

Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption in Defence

A Compendium of Best Practices



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Chapter 18

The Role of Parliaments and Audit Offices

As the direct representatives of the public, parliaments are the principle source of democratic legitimacy. They are responsible for establishing the legislative framework in which government and society operate, and play the central role in overseeing the activities of the executive (in particular, defence ministries and the military), as well as defence industry and private security contractors. Parliamentary committees should be sufficiently empowered to scrutinise budget, procurement and personnel decisions in the context of national security policies and priorities. To exercise their powers effectively, they need to have sufficient access to information and the staff capacity to effectively analyse it. In many countries, parliaments have audit offices attached to them. These have an important role in carrying out detailed investigations of government expenditure and highlighting malpractice

This chapter will look at the various mechanisms and issues of parliament's role in light of the anti-corruption agenda of building integrity, increasing transparency and improving accountability.

Parliamentary Committees

Committees are parliaments' work horses. While major political issues or scandals may be played out in front of cameras in plenary, it is in committee format that parliamentarians most often hear testimony from defence officials, debate issues, conduct investigations, or commission reports. Most parliaments have a committee that bears principal responsibility for defence issues, frequently combined with national security issues more broadly. Nevertheless, various aspects of complicated issues like defence invariably cut across a number of committees – for example, finance, foreign policy, human rights and intelligence oversight.

Areas of activity for the security and defence committee include:

- Developing legislation for the defence and security sector;
- Advising on budgets and monitoring expenditures;
- Reviewing government defence policy and security strategy;
- Consulting on international commitments and treaties to be ratified by parliament;
- Advising parliament on the use of force and the deployment of troops abroad;
- Monitoring defence procurement;

- Reviewing senior appointments; and
- Monitoring personnel policy and human rights.

For committees to be effective in exerting their oversight role, three requirements must be met. Firstly, they must have the necessary *authority*, clearly delineated in legislation. This usually includes the power to:

- Hold hearings or inquiries, at which ministers, others senior executive officials, military or civilian officials and experts can be summoned to answer questions or testify;
- Request documents from the executive;
- Scrutinize the transparency and efficiency of public spending and request competent authorities to perform audits as necessary;
- Examine petitions and complaints from military personnel and civilians concerning the defence and security sector; and
- Visit and inspect bases and other premises, including troops deployed abroad.

Secondly, the committee must have the *capacity* to adequately carry out their responsibilities, in terms of qualified staff, adequate budget, access to information and the ability to arrange (and pay for) external expertise. The professional abilities of committee members are also important; they should have the appropriate education, experience and knowledge, periodically supplemented with additional training and education.

Last but not least is committee members' *attitude* toward holding government accountable and seeking the common good in a non-partisan way. Holding closed meetings, without media or the public, can be one way to help avoid partisan pressures. Off-the-record informal meetings or seminars are also an excellent tool for building common vision and moving beyond partisan politics. The most influential element, however, is the attitude and leadership of the committee chairman.

A strong, pro-active attitude can also help ensure that the committee practises *preventative oversight*. Such an investment of time in regularly scheduled and surprise unit visits, hearings and audits will save considerable time and energy that would otherwise be used reactively to address problems after they have come up.

Audit Offices

In addition to professional staff within the committee, parliaments frequently have access to information and analysis from independent audit offices. These are often attached to the legislature, either directly, like the US Congressional Budget Office, or through specific statutory responsibilities and interrelationships, like the UK National Audit Office. When working effectively, these offices provide parliament with a means to assess the executive's past and current performance. Specific actions by the audit offices may include:

- Auditing financial statements of all central government departments and executive agencies;
- Supporting budget deliberations by developing budget outlooks, analyzing budget proposals by the executive, independently validating cost estimates, and presenting alternative budget options and scenarios;
- Analyzing specific policy and program issues related to budget and finance;
- Providing a means for whistleblowers and the public to make complaints and investigating such accusations; and
- Assisting departments to improve the value for money they deliver, using audits and dissemination of best practices.

All of these efforts are dependent on the ability to accurately cost units and tasks. In addition to an accountancy or legalistic approach, a focus on “policy accountability” is also useful, as it helps link resources, performance and desired outcomes. This is made easier—and the value of auditing offices’ outputs increased—when their work is linked to a Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation System (PPBES). In this case, the auditing office should pay particular attention to programming, which governs decisions on mid-term resource allocation and program evaluation. In many countries evaluation remains an underdeveloped function; not surprising, given its labour intensiveness and political sensitivity.

Box 18.1. The Role of the United Kingdom’s National Audit Office

The National Audit Office (NAO), led by the Comptroller and Auditor General, focuses its efforts in three areas: ensuring value for money; supporting parliament; and providing guidance on good practice.

Value for Money

Under the National Audit Act 1983, the NAO can examine and report on the economy of public spending. Its value for money work looks at how government departments and other public bodies have spent their resources effectively and efficiently to achieve intended outcomes. The scope of this work covers a wide range of issues, from the operation of the criminal justice system to major Defence Ministry procurement projects, from improving commercial skills for government projects to improving contracting for highway maintenance. The NAO presents about 60 reports a year. All are evidence-based and draw on rigorous analysis as well as strong statutory powers that give access to relevant documents.

Support to Parliament

The head of the NAO is a statutory officer of the House of Commons and the results of its work are presented to parliament by order of the House of Commons. It works on behalf of parliament and the taxpayer to hold government to account for the use of public money and to help public services improve performance. Since 2000 it has regularly examined the key assumptions underpinning the government’s projections of public finances to check their reasonable-

ness, reporting the findings alongside the government's reports. In 2007/08, it published 60 major reports to parliament and audited over 460 accounts. Beginning with the 2008–2009 cycle, audits will be made using International Financial Reporting Standards.

The NAO supports the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), other select committees from both Houses and individual members in their scrutiny of public expenditure and service delivery. The NAO has provided 17 Select Committees with a wide range of support and has recently begun producing performance briefings to assist Select Committees' annual oversight of departments' performance. It also deals with a complex and wide range of enquiries from members of parliament, which on occasion may lead to a full value for money report.

Good Practice

NAO produces technical information, guidance and good practice material that can be used by others, particularly those in public sector organizations.

Defence Issues

NAO work in this area includes financial audit of this complex department, which holds approximately £90 billion in fixed assets and manages an annual budget of nearly £34 billion. The NAO also undertakes reports assessing the value for money of Defence Ministry spending. This covers the department's ability to support current operations, as well as maintenance and development of military capabilities to meet future requirements. The NAO focuses on aspects of operational effectiveness, support for armed forces' personnel, major equipment acquisitions and underpinning infrastructure such as the Defence Estate and business change programs. Recent reports have looked at the Chinook helicopter fleet, Hercules C-130s, logistics arrangements for fast jets, recruitment and retention, the use of reserve forces and the defence information infrastructure.

Source (adapted from): National Audit Office, www.nao.org.uk.

Start at the Top: Corruption Risks and Remedies for Parliamentarians

In reducing corruption parliamentarians should be gamekeepers, establishing norms and standards for transparency, holding the government accountable for proper decision-making processes and scrutinising its audits. Yet, as in any area where there are large outlays, they are tempted to influence those decisions and sometimes do so for personal gain or for their party's coffers. In this respect, corruption in defence contracts is increasingly in the limelight. Yet there is no indication that the defence field is more prone to corruption than, say, building and infrastructure contracts. Indeed, in the wider security sector corruption plagues police and customs services far more than defence, although this is frequently petty, grassroots corruption that occurs far below the level of parliament.

Nevertheless, the defence sector does have its unique corruption risks. The circle of decision makers and interested parties usually is smaller and operates in secrecy,

expertise is less widespread, and—above all—the market is monopsonistic, i.e. the defence department is the only buyer and the number of qualified suppliers limited. Complex defence contracts with numerous sub-contractors make proper accounting difficult and procurement departments prefer to deal with a handful of trusted suppliers. Against this background, parliamentarians lobby for the economic interests of their constituency and might lend a hand in obtaining deferrals from conscription or plum jobs for their protégées. In this, there is a thin line between legitimate help to constituents and the exertion of undue influence.

There is no limit to human inventiveness and brinkmanship in finding ways to influence acquisition processes without being in outright conflict with the law. Corruption can take the form of kickbacks on (unjustifiably high) contractual payments, so-called commissions for services rendered, favours outside the contract like holiday trips for members of the family or other services, or outright payments under the table. Large scale corruption to sway the decision of influential individuals usually takes place through agents or other intermediaries, thus avoiding direct contact between supplier and buyer and making it difficult to trace payments through the banking system.¹ This underlines the importance of clear legislation on what is allowed, what is not permitted and where officials should draw the line in their contacts with suppliers. Limits should be put on the value of gifts officials and parliamentarians are allowed to accept. Parliamentarians should see to it that these rules or codes of conduct are firmly established and observed, and also apply them to themselves. They should avoid any semblance of inappropriate behaviour and, for example, not enter into contact with commercial agents or visit factories on their own, but only do so in combination with their colleagues in the defence committee.

In 2007 the democratic senator from Montana, Jon Tester, even took the innovative step of posting his daily schedule on the web. This action highlights the remedy to the risks: maximum transparency in the way parliamentarians do their work and declare their interests. Individual parliamentarians should declare their assets and interests before taking public office and do the same some years after relinquishing it. There should be a prohibition on anonymous contributions to them and to their party's finances. These measures are also in their personal interest, protecting them from incorrect accusations of fraud and enhancing public confidence in their work. In this regard, the UN International Code of Conduct for Public Officials provides a useful basis for crafting rules – in particular section II on conflict of interest and disqualification, and section III on disclosure of assets. Such disclosure is of particular importance in legislatures that are not considered a full time occupation and where members are therefore allowed to take other paid jobs. For example, in the British House of Lords 139 out of the 743 members have paid advisory functions and figure on the salary sheets of corporations.

¹ "The Etiquette of Bribery: How to Grease a Palm," *The Economist*, 23 December 2006.

Parliament's Role in Ensuring Defence Transparency

Parliaments play a strong role in ensuring the transparency of the Defence Department and have a number of instruments at their disposal to do so. Their members can ask written or oral questions and follow them up when the answers are unsatisfactory. A powerful tool for achieving transparency is the organisation of hearings with competing suppliers, if necessary behind closed doors to protect commercial secrets. More dramatic, but also time consuming, is a parliamentary inquiry, which aims at fact-finding and the attribution of responsibilities. Few ministers or state secretaries survive such an ordeal, for the political battle continues in the inquiry and members of the opposition have their knives out for proving the incompetence of the government. At the same time, parliamentary inquiries are often weakened by the inexperience of its members in legal questioning. They are elected for their political acumen, not for their investigative abilities.

Investigative tools are important but the best remedies to corruption are regular procedures and sticking to them: careful, line-by-line examination of the defence budget, looking for the life-cycle cost of new acquisitions, and combining the review with reports from the audit office to determine whether financial outlays are spent for the purposes indicated. Obviously, however, such procedures only work well if parliament possesses sufficient qualified staff for in-depth analysis. Provided an independent Audit Office exists, it also serves as a deterrent to malpractice, since misappropriations are likely to come to light in their reports.

In the area of procurement, the Defence Ministry should be required to provide parliament with information about military requirements, the alternatives for meeting them, the list of potential suppliers and the arguments for final procurement decisions. For example, in Belgium and the Netherlands the Minister of Defence has to follow a prescribed procedure of first including the requirement for a weapon system in a 10-year programme and subsequently explaining it, then analysing the alternatives, reporting on the negotiations and the co-production and compensation aspects (handled by the ministry of economic affairs), and finally making the decision. To support such deliberations, in 1996 Belgium established an *ad hoc* committee for military purchases of the House of Representatives. In the Netherlands, the Defence Ministry must follow a convention that parliament has sufficient time to consider contracts above Euro 50 million before the contract is signed (see Box 18.2). This normally results in a green light from the Defence Committee but members have the right to put the item on the agenda of the Second Chamber for plenary discussion and vote. In Germany, a similar procedure of enhanced scrutiny begins at the Euro 25 million level.

Box 18.2. A Model Sequence for Oversight of Defence Procurement

The following model sequence of procurement oversight is based on parliamentary practice in the Netherlands.

Requirement

The Defence Ministry informs parliament of the general operational requirement. This includes the type of equipment, an estimate of the numbers needed and the volume of funding reserved for the procurement. Parliamentarians usually focus their attention on the share of the overall budget the new plans will absorb and pose questions concerning compatibility with other priority needs. The procurement can only move forward if the parliamentary defence commission approves the requirement, or at minimum signals acquiescence with the formula "the commission takes note of the document presented."

Preparatory Studies

Operational requirements are translated into technical specifications. The market is explored and an exhaustive list of all possible suppliers drawn up. If the product is not available now or in the immediate future, plans are drawn up for a development phase in cooperation with industry and other interested countries. A procurement strategy is established, as well as a timetable for production and delivery.

Assessment

This is a thorough study of the information provided by interested suppliers. Are they able to fulfil all specifications or do they suggest alternative ways of meeting the requirements? Is the equipment in use by other forces and what are their experiences regarding performance? What are the possibilities for co-production and compensation [offsets]? This study should lead to a short list of alternative products. The information should be subject to discussion in the competent parliamentary committee and preferably made public.

Acquisition

This involves a final recommendation and preparations for the acquisition, based on negotiated offers, possibly complemented by field trials. The armaments directorate applies a range of criteria in arriving at its final recommendation. Assuming that several alternatives meet the military requirements, other factors may come to bear: for example, life-cycle costs, gradations in military effectiveness and safety. Offset or co-production arrangements are also frequently an issue – parliamentarians want to be sure that domestic industry will be adequately involved and usually demand one hundred percent compensation for every defence dollar or euro spent abroad.

The role of parliament in each of these phases will differ, depending on the monetary value. In the Netherlands, contracts below 5 million Euros are left to the service concerned. Projects up to Euro 25 million must be included by the chief of the Defence Staff in the overall defence and communicated to parliament. Between Euro 25 and 100 million the requirement has to be approved by the parliamentary committee at the beginning of the cycle, but further execution is mandated to the service concerned, unless the project has been qualified as politically sensitive. Projects of higher value need parliamentary approval before signature. Decisions regard-

ing their implementation can only be taken by the State Secretary (deputy minister) in charge of equipment. Contracts above Euro 250 million require approval by the full cabinet and parliamentary approval.

Source: Willem F. van Eekelen, *The Parliamentary Dimension of Defence Procurement: Requirements, Production, Cooperation and Acquisition*, Occasional Paper No. 5 (Geneva: DCAF, 2005).

Allies: Media, NGOs, International Organizations, Defence Professionals

One of the challenges for parliaments is to effectively target the often tremendous resources at their disposal, in light of real limits on parliamentarians' time. Media is one source of inspiration; many question hours in Western parliaments rely on stories about scandals or ineffective government action in the morning papers. An active and inquisitive press is a requirement for effective democracy yet relying too heavily on news percolating through the media has the drawbacks of promoting reactive responses to scandals and politicisation. Sometimes parliamentarians would better use their resources if they would take some distance from short-lived media excitement and focus on longer-term policy objectives. Likewise, international institutions, like UNDP, should consider the need for balance in their funding of investigative journalism. While a good thing overall, investigative journalism can contribute to an unhelpful accusatory climate. The media should observe a code of conduct of their own.

Parliaments also have allies in the non-governmental community. Most countries have a plethora of civic organizations focused on combating corruption at the national or local levels. The challenge is to bring them into constructive relationships with parliament, rather than just accusatory ones. On the international level, a key ally in countering corruption is Transparency International, which was formed fifteen years ago and annually publishes a Bribe Payers Index, Global Corruption Barometer and Corruption Perception Index. Such "naming and shaming" of culprits—individuals, companies or entire nations—has had some impact, particularly in Western parliaments. Transparency International, through its network of national chapters, can also help mobilize national non-governmental organizations to participate constructively in parliamentary efforts to counter corruption.

A major player in assisting parliaments to build oversight capacity is the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), an international foundation formed by the Swiss government in 2000. DCAF identifies and promotes best practices in security sector governance at the national and international levels. It works closely with other international institutions to provide in-country advisory support and practical assistance programmes that build integrity, transparency and accountability. This is frequently done in combination with various parliamentary assemblies, like the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the NATO Parliamentary As-

sembly, as well as other international institutions that seek to promote best practice in security sector governance.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has been particularly active in supporting defence and security sector oversight. In 2005, in response to actions taken in combating terrorism, it developed a set of detailed recommendations regarding oversight in the areas of intelligence, police, border control, defence and “national security and democracy.” These underlined the need for:

- Clear and appropriate legislation to govern the activities of the security and defence sector, with clear distinctions between security and intelligence services on the one hand and law enforcement agencies on the other;
- The armed forces to remain focused on national security, without dilution by auxiliary tasks, except in exceptional circumstances;
- Functioning specialized parliamentary committees, with supervision of intelligence services and budgets as a minimum prerequisite;
- Parliamentary supervision of exceptional measures, which must not seriously hamper the exercise of fundamental constitutional rights.

The resolution also acknowledged the increasing importance of international cooperation and peacekeeping missions and emphasized that this “must not be allowed to have an adverse effect on the role of parliament in the decision-making process.” It also noted that deferred transparency (declassifying confidential material after a period of time prescribed by law) could help manage the balance between confidentiality and accountability.²

A major anti-corruption ally among intergovernmental organizations is the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Composed of thirty industrialised nations, the OECD drafted a Treaty against Corruption in 1977 that as of today has been adopted by 38 countries. It also has a Working Group on Bribery, which is chaired by the Swiss professor Mark Pieth. A number of OECD nations have implemented anti-corruption laws based on this treaty, with substantial results. For example, Germany adopted an anti-corruption law in 1999 and has followed it up forcefully. The electronics company Siemens was prosecuted for paying €1.3 billion in bribes in more than fifty countries, including a personal payment to Nigerian President Sani Abacha. In December 2008 the inquiry into Siemens’ “Schwarze Kassen” [black accounts] ended with a fine of €395 million. The OECD treaty also facilitated complementary actions in other countries. A similar inquiry in the US led to a fine of \$800 million and in 2004 Italy banned Siemens from doing business with public entities for a year.

Lastly, defence professionals can form a powerful domestic ally to support effective parliamentary oversight. Defence personnel will not easily cheat on the quality and du-

² *Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector in Member States*, Recommendation 1713 (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2005), <http://assembly.coe.int/>.

rability of equipment they are procuring because this might become a matter of life or death for their operational colleagues. Moreover, authorisation and accounting procedures have been regulated carefully, often in excruciating detail and requiring signatures at every level of the procurement process. Most defence departments have a special office to scrutinise this process on possible fraud. Such offices need an independent position outside the line of command and linked with staff of the inspector general. The inspector general should have a strong link with parliament, which should be consulted on his appointment.

Oversight of the Defence Industry and Arms Exports

Parliaments are frequently far stricter in oversight of national procurement than they are of foreign sales. On the one hand, this is logical since national procurement involves the parliament that appropriated taxpayers' money as a direct stakeholder. On the other hand, economic incentives focus more on industrial development than on oversight where experts are concerned. Parliamentarians are legitimately concerned about maintaining jobs in such an innovative branch of industry, focusing on state of the art technology and skilled labour. Except for the US, no country possesses a home market that is large enough to sustain a viable defence industry, making export markets or multinational production arrangements necessary for companies to remain in business. Yet for over a decade, reduced defence budgets in most Western countries have led to increased competition in third country markets. The current economic crisis makes this even more urgent. As large defence contracts are few and far between—but once obtained provide years of work for industry and guaranteed employment for constituents—some in authority are willing to close an eye when attractive contracts could be impeded by full transparency and clean practices. A number of recent cases, however, have begun to reverse this trend (see Box 18.3).

One positive note is that industry itself has begun to address the issue of corruption. In July 2006, the European aerospace and defence industry announced the creation of an international industry working group dedicated to combating corruption. It is initially intended to cover all European defence companies and their national defence associations, and then to be open to defence companies from other countries. On the same day, the formation of the UK Defence Industries Anti-Corruption Forum was announced. Will they work? That remains to be seen. The World Development Report of 1997 noted that 15 percent of all companies in industrialised countries have to pay bribes to retain their business. This figure was 40% in Asia and 60% in the Russian Federation. Reduction of corruption will depend on the perseverance of governments and parliaments, particularly in view of the fact that outside Europe and the US many people in high positions expect bribes for their participation in commercial deals. Consequently, corruption will only diminish if the risks to suppliers and buyers are high. It can be helped if the competing firms close ranks in observing a code of conduct. Parliaments can certainly play a constructive role in supporting this trend.

Box 18.3. Selected Major Corruption Cases in Foreign Sales

The most visible recent case of allowing bribery has been the dealings of British Aerospace Systems (BAE), the fourth largest defence firm in the world, with Saudi Arabia. In 2003, the Guardian newspaper revealed that BAE, with the connivance of successive British cabinets, had paid millions of bribes over the past two decades to senior Saudi officials and members of their families in return for lucrative defence contracts. The British Serious Fraud Office started an investigation and discovered the existence of a £60 million slush fund at BAE for “support services” and evidence that one billion pounds had been transferred to the Swiss bank accounts of two middlemen linked with the Saudi royal family. However, the attorney general stopped the inquiry, indicating to parliament in December 2006 that Saudi Arabia had hinted at retaliating by stopping information concerning possible terrorist attacks in the UK. Prime Minister Tony Blair supported the decision.

Such cases have also occurred in sales to NATO countries. In the mid-1970s, the Netherlands experienced an effort by Lockheed to buy influence in the acquisition of new military aircraft. At his request, Lockheed paid \$1.1 million to Prince Bernhard, husband of Queen Juliana. An independent commission of inquiry concluded that his behaviour had been “reprehensible,” but with the threat of a possible constitutional crisis (possible abdication by the queen) the government, in consultation with parliamentary leaders, only terminated the prince’s functions as Inspector General of the Armed Forces. In roughly the same period, when the Netherlands was in the process of buying F-16 aircraft from the US, an agent linked to Dassault was suspected of attempting to bribe a parliamentarian but the case was not brought to trial.

India is a good example of a country that has suffered greatly from corruption yet it has also taken important legislative action. The purchase of Jaguar aircraft from the UK in 1978 and major contracts in the 1980s for the purchase of Bofors artillery guns, Mirage 2000 aircraft and HDW submarines were all surrounded by a stench of corruption, although nominally backed by defence requirements.

In response, in 2001 a person of impeccable integrity was appointed to introduce a measure of transparency and public accountability into the functioning of the Defence Ministry. The government issued instructions for the open declaration by foreign suppliers of the services to be rendered by their representatives and the remuneration payable to them by ways of fees, commissions or any other method. The Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) enunciated in 2006 created registration requirements and penalties that removed the attractiveness of hiring middlemen—Indian or foreign—for promoting defence contracts. (However, by April 2008 no authorised Indian representative had been registered under this instruction.) The DPP also contains three critical elements: an offset clause, no single-vendor purchases and compulsory transfer of technology in all major contracts. In 2008, Defence Minister Antony also informed parliament of other steps to prevent corruption and to ensure transparency, including: an “Integrity Pact” between the government in all contracts above 3 billion Rupees; major decisions in the acquisition process would be taken in a collegiate manner; enhanced transparency in the conduct of field trials; and regulations on pre-bid meetings with vendors.

Sources: G. Parthasaraty, *The Era of Corruption* (28 March 2001), www.rediff.com; Defence minister A.K. Antony in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. See www.thaindian.com (22 April 2008).

Final Thoughts

A review of contemporary recent corruption cases underlines the continuing need for transparency, as well as the important role—and limitations—of parliamentary oversight. In several cases, the executive successfully (if perhaps only temporarily) argued that the higher interests of the state overrule the inclination of parliaments to take stronger action. Nevertheless, parliamentary action has had an impact. Industrial enterprises are increasingly reluctant to even consider bribery. And overall, governments and parliaments have come together to address the issue. The Lockheed scandal (see Box 18.3) and a case with General Electric led to the adoption by the US of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in 1977 – and subsequent US pressure on other governments to do the same in order to get a level playing field. Parliamentarians have also frequently led national efforts to implement the OECD Convention into national law. And inter-parliamentary assemblies like the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly continue to play a leading role in pushing international cooperation and standards for combating corruption.

Parliaments and parliamentarians have a sacred trust from their citizens to lead in countering corruption. And while much has been done in recent years, many more challenges remain. Parliamentarians can help meet them by ensuring that defence committees and audit offices have sufficient authority to provide effective oversight. They can work to build the needed capacity to implement these mandates, in terms of staff, budget, access to information and contracting for external expertise. Defence Committee members can demonstrate leadership in developing their professional knowledge and in showing a public-spirited, non-partisan attitude toward issues of national security – which fundamentally touch on the survival of the state. In doing so they can courageously act to ensure defence transparency, while protecting legitimate state secrets. And in all of this they can improve their effectiveness by cultivating a network of allies, domestically and internationally, that share a common interest in countering corruption and helping their countries develop as prosperous, secure democracies.