



**CORRUPTION THREATS & INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS: PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS**

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Over the last 14 years of war, our military developed incredible relationships both within and outside the Department of Defense. The concept of the Joint Force reached its full potential as we relied on one another in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. We learned how to effectively integrate the talents of our Special Operations Forces and conventional forces on the battlefield. We integrated with other government agencies on the battlefield, ranging from the CIA to USAID, moving the concept of “one team, one fight” forward. We even worked closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and humanitarian organizations, often finding ourselves in similar areas with similar goals. As we continue to downsize in Afghanistan and our efforts in Iraq remain at the advisory level, my biggest fear is that we forget the lessons we have paid for with the blood and sweat of our brothers and sisters. It is absolutely critical that the military retain the myriad lessons learned from these 14 years for future conflicts.

Toward the goal of capturing important lessons learned, Transparency International UK's Defence and Security Programme has published the valuable handbook, “Corruption Threats and International Missions: Practical guidance for leaders.” This well-written and easy-to-use document will be invaluable to leaders of any organization conducting operations in areas where corruption exists, but especially for our military leaders of today and tomorrow.

In the military, we have observed and dealt with corruption everywhere. Whether in the Kosovo Protection Corps, the Afghan local police or the Iraqi Army, each of us who have deployed to one of these areas has experience dealing with corruption. Current operations, whether in Central America, Africa or once again in Iraq, are in areas where corruption is not only rampant – it is often a culturally acceptable way of conducting business. But what should a leader, whether in a military unit or humanitarian organization do, when faced with this type of endemic corruption? This field guide provides meaningful advice and examples on how to deal with corruption.

As an Army Officer, I like the format of this field guide. Its format consists of a mix of checklists, examples, and various corruption scenarios a leader may encounter. In my opinion, this publication is perfect for any leader of an organization who is working in an area where there is the potential for corruption. Realistically, that is almost anywhere in the world where we find ourselves today.

The guide starts out with a basic, but incredibly relevant explanation as to why corruption is such an issue where we operate. The title of the first chapter, “Why is corruption a threat to mission success?” can easily be applied to any organization operating around the globe. While too often we turn a blind eye to corruption, this manual hammers home why corruption is so devastating to any mission, whether military or humanitarian.

Chapter two looks at the 10 main corruption pathways, the varying ways you can look at corrupt networks and the risks within forces caused by corruption. You get a more in-depth analysis at each of these pathways in chapter six as well. Chapter three will be invaluable to those preparing to go to a region where we know corruption exists. The “Specific Preparatory Actions” section provides a checklist of considerations and potential solutions/options as you plan for your eventual entrance into an area rife with corruption.

For me personally, chapter four was the most valuable, having spent a good deal of my time deployed working with host nation security forces. Using a similar format of chapter three, I read this chapter and wished aloud that I had this knowledge before my first rotation to Iraq in 2004. I worked at a member of an Advisory Support Team training one of the first Regular Iraqi Army Battalions and made nearly every mistake possible. Clearly the authors have previous experience building partner capacity. As I read each item to consider regarding host nation security forces and corruption, I literally shouted aloud, “Yes!” as I saw in print

a list of all the things I failed to consider back in 2004. This chapter alone will be of extreme value to junior leaders preparing to work with host nation forces, a continuing mission of extreme value to our national security.

Chapter five gets into existing guidance on anti-corruption. It includes sources ranging from NATO to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on how different organizations attempt to deal with corruption. Additionally, the chapter points out how the current guidelines apply in Afghanistan for the international forces operating there. This chapter serves as a literature review of the existing doctrine and practices in use for dealing with corruption and is an important point as a “one stop shop” for anyone researching existing anti-corruption policies.

Finally, the last chapter outlines in greater depth the “ten main corruption pathways” which I found extremely interesting and useful. While you may find a different corruption pathway in your operational area, these ten capture what you are most likely going to encounter and provides you with the time to think about them. Most importantly, it provides recommendations on how to plan on dealing with corruption before you ever set foot on the ground. These ten pathways may serve as your planning considerations as an organization models the potential challenges they may face regarding corruption.

Overall, this is an extremely user-friendly handbook for any military organization that operates or trains to operate in an environment where corruption is prevalent — in other words, every military organization! Available for free on Transparency International’s website, I cannot praise this work enough and have shared it with my colleagues who continue to operate around the globe. It is worth a look.