

National Security Priorities Under the Office of Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco 2021-2025

The Justice Department has no higher priority than keeping the American people safe. Today, our nation faces a wide range of serious, complex, and evolving threats – including domestic and international terrorism, foreign malign influence, lethal targeting of American civilians and officials, transnational repression of dissidents, cybercrime, and the illicit procurement of sensitive American technology – posed by individuals, criminal and terrorist groups, and increasingly, hostile nation-states. These threats are intersecting to create a heightened threat environment unlike any we have ever seen before, all exacerbated and supercharged by the misuse of emerging advanced technologies like AI.

Under the leadership of the Office of the Deputy Attorney General (ODAG), the Department has evolved to play an increasingly critical role in the U.S. Government's efforts to protect our national security, advancing a whole-of-government approach with our law enforcement and intelligence community (IC) partners that deploys all available tools not just to arrest and prosecute, but also to disrupt, threat actors around the world. ODAG's implementation and support of the Department's multi-faceted strategies for combatting these ever-changing threats and protecting American national security is outlined here.

Counterterrorism

"The men and women of the Justice Department are working every day to combat hate and extremism not only because it is our job, but because we believe that no one in our country should fear violence or threats of violence because of who they are. We believe it is our collective responsibility to do all we can to confront hate in all its forms." – [Deputy AG Monaco, June 2022](#)

Counterterrorism is a top priority for the Department. The sources of today's terrorism threats are varied and stem from state and non-state actors, domestic violent extremists feeding off internal divisions, homegrown violent extremists inspired by foreign terrorist organizations, and those FTOs targeting Americans here and abroad – all intensified by Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel and its aftermath. To confront and combat this heightened, complex terrorism threat environment, ODAG has led the Department's multi-pronged and innovative efforts, including:

- Modernized the Department's counterterrorism strategy by prioritizing a whole-of-government approach where the Department leverages information from the IC, coordinates closely with federal, state, local, and foreign partners, and uses all available tools – not just arrest and prosecution – to [disrupt and prevent potential terrorist attacks](#) before they can occur.
- Ensured reauthorization of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) by working with interagency partners to secure the passage of the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act – thereby preserving this indispensable authority for identifying and disrupting international terrorist activity and other national security threats, while codifying important reforms.

- Revamped [policies and procedures](#) – in close coordination with our partners at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the IC – that facilitate the use of classified information in immigration court proceedings, to better position the U.S. Government to address the overlap between counterterrorism and border security.
- [Charged Hamas’s senior leadership](#) with terrorism crimes and murder conspiracy based on their orchestration of Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attack on Israel and the kidnappings and killings of scores of innocent civilians, including Americans.
- Successfully [prosecuted and convicted](#) over 1,000 individuals responsible for the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol.
- Strengthened and expanded the Department’s capacity to [protect against Domestic Terrorism \(DT\) threats](#):
 - Created a dedicated Domestic Terrorism Unit (DTU) within the Counterterrorism Section (CTS) of the Department’s National Security Division (NSD) to investigate and prosecute domestic terrorism (DT) and improve the handling and coordination of DT cases across the country.
 - Established new internal notification and approval requirements for all prosecutors handling matters with a DT nexus, to help ensure the Department effectively tracks DT matters across the country.
 - Increased coordination between CTS and the Department’s Civil Rights Division to ensure that all appropriate criminal charges are considered – and the expertise of both sections are fully leveraged – given the frequent [overlap between domestic terrorism and hate crime](#) incidents.
 - Reorganized the structure and operations of the Department’s Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee (DTEC) to better serve the Department’s current DT mission, including through prioritizing close coordination between the DTEC and the DTU.

National Security-Related Corporate Enforcement, Sanctions, and Export Controls

“Since returning to government, I have warned that companies are on the front lines in confronting today’s geopolitical realities. In today’s world, corporate crime regularly intersects with national security in areas like terrorist financing, sanctions evasion, and cybercrime.” – [Deputy AG Monaco, October 2022](#)

In today’s complex and uncertain geopolitical environment, corporate crime and national security are overlapping to an unprecedented degree. ODAG has led the Department to retool and adapt to confront this new threat landscape, where adversaries like Russia, Iran, and China are working to steal sensitive American technology and data. ODAG worked to infuse and reallocate resources and launch initiatives dedicated to pursuing national security-related corporate crime and protecting American technology and data:

- Elevated the importance to national security of enforcing sanctions and export controls:
 - [Significantly restructured and expanded capacity](#) in NSD to prioritize enforcing corporate crime, including adding more than 25 prosecutors dedicated to investigating and prosecuting sanctions evasion, export control violations, and other economic crimes, and establishing the new position of Chief Counsel for Corporate Enforcement.
 - Informed the private sector about enforcement trends and clearly conveyed the Department's expectations as to national security-related compliance by issuing joint advisories with the Commerce and Treasury Departments – akin to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act guidance that the Department publishes jointly with the SEC.
 - Issued the first-ever [NSD Enforcement Policy for Business Organizations](#) (NSD Corporate Enforcement Policy), designed specifically to address national security-related white-collar crime and associated considerations.
 - Secured groundbreaking dispositions in significant national security-related corporate enforcement matters, including the [first-ever prosecution and conviction](#) of a company for providing material support to a terrorist organization (ISIS), and the [first-ever corporate declination](#) – which was accompanied by charges against individual employees – under the NSD Corporate Enforcement Policy.
- Held Russia accountable for its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by launching and leading the interagency [Task Force KleptoCapture](#) (TFKC) dedicated to enforcing the economic countermeasures that the United States and our allies imposed on Russia. [To date](#), TFKC has charged more than 100 individuals and corporate entities for violating Russia-related sanctions or export controls and has seized, restrained, or obtained forfeiture orders against nearly \$650 million in assets – while also working with U.S. and foreign partners to deploy other disruptive measures, including identifying new targets for sanctions designations and using creative legal solutions to route funds forfeited by TFKC to benefit the Ukrainian government.
- Attacked tomorrow's national security threats today:
 - Stopped hostile nation-states trying to illicitly acquire and abuse sensitive U.S. technology by launching the [Disruptive Technology Strike Force](#) (DTSF) with the Commerce Department. The DTSF has [to date](#) brought numerous complex, high-impact cases charging more than 30 individuals and corporate entities with export control violations and related crimes, while also leveraging other available tools with interagency and foreign partners, including issuing denial orders against dozens of businesses with roles in facilitating the illicit acquisition of sensitive U.S. technology – including defense contractors, airlines, and freight forwarders.
 - Prioritized the Department's participation on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), the Treasury Department-chaired interagency body that

reviews certain transactions involving foreign investment in the United States to assess potential national security risks.

- Led the Department to play an active role through the CFIUS process in recognizing and addressing modern national security threats, particularly those emanating from transactions involving foreign acquisition of sensitive data rather than brick-and-mortar assets.
- Drove the Department's successful initiative to help strengthen CFIUS's enforcement efforts, which included the resolution of an enforcement action involving the first-ever public naming of the transaction party and the imposition of the largest monetary penalty in CFIUS history.
- [Prevented the PRC from controlling TikTok and undermining our national security](#) – including through the ability to gather sensitive information about tens of millions of Americans and to covertly manipulate the content delivered to them – by driving the Department's efforts to secure bipartisan legislation that, in a manner fully consistent with the Constitution, breaks the ties that bind TikTok to the PRC government. The legislation also establishes a process for addressing analogous risks arising from foreign adversary control of other applications. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld the law on January 17, 2025.
- Protected Americans' sensitive and personal data from Russia, Iran, China, and other adversaries by creating a [new, comprehensive national security regulatory program](#) in coordination with interagency partners, to be implemented by the Department – the Department has long focused on preventing threat actors from stealing data through the proverbial back door, and these actions will help shut the front door by denying countries of concern access to Americans' most sensitive personal data.

Foreign Malign Influence, Transnational Repression, and Lethal Targeting

“The Department of Justice has a unique role to play in our nation's efforts to strengthen and defend democracy at home and abroad. After all, we are the only department in our government named for a value — justice. And our founding principle is to uphold the bedrock of every functioning democracy: the rule of law.” – [Deputy AG Monaco, March 2023](#)

From waging covert online influence campaigns on social media in an effort to subvert our democracy, to perpetrating transnational operations to repress dissident American citizens who speak out against their regimes, hostile nation-states are increasingly threatening our national security and undermining the global rule of law. [ODAG led the Department to work innovatively and relentlessly to counter these malign efforts](#) and protect the fundamental rights and security of Americans:

- Ramped up enforcement efforts, and partnered with the IC and foreign authorities, to identify, disrupt, and hold accountable hostile nation-state actors perpetrating cross-border repressive activity aimed at silencing and crushing dissidents exercising their rights.

- Secured the arrests and successful prosecutions of, among other threat actors, an [array of PRC-affiliated subjects](#) carrying out the repressive tactics of the Chinese government in [violation of U.S. laws](#).
- [Detected and disrupted the Iranian government's lethal targeting](#) of current and former U.S. Government officials as retribution for the 2020 death of former Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps leader Qassem Soleimani. Brought [multiple prosecutions](#) against Iranian officials and assets for their roles in orchestrating such plots.
- Ensured a safe and secure 2024 presidential election through [extensive interagency efforts](#), including identifying, exposing, and disrupting online operations by both [Russian](#) and [Iranian](#) state actors designed to covertly impact the election.
- Fostered and created increased transparency in the Department's efforts to combat foreign malign influence (FMI) operations:
 - Supported and enhanced the work of the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF) to combat FMI, including through prosecutions enforcing foreign agent registration laws and other disruptive actions such as seizing Internet domains used to wage online influence campaigns.
 - Helped FITF to develop and implement publicly available [Standard Operating Procedures](#) for engaging with social media platforms – important vehicles for free expression that FMI threat actors are abusing – so that the companies can make informed decisions, consistent with applicable First Amendment principles, about what steps they could choose to take to mitigate the threat, and the American people can see the processes their government is implementing.
 - Published the Department's [Strategic Principles](#) governing engagements with social media companies regarding FMI and launched a new Department [webpage](#) dedicated to providing information and resources relating to FMI – because transparency in this space is just as important as the work itself; while our adversaries seeking to undermine our democracy try to hide their hand, we strive to show our work.
- Developed and issued a [new rule](#) updating, clarifying, and modernizing key regulations establishing the scope of liability and exemptions under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, amending those regulations for the first time in more than a decade.