Biden administration to review sanctions on International Criminal Court officials

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The Biden administration will “thoroughly review” U.S. sanctions on International Criminal Court officials imposed over investigations into U.S forces in Afghanistan, a State Department spokesman said on Tuesday.

“Much as we disagree with the ICC’s actions relating to the Afghanistan and Israeli/Palestinian situations, the sanctions will be thoroughly reviewed as we determine our next steps,” the spokesman said in a written response.

The Trump administration last year accused the Hague-based tribunal of infringing on U.S. national sovereignty when it authorized an investigation into war crimes committed by Afghan forces, the Taliban or U.S. troops.

It targeted court staff, including prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, with asset freezes and travel bans for investigating American citizens without U.S. consent. The United States is not a member of the court.

Trump’s Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also opposed an investigation launched in 2019 into alleged war crimes in the Palestinian Territories, including by Israeli forces.

The new U.S. administration supports reforms “to help the court better achieve its core mission of punishing and deterring atrocity crimes” and may cooperate with the ICC in “exceptional cases,” the State Department spokesman added.