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IX LEGISLATURA



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FORO PARLAMENTARIO DE
**INTELIGENCIA
Y SEGURIDAD**

CIUDAD DE GUATEMALA, 7 Y 8 DE MARZO DE 2022



FORUM REPORT

21ST PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE-SECURITY FORUM
GUATEMALA

CORRUPTION AND TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME
“Threat to Social and Economic Prosperity”



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MONDAY - March 7th

9:30 am Opening Ceremony

- Alejo Campos, Regional Director of Crime Stoppers



Mr. Alejo Campos gave the first words, especially thanking Deputy Shirley Rivera and all the parliamentarians of the Guatemalan Congress for opening the doors to share with experts and representatives of other countries on issues related to global security and its implications in Latin America and how they impact the development of our populations, especially in Guatemala.

"Organized crime has become more professional and penetrates more and more the democracies of the countries, that is why it is necessary to take actions to improve the legislation that allows it to be fought and provide the tranquility that our population deserves," added Mr. Campos.

- Hon. Robert Pittenger, Chairman, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum

The Honorable Robert Pittenger begins his welcome speech by thanking everyone who has supported the forum to be held and also the delegates who have attended the forum, mentioning that the role they have in their countries will have an impact on security from all over the world, because what happens in Latin America impacts the United States and the rest of the world, he said.



- Hon. Shirley Rivera, President of the Guatemala Congress



The Honorable Shirley Rivera expressed her gratitude to all those present and mentioned that they are very honored to be the hosts of the first parliamentary forum on Intelligence and Security held in 2022.

She mentioned that this forum will give us the opportunity to exchange experiences on such complex issues that transcend borders and see them from a transversal perspective as strategic axes to achieve social peace and the development of our peoples.



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- **Hon. Alejandro Giammattei, President of Guatemala**



The Honorable President Alejandro Giammattei, during his speech criticized the lack of action of drug-consuming countries to combat money laundering and why nothing is done if it is known that 95% of drug flights that arrive in Central America and Mexico leave from Venezuela.

The president mentioned that it was of transcendental importance for Guatemala to deal with issues such as corruption and transnational crime that represent a threat to the social and economic prosperity of the countries.

He expressed that security is a determining condition for development and providing it is one of the goals and objectives of all States and therefore launching the necessary actions through the means that are available is a high priority.

"Governments are not, we cannot be, omnipresent or omnipotent, this means that it is not possible for us to cover our entire territory and isolate the population at risk to cover those risks and those threats that are taking place," said President Giammattei.

10:00 am Opening Remarks:

- **Honorable John Katko, U.S. Congress, Ranking Member, Homeland Security Committee (video)**

The Honorable John Katko stated in his presentation that we cannot ignore the threats to Central America and that those problems impact the United States in a variety of ways. Being a dependable partner implies having a better approach to the region and the U.S. must ensure long-term solutions and goals are committed to. The Congressman also noted however that the U.S. must act on the threats that it currently faces on the southern border and address that crisis in the immediacy.





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10:15 am **Corruption and Transnational Organized Crime**

- **Hon. Kayra Harding, VP of Panama National Congress**



The Honorable Kayra Harding made known the inter-institutional fight that her country is carrying out to combat corruption and international organized crime and highlighted the tougher sentences against those who commit crimes related to drug trafficking and money laundering.

"We are convinced that this exchange between parliamentarians and international organizations will be a very valuable contribution that will allow

us to combat transnational organized crime that affects the development of our countries," added parliamentarian Harding.

- **Hon. Silvia Giacoppo, Senator of Argentina**

Senator Giacoppo pointed out that crime has no borders, if we do not fight together we will not achieve the objectives, she mentioned that it is important not only that we become aware that we have a challenge, but also adapt to technological changes, because these crimes have already broken traditional barriers and today they are committed through platforms that are increasingly enriched and difficult to combat because they do not have a physical place.



- **Prof. Celina Realuyo, Professor of Practice, William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University**



Professor Realuyo pointed out that corruption and transnational organized crime are actually a couple, one does not exist without the other. She mentions that it is important to know that all those who are part of illicit networks, whether they are criminals, terrorists, traffickers, etc. They all share the same end; destabilize and damage our societies. She also mentioned that the scourge of corruption represents a cancer, a cancer that is damaging all sectors of our societies, politically,

economically and socially, and that is why we must make an appeal, that all of us citizens of the world have to make a stronger fight against corruption.



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- **Mr. Jonathan Riggs, General Secretary, Minister National Security of Panama**



Mr. Riggs argued that crime does not disappear, but rather is transformed. It warns that the only way to effectively combat criminal organizations is by uniting common efforts, through legislation that really promotes democratic stability, that promotes the certainty of punishment and that there is due process that guarantees the legitimacy of judicial actions and of the public ministry in the frontal combat against criminal organizations.

11:15 am Regional Security and North Border

- **Hon. Manuel Eduardo Conde Orellana, President of the International Affairs Commission, Congress of Guatemala**

Legislator Manuel Conde stated that the Northern Triangle of Central America suffers high levels of violence, which come from international groups organized to commit illicit activities such as drug trafficking, sexual exploitation, money laundering and extortion.

In addition, he added that the violence affects Guatemalan and Central American citizens, who are forced to flee their communities to migrate to North American countries, which also generates ungovernability in border areas.



“The Central American region is reflected in some 50 million inhabitants, who live in a territory with an extension of 523 thousand 777 square kilometers, our geostrategic position is opportune for better or for worse, that should make us strengthen the joint work against organized crime”, added the legislator.

11:35 am Abusive practices in global economic expansion

- **Mr. Michael Chen, President Colon Chamber of Commerce, Panama**



Mr. Chen mentioned that in our world we all have a perception that corruption is only about bad policies to influence governments, but in reality, it is much more than that, it is also about our daily behavior as citizens. We must lose our culture of corruption, a large number of small actions such as not giving a bribe to a traffic policeman and paying our traffic fines, will bring great changes to have better countries, better regions and ultimately, a better world, said Mr. Chen.



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- **Mrs. Emily de La Bruyère, Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies (virtual)**

To continue with the panel, Mrs. de la Bruyère spoke about how the Chinese expansion incorporates abusive uses and mentions in one of the important points that China is weaving a system where they have control of the economic system of each country.



- **Mr. Milos Ivkovic, MA, LLM, International Arbitrator / Advisor to Governments (virtual)**



Mr. Milos Ivkovic, who joined virtually, mentioned that it is common to see in international trade that certain important leaders need the financial support of institutions such as international banks, but nevertheless these depend on institutions that want to increase profits or want to enslave economies, Mr. Ivkovic also mentioned that there are loans that are predatory, that are given in infrastructure, energy, banks that are Chinese or Russian that want people and companies not to be able to pay these loans and thus be able to take control of these institutions through insolvency.

- **Mr. Joseph Humire, Executive Director, Center for a Secure Free Society**



To finish the panel, Mr. Humire stated that the most serious way to attack the United States and the west, including Europe and Latin America, is to collapse the U.S dollar, and the best way to do that, the way they want to approach that is to build an anti-dollar alliance, this is what the invasion of Ukraine is all about, he mentioned.

“It's not just an attack on the sovereign territory of Ukraine, it's an attack on the international financial system that is intimately tied to the international order after World War II”, added Mr. Humire.



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12:35 pm Illicit trade, trade-based money laundering, adversarial foreign investments, adversarial threats

- Hon. Andreas Frank, AML/CFT advisor for the Bundestag, Council Europe and the European Parliament



The Honorable Andreas Frank opened the panel and mentioned that after 75 years of relative peace, there is war again. He mentioned that democracies are facing a big problem, democratic institutions are in free fall, according to the results of research reports in the last 12 months.

Money laundering is rampant worldwide, he said.

Mr. Frank mentioned that there are convincing arguments that the Ukraine war could have been prevented and the imposed sanctions against Russia and its oligarchs could be enforced by a strict application of the existing Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terror laws.

- Prof. Celina Realuyo, Professor of Practice, William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University

To continue the panel, Professor Celina Realuyo spoke about the digitization of illicit networks, the impact of the pandemic, and how these illicit networks continue to develop and evolve.

Professor Realuyo mentioned that we are living in the era of globalization, she mentioned that this brings us many good things, however, at the same time, on the dark side of globalization, through illicit networks, drugs are now being exported, immigrants, weapons, in any corner of the world, taking advantage of a more interconnected world. And she stated that trillions of dollars of income from the illicit economy are calculated and unfortunately we have seen that this figure continues to grow and has a greater impact on our hemisphere than the Americas.





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- **Mr. Manuel Levario, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Attaché – U.S. Embassy Guatemala**



To end the panel, Mr. Manuel Levario spoke about the programs that exist in the customs and border protection office.

He mentioned that these programs that were developed try to adjust to trade facilitation and can help in economic development and also in meeting our long-term goal, which is to reduce immigration to the United States.

He went on to say that human trafficking is something very lucrative for criminals, they charge from 6 to 9 thousand dollars to take a single person illegally to the United States without counting what the cartels charge when they go through the immigration routes to get to the South Texas, he stated that there is money laundering and that it is only one network that is used for illegal trade or migration.

2:35 pm Human Trafficking and Illicit Finance

- **Ms. Sandy Recinos, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET).**

Ms. Sandy Recinos opened the panel by speaking about the approval made by the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala of the law against sexual violence, exploitation, and human trafficking in 2009.

She pointed out that Human Trafficking is a transnational organized crime, efforts to combat it must be between countries. Also she mentions the strategies of the central government to combat human trafficking, through innovative mechanisms that bring information on prevention and report mechanisms to people living in the most remote rural areas and digital tools aimed at prevention in young people.





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- **Ms. Anne Basham, Chief Executive Officer & Founder, Ascending Consulting**



Ms. Basham said that human trafficking is the second largest illegal market in the world, with an economic impact of more than 150 billion dollars in favor of traffickers. She mentioned that there are millions of victims of human trafficking, which is literally a form of modern-day slavery, and that there are more slaves today than at any time in history.

Ms. Basham continued mentioning that, according to an expert, 60% of children who are sent to the United States are captured by cartels or by gangs, and what follows is horrendous sexual exploitation, this must be seen not only as a humanitarian issue but as a transnational security issue, because it funds gangs and criminal organizations, and it is spreading to all communities

- **Hon. Rosi Orozco, former Member of Parliament (Mexico)**

To open her portion of the panel, the Honorable Rosi Orozco stated that she is linked to Guatemala by a 6-year-old girl who unfortunately was taken to Mexico to be sexually exploited, after the murder of her mother at the hands of her father, however, now she is a woman who was rescued and came forward to be a voice that was raised to end human trafficking.

She then mentioned that human trafficking is the illegal trade in human beings for the purposes of reproductive labor slavery, sexual exploitation, forced labor, organ harvesting, or any modern form of slavery against the will and well-being of the human being.



- **William Viteri, Homeland Security Investigation (HSI)**



To end the panel, Mr. William Viteri stated that human trafficking is a global problem.

He mentioned that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) strategy to combat human trafficking is as follows ("Four P's):



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1. To prevent; through campaigns that try to get closer to the community to train them on how to identify cases of human trafficking.
2. To protect; through providing support and services to victims.
3. To prosecute; working with partners to investigate, catch, and successfully prosecute traffickers.
4. Partnership; establishing partnerships with other law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and other governments is the pillar of the previous three P's. From his experience, whenever authorities manage to successfully arrest and prosecute a trafficker, it is because domestic and international partners worked together and pooled resources to accomplish the task.

3:35 pm Illicit Finance

- **Mr. John Walsh, President, and CEO of SightSpan Inc. (moderator)**

Mr. John Walsh began by thanking for the hospitality and support provided in Guatemala, highlighted the importance of the issues discussed within the forum and thanked the support and collaboration of all those who are participating in the event, finally, he introduced the participants of the panel, indicating the topic to be addressed.



- **Ms. Sarah Paquet, FINTRAC CEO and Director (virtual)**

During her portion of the panel Ms. Paquet spoke about the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model, which creates a channel of communication from the private sphere to the public. Ms. Paquet mentioned that the PPP Model has allowed them to build a process that has resulted in proactive ML investigations based on information from the private sector. This model has increased the speed and the ability of the Canadian regime to proactively target more sophisticated crime and it did not require legislative change to do so.



Then Ms. Paquet mentioned other projects, one of them was the Project ATHENA, which is a public-private partnership to combat the laundering of proceeds of crime through casino related underground banking scheme activity in Canada through the lawful sharing of information. The objectives of this project are to improve the collective understanding of the money laundering threat, inform and strengthen financial systems and controls, and to disrupt money laundering activity.



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- **Mr. Hamad Alhelal, Director of Financial Crime Intelligence, Sigma Ratings**



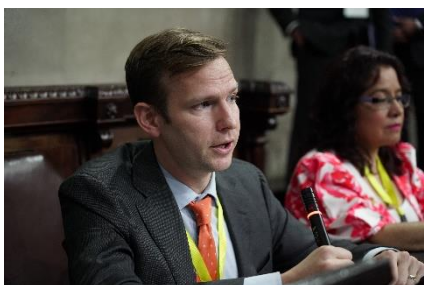
Mr. Hamad Alhelal began by explaining that the definition of illicit finance has an extremely wide scope, commenting that it encompasses all funds with an illegal origin, destination, or transferred by illegal means. Yet, when considering the illicit actors involved, from narco-traffickers that his fellow panelist highlighted to the corrupt who are looting their countries, they have a key thing in common and that is the use of anonymous companies. He emphasized that, as a global community, it is essential not to underestimate the scale or impact of this issue that affects people all over the world, citing research from the World Bank. Mr. Alhelal ended his remarks by saying that he believes transparency on beneficial ownership through legislation is the single greatest tool we have to make a difference in the fight against illicit finance.

- **Ms. Silvia Matus de la Cruz, President, Junta del Capítulo de México ACFCs**

Ms. Silvia Matus expressed that even though thousands of millions of dollars are invested in the fight against illicit finance and money laundering around the world, stopping the wave of economic crimes remains a challenge. Ms. Matus stated that Mexico is going through huge problems of Illicit Finance, she mentioned that of the ten most violent cities in the world, eight of them are in Mexico, she also mentioned that it is the most dangerous country to be a journalist. Ms. Matus said that the world needs an international court against financial crimes, since the problem that exists in her country is a cancer, a cancer that if not cured, will probably make all the other countries of the world sick in the future.



- **Mr. Philip Lovegreen, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of Treasury, US Embassy Mexico**



Mr. Philip Lovegreen commented that the administration of President Biden in the United States created in December a strategy to combat corruption internally with external impact, taking into account the economic responsibility of the U.S.; part of the strategy is to attack regulatory deficiencies and thus be able to strengthen all global activities against corruption, he commented that through the analyzes carried out, several deficiencies could be identified, with the proposed strategy, corporate transparency is sought as part of the act against money laundering, it also seeks to find the real owners of illicit companies. Mr. Lovegreen explained that a key point for the strategy to give positive results is cooperation between the public sector and the private sector, so that both parties can supervise and



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deepen their financial systems, thus facilitating the elimination of illicit activities giving rise to money laundering and corruption.

**4:45 pm Cyber Threat Landscape: Criminal Organizations & Motivations,
Current Threat Vectors and Government Regulations**

- **Mr. Gregory Sim, Founder, 2020Partners (moderator)**



Mr. Gregory Sim began by expressing words of thanks to all the participants and collaborators of the event. Then, he introduced the topics to be covered during the discussion panel, explaining the importance of knowing about cybersecurity and everything that goes with it.

- **Mr. Aristedes Mahairas, Former Special Agent in Charge, Counterintelligence / Cyber,
U.S. Department of Justice**

Mr. Aristedes Mahairas commented that the cybersecurity threat is the most significant national security threat to emerge over the past 15 years. Motivations for cyber-attacks have also changed over the years. Previously, malicious actors engaged in criminal behavior for fun or to prove a point. Today, the criminals steal sensitive information and sell it to the highest bidder, engage in economic espionage, or even target systems for destruction. Mr. Mahairas also observed that criminal organizations today are increasing the frequency and the sophistication of their attacks, which makes it more difficult to investigate and keep up. To combat this criminal activity, Mr. Mahairas stressed the importance and need for the expansion of public-private partnerships and the requirement to leverage their respective networks as a step-in prevention and mitigation, noting no single person or single organization can successfully combat this issue alone.





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- **Mr. Art Cummings, Former Executive Assistant Director, National Security Branch, U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations**



- Mr. Art Cummings, commented from his experience after 25 years in the FBI, that the way in which the law is applied in cybercrime cases can be observed, he commented that having legal frameworks based on regulations helps a lot to combat cybercrime, but that this will not work in the long run, until the source of this problem is found and thus, we can deactivate these criminal activities. Situation that can be achieved with support between governments and permanent training.

- **Mr. Mirel Sehic, Global Director Cyber Security, Honeywell**

Mr. Mirel Sehic commented on the starting point of cybersecurity in different organizations, how risks can be mitigated from the starting point. Mr. Sehic expressed that when it comes to cybersecurity, there are many paths to take, he explained that the simplest thing is to start by doing a risk analysis. The risk becomes the threat multiplied by the vulnerabilities, so it is necessary to define what the vulnerabilities are within the structure, Mr. Sehic expressed the defense in depth and maturity risk based modelling strategy through an analogy, that cybersecurity protection is like an onion, with the core critical assets in the center and different layers of protection being added based on how much risk we want to reduce in a certain infrastructure.



- **Mr. Joshua Jaffe, Vice President, Business Unit Security Officer, Dell Technologies**



Mr. Joshua Jaffe, explained that in order to create a defensive perimeter around a system it is important to know your network and your own system, he commented that this definition seems simple, however, many directors do not really know their infrastructures at all, they do not have knowledge of everything that is connected to your network, it is necessary to know all the data to know what to really protect and how to do it.



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- **Mr. Jeremy Meyers, PhD, President of NAIS**



Mr. Jeremy Meyers, commented on how to respond to cyber threats, explained that the first thing that is usually done is to place the first vulnerabilities as primary, then evaluate them, and finally, see what is most critical. Mr. Meyers suggested that the ideal is to perform the procedure in a different way, first it is necessary to see the risk and then the vulnerabilities and the reason is that cybercriminal organizations look for what is really predictable, they look for techniques that are more successful, such as fishing,

then it is necessary to anticipate what is going to happen or how they could attack and this is achieved by analyzing the risk within the organization, what is the critical information and what could be the short and effective response against the possible risks that they could suffer .

5:55 pm

Closing Remarks

- **Hon. Robert Pittenger, Chairman, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum**



To finish the first day of the Forum, the Honorable Robert Pittenger, expressed farewell words, thanked the Guatemalan government and the participants for their support and for sharing points of view focused on their experiences. He also thanked all those who were listening through social networks and media.



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TUESDAY - March 8th

8:00 am Opening Remarks

- **Congressman Robert Pittenger, Chairman, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum**

Congressman Robert Pittenger expressed words of gratitude to all the participants and collaborators of the event. He also recalled the mission of the event and the importance of training parliamentarians from different countries on transnational issues that include crime and cybersecurity.

- **U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (Video)**



In a video statement, U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy expressed his concerns about the impact corruption and money laundering is having on the western hemisphere. He addressed the issue of criminals using ports and other critical infrastructure to avoid government scrutiny into their illicit activities. The senator emphasized that governments must promote transparency in supply chains and crack down on corrupt actors who abuse these economic systems for their own personal gain. Senator Cassidy looks forward to working with governments, corporations, and other entities in Latin America

to better address corruption and put the region on a path to economic prosperity.

8:20 am Intelligence assessment, regional threats

- **Mr. José Luis Navas, General Director of Civil Intelligence, Ministry of Interior – Guatemala**

Mr. José Luis Navas explained that the countries currently face a frontal fight against drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, incipient terrorism, among other types of crimes and threats. Likewise, he added that these organizations have no borders, which makes international collaboration and qualified personnel necessary for the intelligence units to be reliable. Regarding the results of Guatemala's joint international coordinated intelligence work, he highlighted in 2021 the capture of 57 people for extradition purposes for drug trafficking crimes and the seizure of more than 10,000 kilos of cocaine, valued at several million dollars.





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8:40 am **Cybersecurity Supply Chain (Solar Winds, Colonial Pipeline, Operational Technology and Internet of Things, Ransomware, Resilience (Zero Trust))**

- **Mr. Gregory Sim, Founder, 2020Partners (moderator)**



Mr. Gregory Sim, began by thanking the participants and collaborators, mentioning the importance of the topics discussed within the forum, especially cybersecurity and security in general for the different nations, he also quoted the words mentioned by Minister José Luis Navas, about collaboration; the importance of collaborating among all nations to face the problems that exist today, learn from the mistakes of other countries and thus jointly create measures for a joint force for the common good. He also mentioned about

strengthening cybernetics, which is basically the center of all information that is needed to strengthen the roles and objectives of each nation and their respective leaders.

- **Mr. Mirel Sehic, Global Director Cyber Security, Honeywell**

Mr. Mirel Sehic began by talking about the differences between IT (information technology) and OT (operational technology) operation technologies. He emphasized the need to break separation barriers between both technologies, this could be a bit complicated, but it is a necessary process since OT technology still needs to mature in certain aspects and for this to happen, it is necessary to join forces between both technologies.



- **Mr. Aristedes Mahairas, Former Special Agent in Charge, Counterintelligence / Cyber, U.S. Department of Justice**



Mr. Aristedes Mahairas stressed the need for individuals to exercise good cyber hygiene, a critical component in the overall defensive strategy of preventing the compromise of critical networks. Mr. Mahairas used an analogy to express the significance of engaging in cyber hygiene. In his example, Mr. Mahairas described the simple, yet often overlooked step of changing default passwords and making them more secure. An easy and necessary step, which if not completed may result in long-term and costly

damage to the victim individual or organization. Prevention is always better than the cure.



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- **Mr. Jeremy Meyers, PhD, President of NAIS**

Mr. Jeremy Meyers commented on the importance of the public-private sector partnership for the protection of supply chains. In addition, this union is useful for the exchange of information that benefits both sectors and of course helps to mitigate possible cyberattacks and eliminate them. He stressed that the only way to achieve all these objectives is union and cooperation between both sectors.



- **Mr. Art Cummings, Former Executive Assistant Director, National Security Branch, U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations**



Mr. Art Cummings spoke of his experience working with the public and private sectors. He expressed the difficulties they had to go through when sharing information and thus working in unity. Finally, he expressed that, despite the difficulties, it was possible to learn from the mistakes made and thus generate a balanced teamwork environment, where both parties share what is necessary and what is beneficial for both sectors. He expressed the need to find a balance so that both sectors can work in harmony and efficiency.

- **Mr. Joshua Jaffe, Vice President, Business Unit Security Officer, Dell Technologies**

Mr. Joshua Jaffe commented on cyber resilience, which consists of defending oneself and planning measures to prevent possible cyber-attacks. He indicated that the first thing is to know the vulnerability of the supply chain, it may have defects that could be catastrophically exploited, therefore, it is necessary to know and be able to plan the defense starting from the weak points. He also mentioned the importance of having clean data as a backup in case you need to rebuild the system again.





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Remarks by: U.S. Congressman Mark Green (Video)



Congressman Green joined the forum through a video, he spoke about transnational crime and narco-terrorism, mentioned that a laboratory was recently found that produced five tons of cocaine per month, mentioning that there are many challenges like these and that the use of technology is a factor important in meeting these challenges.

9:50 am Cryptocurrency, Stablecoins and CBDCs

- **Mr. J.C. Boggs, Partner and Co-lead, Fintech, Blockchain and Cryptocurrency Practice, King & Spalding**

Mr. J.C. Boggs introduced the panel of experts and provided a brief overview of digital assets including cryptocurrency, stablecoins and central bank digital currencies. He spoke about the evolution of money globally and referenced the Guatemalan currency, the quetzal, named after the national bird of Guatemala. In ancient Mayan culture, the quetzal bird's tail feathers were used as currency. From tail feathers to precious metals to coins, governments have adopted paper currencies in order to more easily facilitate banking and commerce. Today, most transactions take place digitally, via credit or debit card or some other electronic means. Blockchain or distributed ledger technology represents the next phase in the evolution of money. In Guatemala, there are no legislative or regulatory provisions which specifically govern virtual currencies, though policymakers are now evaluating the various risks and benefits. Governments around the world are examining digital assets and whether and how to regulate them. Many countries, including the United States, are also exploring the establishment of a central bank digital currency (CBDC). Mr. Boggs asked a series of questions and promoted a lively panel discussion on the topic.



- **Ms. Jessica Renier, Managing Director, Digital Finance at the Institute of International Finance; former Senior Counselor, U.S. Department of Treasury**



Ms. Jessica Renier, spoke about Crypto 101, she explained that it is important to distinguish between types of cryptocurrencies, whether they be unbacked crypto-assets, stablecoins, or central bank digital currencies. Understanding the differences between them is essential to understanding what the macroeconomic effects of each are on a country's underlying macroprudential policies. Renier stated that oftentimes when people think of "cryptocurrencies", they



often only think of bitcoin or ether, which are perhaps the best known unbacked crypto-assets, but in reality, there are many more. As unbacked crypto-assets are more volatile than the stock market or traditional commodities markets, their value can go up or down within a matter of minutes; investing in them can present significant risk or significant profit, but making them legal tender in an economy imports that same volatility into the macroeconomics of the country itself, which is quite risky. Governments stand to gain or lose just as much, if not more, than individual investors by investing in unbacked crypto-assets. She stressed that it is important for government to understand the macroprudential risks associated with crypto-assets, stablecoins, and central bank digital currency.

- **Hon. Erik Bethel, Distinguished Fellow, Chamber of Digital Commerce; former U.S. Representative to the World Bank**



Hon. Erik Bethel, commented on the use of digital currencies, he started with the comparison of the use of technologies, previously you needed to buy records to listen to music, today, you can do it from your mobile phone, the same will happen with banknotes, today We still use bills and coins, but in the not too distant future, everything will become digital; He also commented on the advantages that these digital currencies can have, both for the central bank of each nation and for citizens, but he also commented on the existence of challenges that may

also appear, such as security, the possibility of theft , invasion of privacy, etc. For this reason, it is necessary to know not only the advantages, but also to be trained as a nation in the face of any risk that the growing digital technology may have.

- **Mr. Combiz Abdolrahimi, Esq., Global Emerging Technology & Innovation Leader, Deloitte**

Mr. Combiz Abdolrahimi commented on the benefits, risks, and opportunities of cryptocurrencies, CBDCs, and digital assets. Among the benefits are improved financial inclusion, streamlined payment systems, enhanced monetary and fiscal policy, transparent supply chains, and new market and business opportunities. He also talked about the risks from lack of regulation and consumer protection, to its volatility, cyber risks, and its increased role in ransomware attacks and facilitating financial crimes. Regulators, law enforcement, and financial institutions are all on the same side in combatting corruption and financial crimes, and continued collaboration, cooperation and joint innovation are critical to success. He encouraged everyone to study the underlying digital asset technologies – which show real promise for enabling economic growth and opportunity – and plot a long-term strategy to ensure these technologies are developed, designed, and implemented in a safe





manner that includes privacy and security in their architecture, integrates features and controls that defend against illicit activity, and enables responsible innovation.

11:00 am Remarks by:

- U.S. Congressman Gregory Steube (video)



US Congressman Gregory Steube, through a video, spoke about the current problems that exist between some countries on different continents and the threatening consequences that such disputes could bring about. He also mentioned drug trafficking, which is a problem especially in South America, and the importance of all nations working together to reduce all the points mentioned. Finally, he

urged all nations to support and protect religious freedom, since this last point turns out to be a problem that carries important threats such as terrorism, wars, and genocide.

Religious Freedom

- Mr. Sean Woo, Executive Director of U.S. National Committee for Religious Freedom

Mr. Sean Woo commented on the importance of religious freedom; He expressed that currently in some nations it is still a problem, people lose their rights, they even get imprisoned, tortured, and even killed for professing a religion different from the one that the nation professes. As a nation we must promote religious freedom as a right of every citizen and encourage the right to profess different religions and thus also promote the common good, he expressed.



11:30 am 5G Security Challenges

- Mr. John Strand, CEO, Strand Consult



Mr. John Strand, commented from his experience after 25 years in the telecommunication industry. After a period where a lot of people have evangelized for OpenRAN as an alternative to Huawei on 5G, Huawei advanced its cloud solution in LATAM. Huawei in the cloud obliterates any security which could be achieved by removing Huawei in the mobile network. A report from CSIS: [Huawei's Global Cloud Strategy Economic and Strategic Implications](#) documenting Huawei's rise. This is because 5G networks



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are integrated with the cloud, processing the data from 5G apps and services. The effort to promote OpenRAN while Huawei advances across the network is like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Strand Consult's Peru-born associate Silvia Elaluf-Calderwood describes Huawei's rise in cloud, the fastest in LATAM in fact, and its threats to [US and EU security and human rights](#).

- **Dr. Sohan Dasgupta, Former Deputy General Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

Dr. Sohan Dasgupta, former Deputy General Counsel of the United States Department of Homeland Security, addressed that 5G technology represents for the world a technological and economic revolution. The higher latency, speed, and capacity for industries under 5G will be remarkable. In addition, 5G currently is being used by the education, medicine, construction, and automotive industries worldwide. Furthermore, 5G's implications for artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, cryptocurrency and fintech, and other novel developments will be immense. Certain recent U.S. Government responses, such as new laws like the Secure Equipment Act, agency rules like those issued by the Federal Communications Commission, the work of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), export controls, and sanctions, are noteworthy.



12:00 am Closing Remarks

- **Hon. Robert Pittenger, Chairman, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum**



The Hon. Robert Pittenger, expressed a few words to end the day's event, urged the participants to be alert about the updates of the topics discussed within the forum that are transmitted globally through the internet, thanked for the participation and concern for the topics discussed, especially the current situation on the European continent and the importance of providing support as nations, ended by thanking the warm acceptance and support from the Guatemalan Congress and all those who were part of the forum.