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Navigating the Choppy Waters of Foreign Anticorruption Enforcement

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The first reported case of corporate foreign corruption dates back to the 16th century, when the British East India Company bribed Mogul rulers with “rare treasures, including paintings, carvings and costly objects made of copper, brass and stone” in consideration of a tax break on exports. Historically, these practices were seen as an essential aspect of doing business abroad, or “as a kind of grease to move economic machinery along when there were bureaucratic obstacles.” Thus, foreign corruption became a well-entrenched profitable practice, which was even welcomed by shareholders of early multinationals.

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