

RPTSS 2018
International Conference on Research Paradigms
Transformation in Social Sciences

**CORRUPTION IN RUSSIA- A THREAT TO NATIONAL
SECURITY**

V.V. Moiseev (a)*, E.A. Karelina (b), O. A. Sudorgin (c), Stroev V.V. (d)

*Corresponding author

(a) Shukhov Belgorod State Technological University, 46 Kostyukova St., Belgorod, 308012, Russia,
din_prof@mail.ru

(b) Moscow State University of Technology «STANKIN»1 Vadkovsky lane, Moscow, 127055, Russia
opferpriesterin@mail.ru

(c) Moscow Automobile and Road State Technical University MADI Moscow, Russia 125319, Leningradsky
Prospect, 64 sudorginoleg@yandex.ru

(d) Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), Sadovaya-Kudrinskaya str., 9, Moscow,
Russia, 123995, Vstroev@yandex.ru

Abstract

The essence of corruption lies in the bribery of state officials, political and public figures, officials of different levels who make decisions in the interests of the bribe-giver for money or other benefits. Sales and bribery of law enforcement agencies undermine people's belief in the state's ability to protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens, which increases social tension and threatens political stability in the country. Russian Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika, speaking at the State Duma, stated that the authorities and administrations were struck by corruption on a huge scale: "It cannot be said that corruption is a characteristic of certain parts of the state machinery. It permeates all levels of power, acquires a systemic character" (Seagull: corruption, 2018). According to the Prosecutor General's Office, in all federal ministries and departments covered by prosecutorial inspections, facts were found out revealing violations of the requirements of the law by employees on the submission to the tax authorities of declarations of income and property. In the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020, approved by the Presidential Decree of Dec. 31, 2015, N 683, corruption is called one of the main threats to state and public security (Decree of the President, 2015).

The authors regret that the fight against corruption has not yet yielded significant results in Russia and points to obvious ways to activate it.

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Keywords: Corruption, national security, counteraction to corruption.



1. Introduction

Corruption manifests itself in virtually all spheres of state activity, in which financial or other material resources are distributed; permits are issued for the performance of certain activities. Corruption in the renewed Russia blossomed because the officials were able to manage not only budgetary funds, but also state or municipal property, state orders, licenses, benefits, etc. Corruption today has become the main source of income for a certain part of federal, regional and municipal leaders, representatives of legislative bodies and political parties; it has become the main motive for making managerial decisions. Corruption in law enforcement agencies, special services, the prosecutor's office and the judiciary is especially dangerous. Corruption of law enforcement bodies helps to strengthen organized crime. Measures taken in recent years at the level of public authorities, including legislative ones, did not have any significant impact on the state and level of corruption in the country. Moreover, in the context of the global economic crisis, the manifestations of corruption have become more widespread and systemic, assuming the nature of the most significant threat to the national security of the Russian Federation.

Thus, corruption at the beginning of the third millennium became the main obstacle to Russia's political, economic and spiritual revival. Becoming actually one of the elements of the functioning of the state, an integral part of its relations with the oligarchic business, corruption created monstrous disproportions in the system of governance and functioning of state institutions. Corruption reduces the authority of government and public administration in the eyes of the people, hinders the development of the economy, the administration of justice, the construction of a state of law, etc.

One couldn't possibly assert that in Russia nobody is fighting corruption. There is a national plan and strategy for fighting against it, specific measures are being taken, for example, in 2010 the list of officials and their relatives obliged to declare their income, was expanded. The creation of anti-corruption bodies, the introduction of high standards for hiring civil servants, the adoption of codes of conduct, the publication of income data are necessary but insufficient measures. This is convincingly shown by both Russian statistics and international ratings. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the number which is identified in 2003-2009 bribes increased by 80%, and the number of those brought to court for bribes grew 2.5 times over the same period.

The number of corrupt officials and does not decrease even when some of them go to prison; new greedy people come to their place, who are not afraid of the penalties established by Russian legislation. In August-September 2006, prosecutors checked the enforcement of legislation on public service in 11 federal ministries, services and agencies, as well as in their territorial divisions. During the inspections, more than 47,000 violations of the law were revealed, 10,000 submissions were filed, more than 4,000 protests were brought, more than 600 criminal cases were initiated, more than 1,100 lawsuits were filed, 1,600 warnings were issued, more than 2,500 were brought to disciplinary and administrative responsibility thousands of state and municipal employees (Moiseyev & Prokuratov, 2012).

The inspections revealed numerous cases of officials combining their main activities with commercial activities, as well as their participation in the management of various business structures. Civil servants "trade" information entrusted to them containing state, commercial and other secrets protected by law, assist the entities under their control in obtaining illegal privileges and or certain legal privileges in acquiring property, in speeding up the procedure for issuing documents.

In conditions where the current legislation does not establish criminal liability, confiscation of property or other stringent measures to combat corruption, the latter flourishes. In 2001 the volume of corruption deals was estimated at \$ 50 billion, then in 2007 it reached \$ 250 billion. The growth rate amounted to 500% in six years. The war against corruption, declared by V.V. Putin, has brought absolutely opposite results. In the report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in the summer of 2007 it was noted that "the scale of corruption had already posed a real threat to national security" (Moiseev, 2014). "The corrupt system" was mentioned by President Vladimir Putin while he was speaking to his state apparatus in February 2008 (Putin, 2008). Thus, the head of the Russian state indirectly acknowledged that the cadres he had selected, nominated or recommended to the State Duma, the Federation Council and regional legislative assemblies, did not justify his high confidence.

Here it should be emphasized that corruption has become alarming in Russia, because President Putin has not taken any drastic countermeasures. Moreover, in the period of 2000-2008, in the first term of his country's leadership, he not only failed to initiate the adoption of anti-corruption legislation, but also vetoed the draft laws adopted by the State Duma twice. Who prevented Russian President Putin from introducing the rule on the confiscation of property of corrupt officials into the current legislation, which is set out in the UN Convention, which he personally signed in 2003? By signing and ratifying this Convention as a whole, Russia has not ratified its 20th article, which not only defines illegal enrichment as a difference between official incomes and official expenses, but also recommends confiscating property of corrupt officials.

With the help of the initiative of D.A. Medvedev the National Plan for Combating Corruption was drafted and a package of anti-corruption laws was adopted that came into force on January 1, 2009. They provide for a number of measures, including a total revision of the current legislation on the "corruption component", the filing of income declarations of officials of different level and others. However, in the draft anti-corruption laws, State Duma deputies made so many amendments that they managed to make them toothless and practically not dangerous for corrupt officials. Of these, the main thing was removed that Russia required the UN Convention and the Council of Europe on combating corruption, namely: the introduction of criminal liability for illegal enrichment and confiscation of property of corrupt officials. Criminal penalties in the form of long periods of imprisonment and confiscation of property are contained in the codes of most European states. But similar norms were never included in Russian anti-corruption laws.

In the federal law of December 25, 2008 on countering corruption, in Russian post-Soviet legislation important provisions were laid for the first time: principles and organizational bases for combating corruption, measures for its prevention, directions for government agencies to improve the effectiveness of countering corruption, settlement of the conflict of interests of state and municipal employees, responsibility of individuals and legal entities for corruption offenses, etc. A significant shortcoming of this law was the absence in it of specific norms of criminal, administrative and other legal responsibility of individuals and legal entities, officials and politicians for committing acts of corruption. This law contained neither confiscation of property, nor long periods of imprisonment of corrupt officials convicted by the court. The damage caused by the package of anti-corruption laws signed by the lawyer D.A. Medvedev, also lies in the fact that high-ranking officials of the Russian Federation remained untouchable in it, being

in some sense over and beyond anti-corruption legislation. Therefore, the investigator or the prosecutor, based on the Anti-Corruption Law of December 25, 2008, could not, for example, bring charges of corruption to either the chairman of the government, the president or the speaker of parliament, or other persons from the highest echelon of power. Officials of the average hand were punished according to the law only by removal from office. The toothlessness of the anti-corruption laws of the Russian Federation has led to an even greater increase in the scale of corruption.

On the initiative of President Dmitry Medvedev in the spring of 2010, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy was developed. This document defines the main directions of state anti-corruption policy for the medium term and the stages of its implementation. In the Presidential Decree of April 14, 2010, "On the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2010-2011," it was stated: "In pursuance of the National Anti-Corruption Plan approved by the President of the Russian Federation on July 31, 2008, №Pr-1568, in Russia, a legislative framework for combating corruption has been created, appropriate organizational measures have been taken to prevent corruption and the activities of law enforcement agencies to combat it have been stepped up. "

The decree of the president recognizes that despite the measures taken by the state and society, "corruption still seriously hampers the normal functioning of all social mechanisms, hinders the implementation of social reforms and modernization of the national economy ..." (National Anti-Corruption Plan, 2010).

In the absence of systematic work of government bodies and civil society institutions due to the mildness of punishment for corruption schemes in Russia during the second period of Vladimir Putin's presidency the growth of corruption intensified. This is evidenced by many facts, including data from the Control Office of the Presidential Administration, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation, and publications in the mass media. Thus, the head of the Control Administration of the Administration K. Chuikin reported to the President in 2010 about embezzlement from the state budget through corruption schemes of an acute amount of 1,000,000,000,000 rubles. This fact was reported in 2010 by the Russian newspaper "Vedomosti" in the article "Steal a trillion." (Written, 2010). The Chairman of the Accounts Chamber of Russia, S. Stepashin, reported about this scale of corruption personally to President Vladimir Putin in 2014. The corruption of public authorities and municipal government is illustrated by the number of corruption-related offenses exposed by the prosecutor's office. Only in 2014, according to the Prosecutor General, more than 381 thousand violations of the law in the sphere of combating corruption were revealed (Moiseev, Guzairov & Vasneva, 2015). Ignoring the anti-corruption legislation by officials has resulted in an even greater increase in corruption and led to unprecedented embezzlement from the state budget. Thus, according to the head of the Russian Accounting Chamber, T. Golikova, with the help of various criminal schemes, including corruption schemes, 1.9 trillion rubles were stolen from the country's budget (The Chamber of Accounts, 2017). She reported this to President Putin at a working meeting in December 2017. However, this time no significant response was received from the head of state. No proper measures were taken to strengthen the fight against corruption. Putin did not use the political will to activate the anti-corruption policy in the country.

Thus, despite the ongoing state anti-corruption policy, the political mechanisms involved, the situation in our country has not changed significantly for the better. According to the Center for Anti-

Corruption Research and Initiatives of Transparency International-R, the Russian Federation is among the most corrupt countries in the world: in 2014, Russia took the 136th place out of 175 countries, sharing it with Nigeria, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Iran and Cameroon (Russia was among, 2018).

The Prosecutor General's Office and the Investigative Committee initiate criminal proceedings against high-level corrupt officials, including employees of the President's divisions, governors, regional ministers, their deputies and even government members. For the loss of confidence, the head of the Komi Republic, V. Gaizer, the governor of the Bryansk region N. Denin, the one of the Kirov region N. Belykh, that of the Sakhalin region A. Khoroshavin, the Minister of Economic Development of Russia A. Ulyukaev and several other high-ranking officials were dismissed from office and arrested. Due to the absence of a system in the anti-corruption policy and the systemic nature of its practical implementation, corruption has now reached an unprecedented scale, penetrated not only the regional and municipal authorities, the court, the prosecutor's office, customs or police but also the upper echelons of power: the Presidential Administration, Government, the State Duma, the Federation Council. These and other arguments and facts make it possible to make a well-founded conclusion that during the time of Putin's rule Russia has made an impressive breakthrough and found itself in the group of the most corrupt states of the planet.

Corruption has now become an integral part of the relationship of government officials with business and citizens, which generates perverse forms of public administration and the functioning of state institutions, hinders the development of the economy, small and medium-sized businesses in our country. At the same time, the growth of corruption discredits the system of public authorities and municipal government, reduces their authority among the population.

2. Problem Statement

When investigating the problems of counteracting corruption in Russia, the authors mainly focused on the analysis of the reasons that led to the growth of its scale during the rule of President V. Putin. The greatest interest of the researchers was caused by the reasons for the long absence of anti-corruption legislation (from 1991 to 2008) and the relative softness of the criminal punishment of corrupt officials, which excludes confiscation of illegally acquired property. Moreover, the researchers could not but be interested in the fact that Vladimir Putin vetoed anti-corruption laws in 2000-2008 and did not include the norms recommended by the UN Convention against Corruption into them. Criminal penalties in the form of long periods of imprisonment and confiscation of property are contained in the codes of most European states. But similar norms were not included in Russian anti-corruption laws. In the first period of President V. Putin's rule there was no system of measures to combat corruption, there were no effective political mechanisms, there was no well-verified anti-corruption legislation. According to his successor, D. Medvedev, in the legislation of the Russian Federation there were more than 10,000 niches which were used by dishonest officials.

In the first period of the presidency of V. Putin, in the so-called "zero years", a term was born that was not previously known - the "rollback rate". The rollback rate is the lower limit of a corruption bribe in percent which is supposedly not considered shameful to negotiate with an official and a businessman when determining the "most favored nation" regime. E. Panfilova, the director of the Russian branch of the international center for anticorruption research and initiatives, made public some of the standards of recoil.

According to her, when buying cars for budgetary funds, the rollback rate is about 10-15%, for receiving government contracts - 20% of the total project amount; for a profitable site for development - up to 30%, and for participation in national projects - 30-40% of the amount. In exchange for bribes, quotas and licenses for the development of natural deposits are issued, tenders and auctions are organized with a predetermined result, access to official information is provided for its use in the interests of corrupt persons, etc. "Everything is bought in the country and everything is sold: prices for high durability chairs were repeatedly voiced. The embezzlement of wealth is flourishing, - the newspaper "Peasant Russia" writes, - A rollback from any contract amount in favor of an official decision to be made about this amount is not less than 20 percent" (Kondrashov, 2009).

Article 5 of the Federal Law of December 25, 2008 N 273-FZ "On Combating Corruption" instructs the Prosecutor General and his subordinate prosecutors, within the limits of his powers, to coordinate the activities of the internal affairs bodies, federal security services, customs authorities and other law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation in fighting against corruption as well as to implement other powers in the field of combating corruption, established by federal laws. Practice has shown that prosecutors failed to cope with the oversight function entrusted to them, allowing local governments to get along with organized crime in the area of their responsibility being mired in bribes.

A lot of facts and analysis of anti-corruption show that real work to limit corruption in the country is often replaced by declarations and statements about its importance. Meanwhile, it is the state, federal and regional authorities that should not only create a strong legal basis for limiting corruption, but also to achieve a real reduction in the degree of corruption of officials and officials selling permits, licenses and victories in tenders and competitions to cut funds from the state budget. Anticorruption policy cannot be limited to appeals, it is necessary to adopt a more stringent anti-corruption law with a clear law enforcement mechanism. It seems to us that the president, as the guarantor of the Constitution and the highest official in the Russian Federation, is simply obliged to demand from the Prosecutor General's Office full and accurate implementation of the anti-corruption legislation. The incompleteness and lack of discipline of the prosecutor's office sets a bad example for other law enforcement agencies in the fight against corruption when they do not comply with anti-corruption laws and instructions of the head of state in this field. And there have been many indications of such kind made by President V. Putin, including those in his public speeches, among them messages to the Federal Assembly. Here are some of them. In March 2000, immediately after the election of the president, V. Putin declared: "There can only be one remedy here: a uniform understanding of laws and a consistent struggle for their implementation." It's consistent, tough and persistent. "There can be no specificity, no special approach to this. We need just a persistent, consistent and principled fight against corruption; I must say that this is one of the most important tasks of the state in order to make our country economically attractive and politically developed. Without the fight against corruption, there is no progress in the sphere of economics, it will not exist, and therefore it was and still remains one of the most important tasks of the state". In 2001, President Vladimir Putin announced that he would "strictly oppose corruption" (Putin, 2018). In 2005, President Vladimir Putin, referring to the problems of combating corruption, which was gaining in scale, pointed to the conditions for successful work in this area: "We will be able to effectively combat this phenomenon only if we really promote the development of ... independence of means mass information and the creation of effective institutions of

civil society and a multiparty system" (On the heroic confrontation of Putin, 2018). Very correct words. The only shortcomings were specific actions to implement them through anti-corruption policies and political mechanisms. (Putin, 2018).

In May 2006, while speaking to the political and economic elite of Russia, V. Putin was forced to admit that the level of corruption in the country was unacceptably high and the effectiveness of fighting against it was low. At the same time, the head of state stressed that corruption was not an original Russian problem and that it was present in many countries of the world. However, this did not mean that we should not fight it, the President said. The head of state, while acknowledging the growth of corruption in the country, did not say which program of actions during the previous 5 years of the presidency he and his team had developed and implemented or what specific measures, including political, ideological and organizational ones, he intended to take to stop the growth of corruption and to reduce the corruption of representatives of government in Russia. It would be appropriate to note that according to the Constitution of the Russian Federation in 1993, the head of state does not submit to anyone and is not accountable to anyone. Therefore, nobody can ask the president to explain his actions or inaction, as well as mistakes in the strategy and tactics of fighting corruption. We should remember that during the eight years from 2000 to 2008, President Vladimir Putin did not sign a single law on combating corruption. In our opinion, this fact is conspicuous enough.

Representatives of the Russian state authorities resort to a questionable practice instead of reporting on the work really done. In December 2010, at a meeting with heads of small and medium-sized business associations of Russia, V. Putin, being the head of the executive branch, promised: "We will consistently carry out anti-corruption work, severely punish dishonest officials, continue to "clean "the legislation, eliminate the opportunity for corruption manifestations."

The results of this "tough fight" with corruption in Russia are depressing: according to the Control Chamber of the Presidential Administration, the state budget of the Russian Federation loses 1 trillion rubles (over 16 billion dollars) annually due to corruption and other types of violating the law.

Practice has shown that almost the whole bureaucratic apparatus, the entire vertical of power created by President V. Putin, has been struck by corruption. Therefore, it is senseless to fight corruption by the forces of corrupt officials themselves. We need to start with a change in the nature of the political environment which implies not only the presence of opposition but also real freedom of speech, the real competitiveness of political actors. Without these necessary conditions, any struggle "for power without corruption" will be fictional. Not less significant conditions are: a clear legislative definition of the functions of the state and individual officials; reduction in the spheres in which decision-making depends on the will of individuals; clarity, simplicity and stability of legislation; assistance in the formation of civil society; increase in the educational level of the population, including its legal literacy.

Obviously, we should also talk about minimizing the socio-economic conditions that engender corruption of politicians and all kinds of officials. It is necessary not only to identify problems, but also to achieve their solution.

World experience of counteracting corruption convincingly demonstrates that in the presence of a system of political, legislative, educational and other measures corruption can, if not being eradicated, significantly reduce its scale. In the modern world, examples are known when actions aimed at reducing

corruption have led to significant success: Denmark, Singapore, New Zealand, Finland etc. The examples of the developed countries of Europe and Asia unequivocally speak in favor of the fact that effective methods of fighting against corruption do exist. And they need to be studied and used in Russia, taking into account local peculiarities. From this point of view, Singapore's anti-corruption experience will be useful. Singapore takes the leading place in the world table of ranks – both in socio-economic development and in successful fight against corruption. In 2009, this Asian country was ahead of Russia by more than 140 points, and in 2010 it firmly ranked third in the world, sharing the laurels of the championship with New Zealand (2nd place) and Denmark (1st place). On the day of independence (August 9, 1965) Singapore was a small poor country which had to import even fresh water and construction sand. Neighboring countries were unfriendly and a third of the population sympathized with the Communists. The situation was corrected when Lee Kuan Yew, who came to power, had created an independent body to fight corruption in the higher echelons of power. Investigations were initiated even against close relatives of him. A number of ministers convicted of corruption were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, either committed suicide or fled the country. Among them were long-time associates of Lee Kuan Yew, such as Minister of Environment Wu Tong-Boon. Now in Singapore, in case a politician wears a platinum watch, everyone knows that he had bought it for his salary. And if it happens in Russia and an official wears a watch for 100 thousand dollars, many people will say that it was a fruit of corruption.

To combat corruption, a special body was created - the Agency for Combating Corruption (ABK), whose head was directly subordinate to the Prime Minister of the country. The Corruption Prevention Act gave this body serious powers. The agency received permission to detain potential bribe takers, conduct a search in their homes and work, check bank accounts, etc. Later, Singaporean anti-corruption legislation was supplemented several times - for example, in 1989 it included confiscated property. Hard control gave good results, so the authorities moved to the second stage of the fight against bribery - "soft."

The fight against corruption was accompanied by simplification of decision-making procedures and removal of any ambiguity in the laws. As a result of the issuance of clear and simple rules, up to the cancellation of permits and licensing "the soil was knocked out from under the feet" of bureaucratic bribe-takers.

Anti-corruption policy has become more effective after a sharp rise in wages. The government decided: both the policeman and the clerk should receive such income so that the temptation to take bribes would be gone. Officials have seriously raised their salaries; today they reach 20-25 thousand dollars a month. Ministers in Singapore have established an astronomical salary - up to 100 thousand dollars a month. But security guards, a car with a driver and an official countryside residence for a minister is not allowed - for personal money only. To increase the independence of judges and their social status, not only relevant legislative acts were enacted but salaries were increased. Before that, almost the entire corrupted judiciary was replaced by the best lawyers in the country, among which private lawyers predominated. The salary of a Singaporean judge reached several hundred thousand dollars a year. This was 10 times higher than the ministerial salaries. Of course, with such a salary judges no longer had a need to take bribes.

If a clerk and his family live beyond their financial means, the "Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau" automatically starts an investigation without waiting for any command from above. If a minister indicates that he owns one rusty car in the income declaration, it is only our country where nobody would

be surprised. In Singapore, after such a report, a check would start and the minister would be obliged to provide an explanation. If his expenses exceed his legal income, things will look bad for him.

Rigid laws, appropriate salaries for ministers and civil servants, the punishment of corrupt officials, the effective functioning of the anti-corruption department, personal examples of senior executives - all these factors explain how Singapore is fighting corruption. The policy has its fruit: the level of corruption in Singapore fell (Bilinskaya, Moiseyev & Nitsevich, 2011).

3. Research Questions

In carrying out this study, the authors ask themselves the following key questions. Firstly, they analyze the current state of the fight against corruption and show the true (real) results of this struggle. Secondly, they identify the main reasons for the continuous growth of corruption in Russia to the extent that threatens the national security of the state. Thirdly, they aim to show the real role of President V. Putin in the organization of combating corruption in the government and its structures. Using specific examples, the authors demonstrate the lack of political will of the president in the fight against corruption in the highest echelons of power. Fourthly, they formulate scientifically substantiated recommendations on improving mechanisms of countering corruption in Russia so that the state budget shall not constantly lack hundreds of billions and even trillions of rubles. These recommendations are based on international experience in struggling against corruption.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to analyze the situation and determine the further ways of counteracting corruption in Russia on the basis of world experience.

5. Research Methods

The current study uses several research methods. First of all, the comparative method is used, allowing the authors to bring into comparison different political, economic, socio-historical and national-cultural contexts of counteracting corruption in Russia and in advanced European and Asian states. At the same time, the main focus is on generalizing the world experience of fighting corruption which leads to a reduction in its scale in the country.

Secondly, both the systematic and the structural-functional approaches allow the authors to form a holistic view on the mechanisms of counteracting corruption which are used by the state, civil society and political parties.

Thirdly, the institutional approach allows analyzing the influence of various state institutions on reducing and preventing corruption and eliminating the causes that generate negative processes in society.

6. Findings

As a conclusion, the following should be noted. The fight against corruption in Russia has a number of characteristics. It is often carried out by individual corrupt officials who harm the whole system. Moreover, people in power can even encourage corruption among their subordinates in order to literally keep them on the hook.

This disturbing trend for the Russian society can be reversed by changing the imperfect legislation, thus moving to a significant reduction, if not eradication, in the level of corruption in Russia.

In public speeches carried out by Russian politicians and officials, corruption often gets such definitions as "systematic" or "traditional". In fact, these are excuses. Let us start not from how difficult it is but from what needs to be done to reduce the scale of corruption.

The main conclusion is that in order to combat corruption, systematic work has to be performed and not just fragmentary measures. The system consists of a variety of forms and methods that include not only criminal prosecution for corruption but also political mechanisms as well as organizational and political work among the masses to create a climate of rejection of corruption practices.

World experience suggests that to begin with, you should put into practice only three main principles:

- 1) pure federal authority;
- 2) the inevitability of punishment;
- 3) a good reward for honest work.

It will work if the government itself, its representatives in the higher echelons, observe these three main principles.

The world experience in the struggle against corruption has convincingly shown that in case the fight against corruption is systematic and multifaceted, being based on all levels of government and on the institutions of civil society and at the same time widely covered in the media, it certainly yields positive results. This conclusion is confirmed by the examples of many developed countries in Europe and Asia, as well as the United States of America.

The example of Russia shows that in the absence of political will of the head of state and his interest in reducing corruption in the government itself and governmental bodies when there is no systematic, consistent and purposeful work, when the mass media are limited in freedom of action to expose corrupt officials in power structures, and while civil society is underdeveloped - under these conditions and without meeting the necessary resistance, corruption has grown on a huge scale, threatening national security.

7. Conclusion

It is pointless to fight corruption by the corrupt officials themselves. It is necessary to start from the political environment, from the creation of a favorable political atmosphere for this struggle which implies not only the presence of an opposition but also the real freedom of speech and the possibility of open discussions on topical political issues as well as political competitiveness and transparency of power. These are not just beautiful words but necessary conditions without which any struggle "for power without corruption" will be mere fiction. There are other significant conditions: a clear legislative definition of the functions of the state and individual officials; reduction of areas where decision-making depends on the will of individuals; clarity, simplicity and stability of legislation; creation of conditions for the formation of civil society; increase in the educational level of the population, including in terms of legal literacy.

Obviously, we should also talk about minimizing the socio-economic conditions that engender corruption of politicians and officials. And it is necessary not only to identify problems but also to achieve

their solutions through political mechanisms, to seek at least a significant reduction in corrupt practices – complete eradication of it sounds too unreal.

The National Anti-Corruption Plan, the introduction of declarations on the incomes of officials, anti-corruption legislation, criminal punishment for bribes, multiple penalties and other measures make it possible to hope that corruption in our country is still struggled against.

The Anti-Corruption Strategy and the National Anti-Corruption Plan reflect the conceptual foundations of the domestic anti-corruption policy which is based on the doctrinal provisions of the national security system and also on the recommendations of venerable scientists and international experience. These documents provide for the formation of an effective regulatory and legal framework aimed at organizing the detection of facts of corruption offenses and crimes as well as political and ideological activities involving television, radio, print media to create an environment of intolerance towards corrupt officials, to scour their desire for profit at any cost showing of the harm caused by massive corruption in politics, economy and social sphere.

Russian leaders often go abroad, meet other presidents of states where the problem of corruption is not as acute as in our country. Why not ask foreign colleagues to pass on the accumulated experience to us, share techniques and legal innovations? Is it possible, like the reformer Peter the Great, to send the Great Embassy to the advanced countries - Denmark, Sweden, Singapore, etc., who are the world leaders in the fight against corruption, especially for advanced capitalist experience? And then apply this practice to us, adapting it to our specifics in accordance with the peculiarities of sovereign democracy? It would be a good idea to modernize the political system by strengthening the independence of the courts which must make fair decisions, increasing the freedom of the media, etc.

The institutions of civil society should be more widely involved in the fight against corruption. In our opinion, it would be right to cover such trials in the media. To successfully combat corruption, not only free press but also independent courts and incorruptible law and order police are needed. Only in this case it will be possible to significantly reduce the high level of corruption in our country, if not eradicate it completely.

The Federal Law "On the Civil Service of the Russian Federation" prohibits government officials from engaging in business activities (Article 17), so that they do not use their official position for mercenary purposes. But in fact there is a massive violation of it, if not to say more - ignoring the current legislation. But instead of taking measures of influence right up to criminal responsibility, empty talk and political demagoguery are conducted. The conclusion can be one: the severity of anti-corruption laws in Russia is compensated by the non-mandatory nature of their implementation.

The main danger for the society is corruption in the bodies of state power and local self-government, especially in the areas of development and adoption of managerial decisions. Without it, the privatization of state property, the allocation of budgetary funds and the provision of various privileges and preferences did not fail. In the transition period from socialism to capitalism, corruption in Russia was often declared "an instrument of a bloodless transformation of society, the mobilization of elites and the activation of progressive reforms." So, the well-known economist, the rector of the Academy of National Economy under the Government of the Russian Federation prof. V.A. May wrote in the collective work "The Economy of the Transition Period: The essays on the economic policy of post-communist Russia. 1991-1997: "The

mechanism that ensures the survival of weak revolutionary power is the manipulation of real estate ... Specific actions of the revolutionary government are determined ... by factors of political expediency coupled with elements of corruption" (Economy, 1998).

Former Minister of Finance A.Ya. Livshits stated in an interview with a Moscow newspaper that an active fight against corruption could torpedo all economic reforms in Russia. Is it not for this reason that corruption has struck not only the average managerial staff with its metastases but also the highest echelon of power, as evidenced by the numerous arrests of senior officials implicated in "backrolls" and bribes? Even ministers, members of the Russian government (Minister of Justice V.A. Kovalev, Head of the Ministry of Atomic Energy E. Adamov, Minister of Railways V. Aksyonenko, Minister of Economic Development A. Ulyukaev were arrested for corruption and fraud on an especially large scale as well as N. Denin, V. Dudka, V. Gaizer, A. Khoroshavin and others).

In exchange for bribes, quotas and licenses for the development of natural deposits are issued, tenders and auctions are organized with a predetermined result, access to official information is provided for its use in the interests of corrupt people etc. According to the Prosecutor General of Russia, the authorities and government of the country are struck by corruption on a huge scale: "It permeates all levels of power and acquires a systematic character." Under conditions where the current legislation does not establish criminal liability, confiscation of property or other severe measures to counter corruption, for example, as in China - execution - it reaches unprecedented scale, discredits power and its decisions, reduces the authority of state power headed by the president, not capable of reducing its size.

Acknowledgments

The work is realized in the framework of Belgorod State Technological University named after V.G. Shoukhov.

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