



THE VICE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON

February 24, 1999

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to welcome you to Washington for the world's first conference specifically targeting corruption among justice and security officials.

Corruption among such officials is a direct threat to the rule of law. President Clinton addressed this threat in his International Crime Control Strategy of May 1998, wherein he called for a conference to examine real-life situations relating to standards of integrity among justice and security officials. This gathering also responds to the call raised at the June 1998 Summit in Birmingham, England, where the G-8 heads of state directed senior experts to explore ways to combat official corruption. Finally, this conference builds on the work of the United Nations, the OECD, the OAS, the European Union, NGOs including Transparency International, and other organizations such as the Global Coalition for Africa -- all of which are involved in fighting corruption.

Only by acting together can we safeguard our common interest in the rule of law and protect our citizens from official corruption. I am honored to join you.

Sincerely,

Al Gore

REMARKS PREPARED FOR VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE  
GLOBAL FORUM ON FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Keynote Address

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Once in a rare while, the cycles of time present us with what historians call an open moment -- when some combination of luck and circumstance allow us the chance to choose a better future. We are in such a moment. We have the chance now to draw on our oldest ethical values, our strongest democratic principles, and our newest tools and technologies, to do a better job than any people before us in creating a world that is not just better off, but better -- for all who inhabit the earth.

In the Old Testament, Moses teaches the people of Israel: "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous."

Some thousand years later, Confucius found in China a corrupt government, and began to set the high moral standards he believed would make for a more harmonious society.

Some thousand years after that, the Koran says: "O my people! Give full measure and full weight in justice ... And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption."

Corruption is an old affliction, and no corruption is more damaging than the corruption that is the focus of this conference: corruption among justice and security officials, those pledged to uphold the law. In the information age, the speed of information, the movement of capital, the increase of trade have all magnified the potential impact of official corruption.

Official corruption can speed environmental destruction, accelerate the drug trade, even encourage the smuggling of biological, chemical or nuclear weapons materials. Economically, corruption represents an arbitrary, exorbitant tax. It can lead to wasteful government spending, bigger deficits, greater income inequality, and a crisis of confidence that can spark capital flight, crash the economy, destabilize governments, and put people half way around the world out of work.

While the debate can rage all night about the precise role of corruption in the global financial crisis, there can be no serious doubt that the crisis has been aggravated by corruption. And now -- in spite of the general prosperity of the U.S. economy, some American sectors are hurting a great deal from that crisis. Of course, at the epicenter of the financial crisis, it is far worse -- millions of Asian families feel they have lost their financial future.

The point is -- corruption in one country can make its impact felt around the world. No country can seal itself off from the impact of corruption beyond its borders, and therefore every nation must work with every other nation to fight corruption wherever it is in the world.

At the same time, to work well together, we must all acknowledge a central truth: No nation has a monopoly on virtue. None has a corner on corruption. And no nation has the right to lecture any other.

Just this month, 3 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service employees, charged with patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border near Nogales, were arrested for their involvement in a scheme to smuggle illegal drugs into the U.S. The alleged role was simple – looking the other way. The alleged crime was vile – betraying the trust of their country, and selling out the millions of young people we seek to protect.

The large amount of illegal drugs that pass through the 300 ports of entry into the United States -- combined with the enormous amount of money drug traffickers will spend trying to corrupt U.S. officials -- can put enormous pressure on the professionalism of officers from the DEA, INS, Customs, and Treasury. We are attentive to it. We are addressing it. But let's be clear: The stakes are too high -- the lives of our children too precious -- to waste time posturing about it. We in the United States must have a serious, rigorous discussion of every possible avenue for guarding against corruption -- both here and abroad. And I want to welcome each and every one of you to the United States, and thank you for coming to this conference to join us in this critical three-day conversation on fighting corruption.

A sample of any week's newspapers, TV, and magazines might suggest corruption is on the rise. We read and hear everywhere about its infestation in former empires and its choke hold on young democracies. Today, the reach of corruption seems longer; its power to shake the world seems greater. And yet, there is hope. Hope in the successful approaches of the past. And even greater hope in the early and growing successes of today. There is an important reason why -- at a time of apparent rise in global corruption -- that corruption may be suddenly and surprisingly more vulnerable than before. Cynics no doubt will mock any optimism in the fight against corruption. But let me remind you of the words of George Bernard Shaw: "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

Let me review for you today the forces that can assist our fight against corruption, and suggest to you that we have a secret weapon that is unique to our time in history, and could turn the fight in our favor.

First, the world's tolerance for corruption is fading fast. Gone are the days when corruption was written off merely as a cost of doing business. Today, in more and more parts of the world, corruption is seen as it should be seen: as serious crime with devastating consequences -- as a cold, vicious, often violent sacrifice of citizen security, for a narrow, greedy, private, personal profit on the part of a crooked official.

As evidence of the rising interest in fighting corruption, let me explain that we initially expected to have representatives from about 40 countries at this conference. In fact, we have representatives from eighty-nine. Some nations were so eager to come they even cautioned us that our bilateral relations would suffer if they were not invited. And so we are here, squeezed to the walls, because of the rising intolerance of corruption, and the rising sense that it is time to take action against it. Victor Hugo once wrote: "An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come." Fighting corruption is an idea whose time has come.

A second important force in our favor is leadership. We are blessed to have in the world today -- and many are in this room right now -- very prominent leaders who have placed the fight against corruption at the heart of their public mission. There is no substitute for leadership by example -- especially on the issue of official corruption.

The 13th-century Persian poet Saadi told this story to illustrate the importance of leadership. A King was moving with his army through the land when he came upon some beautiful apple trees. The King asked for an apple, ate it, and suddenly noticed his top general had gone to pay the owner the price of the apple.

When the General returned, the King challenged him: "Why did you pay the man? He must have been flattered to have a King take a piece of his fruit."

"Your Majesty," his General explained. "If you had taken even one apple, your army would have taken the whole orchard."

People are guided by the behavior of the men and women they look to for leadership.

A third force in our favor in our fight against corruption is the growing trend toward government reform -- or reinventing government. Just five weeks ago I hosted right here at the State Department an international conference on Reinventing Government -- the effort to institute reforms that can help government work better and cost less. There is one especially striking parallel between that conference and this one -- namely: in many cases, the very steps you would take to reform government to reduce corruption are the same steps you would take to reform government to increase efficiency.

As an example, confusing regulations can foster corruption. Adopting fewer, clearer regulations would help reduce corruption. That is also a principle of reinventing government.

Monopoly power can foster corruption. Diluting monopoly by privatizing some functions would help reduce corruption. That is also a principle of reinventing government.

Lack of accountability can foster corruption. Increasing accountability by focusing on measurable results would help reduce corruption. That is also a principle of reinventing government.

The point here is one often made by students and scholars of international corruption, namely: the fight against corruption is not separate from the process of government reform. They are both efforts to make sure self-government works for its citizens.

A fourth factor in our favor in the fight against corruption is ethical behavior. Robert Klitgaard, Dean of The Rand Graduate School in Santa Monica California, has developed a formula to gauge the likelihood of corruption. He describes it:  $C = M + D - A$  or "corruption equals monopoly plus discretion minus accountability." If you have a monopoly, and you have discretion in applying the rules, and no one is holding you accountable, you are far likelier to become corrupt.

I think that is a very insightful analysis, particularly if the formula takes into account what I would call the "inner accountability" of conscience. I believe conscience is innate, universal, and one of the most important tools in the fight against corruption.

Chilean poet Pablo Neruda talked of "the most ancient rites of our conscience." The poet Dante once wrote: "A light is given you to know good and evil." Immanuel Kant once wrote: "Conscience is not a thing to be acquired... but every man, as a moral being, has it originally within him."

More recently, Harvard Professor Jerome Kagan published a book contending that there is a universal desire to see oneself as ethically upright. This desire explains the power of conscience. If we wish to see ourselves as ethically upright, we will avoid situations where we could be seen doing wrong.

This explains not only the power of our private conscience, but also the power of our public conscience -- our clergy. Our Priests, Ministers, Monks, Nuns, Mullahs -- who represent God in society. They are the public voice of conscience. They command enormous respect throughout society. They have immense power to tilt the scales toward good in public life. I look forward to their work here at the conference, and to having their ongoing participation in society's efforts to root out corruption.

If we accept that people, driven by conscience, really do prefer to be clean and honest, we can see the wisdom in reinventing government and reforming systems to make it easier for people to make the right ethical choices. And it would itself be ethical to do so. After all, the last line in the most famous prayer in the Christian world begins with the words: "And lead us not into temptation." A system that reduces temptation and engages conscience will reduce corruption.

The fifth factor in our favor as we fight against corruption may be decisive. Some months ago, I spoke of people whose countries were in economic crisis, raising calls for democracy and reform. But today, in the information age, reform is not enough unless it matched with an effort to inform. First inform; then reform. Then, information may be decisive, because information is the natural enemy of corruption. Corruption thrives on ignorance, not information. It needs secrecy, not transparency. It seeks darkness, not light.

It has always been a legendary trait of organized crime that members of the syndicate would not talk; because talk would kill them. It is the same today with corruption. The free flow of information is the very thing corruption cannot abide, and yet the free flow of information is the signature trait of the age in which we live. --

There have never been more channels of information, more sources of information, more storehouses of information. Information has never moved more quickly, to more people, with more purpose. Information has never been more prized, more purchased, or more essential to the wealth and success of society. It is the central medium of exchange.

At a time when society's central industry is the effort to satisfy people's need to know -- it bodes ill for corruption that it lives off the need that no one know -- that no one talk; and no one take action.

In fact, the recent examples of successful efforts against corruption come from the power of information, and the action of civil society.

In Argentina recently, newspapers reported huge discrepancies in public school lunch costs between the capital of Buenos Aires and a more rural school district. Within two weeks, there were personnel changes in Buenos Aires and lunch costs dropped by half. If we inform civil society, civil society will reform the system.

Through a process called third-party procurement monitoring that brings openness, transparency and information to the process, a private firm has helped the Ministry of Health of Guatemala reduce its corruption, gain savings of 43%, and lower the price of its medicine by an average of 20 percent. The same approach has shown results in countries as diverse as Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and Colombia.

In several countries from Latin America to Eastern Europe and to the former Soviet Union, the World Bank -- in collaboration with local institutions and civil society and international NGOs such as Transparency International -- has collaborated with local Governments to administer deeply detailed surveys on corruption to citizens, companies, and public officials in willing countries. Survey results typically reveal that public officials are highly cooperative survey respondents. They are very candid. They say they are themselves sick

and tired of the corruption in their midst, and they are prepared to join coalitions to address the problem.

Businesses -- far from accepting corruption as a cost of business -- say they would pay 15 - 20 % more in taxes just to be free of the costs and hassles of corruption. As an example of the depth of corruption exposed by these diagnostic surveys, respondents from one country say it takes an average bribe of one thousand dollars to get a phone line. In another country, 60% of the customs officials surveyed say they purchased their positions. You know that if they pay for their position, they will make their position pay off.

Following this in-depth diagnostic survey approach, all this data is released in a major public meeting in the country, with the media present. Leaders from government, business, and civil society then come to consensus on an action plan targeting the worst areas of corruption.

In Bolivia, Vice President Quiroga -- after receiving and reviewing the survey results on official corruption in his country -- delivered a PowerPoint presentation before a national television audience identifying his 20 priorities over the next twelve months, and promised to follow up with further diagnostic survey work to monitor progress. This is just a beginning, of course. But it is an auspicious beginning.

In Albania, the then Prime Minister was presiding at a diagnostic survey workshop last summer. He said "we can sit here past midnight and argue about a particular number or claim that a point has been overstated. That would be a waste. We have the data. We know what needs to be done. Let's begin." The next day, all the nation's newspapers carried Page One coverage of the results, with charts, graphs, and texts of survey results. Pushed off the front page that day -- amazingly -- was coverage of the prior day's crucial World Cup Soccer match between Albania's neighbors Romania and Croatia. People were more eager to see the survey information.

As a result of the excellent early results of this approach, and its success in engaging the energy of civil society, public officials, business people and individual citizens, I am pleased to announce today that the United States plans to work closely with the World Bank, local organizations, civil society and other international donors and NGOs to support willing countries in the use of these diagnostic surveys. When a country shows it is committed to the rigorous self-analysis necessary to launch a process of reform, we would be honored to work with its civil society, companies, public officials, and citizens to assist and encourage those efforts.

Of course, this initiative will be part of our administration-wide effort to mount a comprehensive, global response to the problem of corruption. Over the next two years we in the U.S. will work diligently with our friends and partners to (1) urge other key exporting nations to ratify and implement the OECD Convention; (2) to develop and implement global standards on transparency and accountability; (3) to conclude an Agreement on Transparency in Government

Procurement at the WTO ministerial in Seattle later this year; and (4) to pursue region-wide anti-corruption initiatives in the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Europe -- including urging ratification in the United States Senate of the Inter-American Convention and seeking full implementation by all signatories.

We also look forward to working with all of you to maximize the advantages offered by what is called "mutual evaluation"-- an approach where different countries conduct on-site mutual evaluations to heighten the accountability and rigor attached to anti-corruption conventions.

I would suggest, to build on the effectiveness of the mutual evaluations, that we discuss during this conference ways to supplement the mutual evaluation process with an Internet-based reporting device. In addition, the mutual evaluation teams might consider offering individual citizens and business people of the host country the opportunity to serve as evaluators. That would increase interest and awareness of the evaluation efforts and help contribute to their success.

The information age -- with its advances in science and technology, new medical discoveries, mobile capital, expanded trade, and instantaneous communication -- offers great opportunities coupled with great risks -- and thus brings us to the open moment I mentioned earlier. We have a rare chance to use the tools of our newest technology in the service of our oldest values -- helping us build faith in democracy, improve competitiveness, expand prosperity, expose corruption, and strengthen the system of self-government that is history's greatest guardian of freedom, equality, opportunity and human dignity.

If we do not fight for these values, the information age will simply create more efficient channels for the spread of mischief, mayhem and corruption. Make no mistake: this is a fight for our values. We know that as bribery rises, civil liberties fall. We know that as bribery rises, the rule of law falls. We know that as bribery rises, the professionalism of our civil service falls. We are not engaged in an academic debate. We are locked in a battle over the kind of world we will leave our children.

Together, for the sake of a greater global community, let us set new standards of humanity and new heights of prosperity -- by matching wisdom with intelligence, humanity with humor, compassion with common sense, and realism with idealism -- by instituting the open, honest, transparent, democratic systems that will help make public servants accountable for the best and most honest use of public money, and urge them to earn and safeguard every citizen's deposit of public trust. Thank you.



**CLOSING REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE**  
**GLOBAL FORUM ON FIGHTING CORRUPTION – CLOSING REMARKS**  
**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1999**

Let me thank you all once again for making the long journey here to the United States to help make a difference in the future of your countries and the future of our world. It takes an urgent issue to bring together high-level representatives from eighty-nine nations. We have traveled more than a million collective miles for two reasons: One – official corruption imposes a painful cost on the quality of our lives, and – two – we believe that if we come together to fight corruption, we can reduce its costs in our countries and communities.

On the costs of corruption, we have heard a great deal. If our presence here were not proof enough, our presentations have left no doubt: corruption accelerates crime, hurts investment, stalls growth, bleeds the national budget, and -- worst of all -- undermines our faith in freedom. Corruption is an enemy of democracy -- for democracy lives on trust, and corruption destroys our trust.

But the costs of corruption have not paralyzed us; they have energized us. We are here because we believe that by coming together, we can gain a firmer foothold in the fight against corruption. We all have seen and heard the success stories.

One of the striking stories I have heard comes from a police force in Colombia. The head of the force inherited a corrupt department. He began with survey work and background checks -- and then fired a large number of corrupt officers.

Then he vetted a special group of candidates for their ethical values, and enrolled those who passed the test into an elite force to deal with drug traffickers. The elite force is reasonably well paid, but no government salary can compete or compare with the bribes of a drug trafficker. It is the officers' values that keep them loyal. They regularly report back to the chief on the value of the bribe offers they reject.

Of course, the chief is wise enough to know that he cannot build an enduring new culture on the leadership of one person. So he has created an outside review board -- made up of the most prominent members of society -- to monitor the honesty and effectiveness of the force. He has admitted the force has a long way to go -- but it is perhaps not as long a way as they have already come.

Over the last three days, we have discussed many of the principles and themes that underlie this success and others.

First, to get honesty from our governments, we must first get honesty from our justice and security officials. As our conference special adviser Charlie Moskos has said: "You can't arrest crooked officials unless you first have honest cops."

We also know that -- to have honest cops -- we must pay them an honest wage. One

nation -- unfortunately not unique -- is known to pay its police officers about half the wage of an average worker. No fight against corruption can succeed if it requires police officers to be moral heroes. It is simply unwise and unfair to force a mother or father to choose between doing their jobs honestly and raising their children comfortably.

Of course, we have also talked about what our first President George Washington called “that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.” Conscience is essential to honest public service. We can set government salaries to meet need, but no government salary will ever satisfy greed. To withstand the astonishing sums offered by drug traffickers, a person needs a stout heart and a strong conscience, and that is why personnel in our justice and security positions need to be thoroughly vetted for their ethical values.

At the same time, I believe that our clergy could help our anti-corruption efforts immensely if they were to make their voices heard around the world through an inter-faith statement on fighting corruption. They serve as our public conscience, and I am convinced that their support would strengthen the hands of those who are fighting for more ethical governance.

We have also talked about the importance of government reinvention and reform, including fewer, clearer laws; more measurable results; disinterested economic decisionmaking; strong and independent judiciaries, and strong ethics and financial disclosure rules.

We have talked about the fact that as military forces move to non-traditional defense roles – such as counter-drug efforts and border protection – their vulnerability to corruption increases. We need to respond decisively with strong and clean leadership, appropriate training, and keen emphasis on the principles of military professionalism.

We have talked about the importance of openness and transparency -- and about the value of information. Indeed, I have heard from many who are convinced -- as I am -- that the number one force in our favor in the fight against corruption is our ever-expanding access to information.

But information alone is not enough. The core of accountability is the fusion of information and action -- action on the part of public officials, private citizens, businesses, and non-governmental organizations. The crucial role of NGOs is far too often overlooked -- but their importance is more than apparent to host governments. Any government who wants to throw a dark cloak over its activities immediately tries to tie the hands and bind the feet of its NGOs. NGOs are a core component of civil society, and they bear a great share of the 24-hour, watch-dog work of holding governments accountable.

All these themes represent international norms for fighting corruption. If we are committed to these norms, then governments should ratify and implement the international conventions that embody these norms – such as the OECD and the OAS Conventions. On this last point, I am delighted to announce that on the opening day of our conference, the Inter-American Development Bank and the OAS agreed to fund efforts to promote ratification and implementation of the OAS accord.

I would like also to recognize the fact that this Tuesday, ministers from 11 African nations here in Washington for this conference drafted a set of 25 principles on anti-corruption, good governance, and accountability. They are now taking these principles back to their governments for consideration.

As we seek to ratify and then implement these anti-corruption conventions, we should take advantage of known anti-corruption principles and effective practices. We have distributed here at the conference just such a set of guiding principles. They have been compiled, reviewed, written, and edited by a broad cross-section of experts. And they represent the first major effort to articulate a set of comprehensive, global principles for fighting official corruption.

We urge you to take these principles back home -- talk about them, test them, see if you can use them. They represent the basis for the anti-corruption principles I will present to President Clinton for discussion of the G-8 at the Koln summit this summer. We hope they will make a difference in the efforts of all nations eagerly undertaking any anti-corruption effort.

In addition to discussing general principles of fighting corruption, we were fortunate at the conference to hear about several new tools to help countries gather data, identify priorities, and apply the principles necessary to get a start in the fight against corruption.

As I announced on Wednesday, the United States plans to work closely with the World Bank, local organizations, civil society and other international donors and NGOs to support the use of diagnostic surveys. Countries who have adopted this approach have seen the dynamic impact of information: When overwhelming evidence of a problem is presented to the public in an open forum -- inaction by the government is no longer an option.

In the past three days we have also had enthusiastic discussions about the promise of mutual evaluations. In particular, I have been pleased to hear from those who are eager to pursue the Internet-based reporting device I proposed on Wednesday -- and from those who support the possibility of offering individual citizens and business people the opportunity to serve as evaluators.

I am immensely proud of the work of this conference. I am not alone in the view that such a conference could not have happened ten years ago. Ten years ago -- if the nations of the world had been able to overcome the implicit self-criticism to convene on the subject of corruption -- I am afraid there might have been so much discussion on the source of the problems, there would have been little time left for discussing solutions.

Very possibly, lines would have divided north from south, east from west, rich from poor. Countries might well have fought over who was worse: the bribemaker or bribetaker.

Much has changed in ten years. The feeling of good will we have built together has become almost a physical feature of this room. Our conversations have been marked by the kind of honesty that both expresses trust, and builds trust. It has transformed the depth of our dialogue.

Just one hour ago, the chief delegate from the Netherlands proposed that we follow this event with a second global forum – to be held in the Netherlands sometime in the next calendar year.

I second his proposal. On behalf of the United States, I thank the Netherlands for its initiative and hospitality and am honored to offer the services of the United States as co-sponsor.

The Korean delegation has proposed an annual global ministerial forum on fighting corruption. The heads of delegation have agreed to this idea and we hope to see it come to fruition.

Finally, one of our delegates from Kenya was so enthusiastic about the spirit and accomplishments of the conference, he implored us to sign a declaration expressing our common sense of urgency about the problem of corruption, and our commitment to continue the dialogue begun in this forum.

In closing, I would like to read to you a short, but poignant passage from a noted African novel -- The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born – by Ayi Kwei Armah. It is the story of an honest and idealistic young man, who goes against the grain, resists bribes, and is rewarded not with respect but with the scorn of his friends and colleagues.

During one scene, the protagonist, deep in thought, was finding it – in the words of the author “more and more difficult to justify his own honesty when the whole world said there were only two types of men who took refuge in honesty -- the cowards and the fools.”

That upright young man – in a story published 30 years ago -- was alone in his moral struggle. Today, he must have our help. More and more of us must be there with him, battling with him for the minds and hearts of the majority, working to change the culture and customs; to turn the corrupt into outcasts; to expose them as criminals who slice into the veins and arteries of the nation’s economy, and slowly bleed it dry.

As we uncover the corruption, expose the crimes, and expel the criminals – our people will sense their own growing power to chase out corruption, and they will quicken their efforts. More and more people will see that official corruption is theft from the nation, and theft from the nation is always theft from the weakest in the nation: the poor, the old, the disabled, the sick, the children, the new borns. It is for them that we gather here. It is for them that we take up this fight. It is for them that we pledge our common commitment to honest government.

As our beloved President Abraham Lincoln reminded us: “The only thing necessary for

the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.” Let us not leave here today before we make an enduring personal pledge to this cause. For if we do not take the lead in cleaning up corruption, no one else will, because no one else can. Thank you. May God Bless you, and may God bless our efforts.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**  
**Office of the Spokesman**

For Immediate Release  
99/155

February 24, 1999

**REMARKS BY**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT**  
**AT**  
**A GLOBAL FORUM ON FIGHTING CORRUPTION**

**Washington, D.C.**

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** Good morning, everybody. Mr. Vice President and distinguished counterparts, colleagues, friends from the NGO community and guests, welcome to the Department of State.

It is fitting that for this Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity Among Justice and Security Officials, a truly global audience has assembled. The surpassing breadth of this conference reflects a fundamental understanding that corruption is not just a private breach of ethics, but a matter of profound political and social consequence; not least for our efforts to strengthen democratic governments.

It reflects, as well, the realization that working together, governments and non-governmental institutions can help one another make corruption everywhere the exception, not the rule; and by so doing, contribute to the prosperity of our people and the justness of our societies.

Now, some would say that our effort this week, to come together to fight corruption, is doomed to fail; that wherever there is gold, you will find greed; that corruption is endemic to human nature; and that it's futile to try to do anything about it. To them, I would reply as Katherine Hepburn did to Humphrey Bogart in the movie, *The African Queen*: "Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we were put into this world to rise above."

The truth is we are making progress. The OECD convention entered into force this month, committing all signatories to adopt strong anti-bribery laws. The Inter-American Anti-Corruption Treaty has been signed by almost every country in this hemisphere and deserves prompt approval by the United States Senate.

The Council of Europe's convention opened for signature last month. Africa, among other regions, has begun discussing its own anti-corruption pact. Individual countries, ministries and even municipalities -- from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Hong Kong to Palermo, Sicily -- are moving ahead to strengthen justice systems, and build what several participants have aptly described as a "culture of lawfulness."

The advances of recent years reflect several important principles. One is that we must act against corruption on both the demand and the supply side. That means not only making bribery illegal, but also ensuring that border guards, for example, are made less susceptible to bribes by paying them sufficiently. A second is accountability. The border guards that we are now paying more must know that violations will cost them their jobs, and serious or repeated transgressions,

their freedom.

A third is clarity in teaching, and maintaining, the line between public duties and private preferences. People everywhere, whatever their countries pass, must understand that corruption is not capitalism's natural product, but its perversion. And undergirding everything we do is the bedrock principle of establishing and reinforcing the rule of law.

That's why this forum's emphasis on integrity in the judiciary and security forces is so very, very well-placed. For however much we do to prevent corruption with stronger laws on the supply side, and a newfound accountability on the demand side, we won't have achieved much if, toward the end of the pipeline, the corrupt official or businessperson faces a compromised policeman or a crooked prosecutor or a judge who can be bought off.

The culture of lawfulness may not be easy to achieve; but we have recognized how to pursue it. We know that we must strive for an independent judiciary, a free press and a bureaucracy that is both streamlined and fairly paid. We know that corruption thrives in dark corners, and that exposure to sunlight can scorch it clean. And we know that religious and ethical leaders, as well as public officials and captains of industry, all have pivotal roles to play.

No country has a monopoly on wisdom in achieving such a culture. In the United States, it remains, after more than 200 years, a work in progress. And in this decade alone, governments in Europe, South America, Africa and South Asia have fallen, at least in part, because the people would no longer tolerate public corruption.

That's why the principle of mutual evaluation has been so valuable in our efforts to date. That's why this forum is -- speaking selfishly for the host country -- such a tremendous opportunity for us to listen and learn.

In the end, the failure or success of our efforts to combat corruption will determine whether we live in societies governed by individuals or laws; whether our firms and products and ideas rise and fall based on mendacity or merit; and whether we starve or nourish public confidence in democracy and economic freedom.

So it's a momentous mission on which we're embarked here this morning, and no one understands this better than the leader it is my welcome task to introduce to you now.

In America, in my experience, no one has done more to spread the gospel of good governance than Vice President Al Gore. From the day President Clinton asked him to improve and streamline our own government, Americans have witnessed a government that works better, costs less and delivers results. Of course, such far-reaching success is nothing new to the Vice President. Maybe it's because he's so tall, but throughout his career, Al Gore has been able to see further ahead than most. He has made a habit of identifying vital issues as they emerge, mastering their complexities and devising practical solutions while others are still struggling to make out the nature of the problem.

Whether the issue is the environment, or national security, or the relationship between cutting edge technology and ancient principles of fairness, Al Gore is a leader, and a thinker, and a teacher, and the man to go to get things done.

If there's any one message that Al Gore conveys, whether before a global audience or in a one-on-one session, it's that all of us -- as individuals or as nations -- are part of something much larger than ourselves. That understanding, I believe, must be central to any real solution to the problem of corruption. For corruption is based on the soul-killing illusion that happiness rests on

the indulgence of the self, rather than service to one's community, country and faith.

I am privileged to work with this man every day on the most critical foreign policy and national security issues facing our nation. I can tell you from being with him that he has a mind that can delve into the most complex issues, a heart that is open to the respect of every single individual, and a desire to solve problems. In all these areas, his abilities are unparalleled; and I am very, very proud to call him my friend. I am both pleased and honored to introduce him to you now: the Vice President of the United States, Al Gore.

(Applause.)