

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE**  
**WASHINGTON**

At this, the beginning of a new millennium, countries throughout the world recognize that one of the most fundamental impediments to the development of stable democratic institutions and to sound economic development and growth is corruption. Corruption impairs the legitimacy of democratic electoral processes. Corruption among government officials compromises the responsibility of governments to maintain the rule of law for their citizens. Corruption distorts lawful economic activities everywhere, preventing citizens from reaping the benefits of economic progress. Corruption adversely affects trade and investment. If one single issue is central to virtually every aspect of the political freedom and economic wellbeing of nations and their people today, that issue is corruption.

Corruption was once thought of as an inescapable attribute of government, politics or business. The new and growing force in the struggle against corruption is the dawning recognition that it is not inevitable. Corruption is no law of nature. It is the result of what humans do. It is therefore something we have the power to prevent. This realization is fundamental.

Promoting action against various forms of corruption has been part of United States international policies and programs for many years. Recently, there has been a dramatic growth of global recognition of this problem, and political determination by all governments to act against it. This has led in turn to dramatic increases in the extent, complexity, visibility and significance of actions by all elements of the United States Government to promote anticorruption goals internationally, and to assist other governments to define and implement effective anticorruption practices.

This is our first attempt to consolidate these United States international anticorruption activities in a comprehensive international strategy against corruption. It is necessary, and it is timely. In 1999 and years to come, we will continue to enhance the scope and refine the methods of our measures against corruption. No nation stands alone as a victim of corruption, and likewise, no nation should be left alone to confront it. With this first annual International Strategy Against Corruption, we recommit our policies and our resolve to act cooperatively with all nations to forge a new era of clean, honest and efficient government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Madeleine Albright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "M".

Madeleine K. Albright