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CORRUPTION

France launches anti-corruption push ahead of 2024 Paris Olympics
France 24: 21 February 2024

Ahead of the Paris Olympics in July and August, French prosecutors are working on four inquiries into possible wrongdoing, but are the investigations a sign of problems or of genuine efforts to tackle graft?


Thousands at anti-government rally in Croatia allege high-level corruption and demand an election
Darko Bandic – The Associated Press: 17 February 2024

People rallied in Croatia’s capital, accusing the ruling center-right party of corruption and demanding that the parliamentary election be held as soon as possible.


For more on this theme:
Profile: Aleksei Navalny, Dogged Anti-Corruption Crusader And Outspoken Kremlin Foe

Opposition supporters in Albania protest alleged corruption in Cabinet
https://apnews.com/article/albania-opposition-protest-government-corruption-aa014b474d5b66613c5d05cdc739ac2b

Slovak president challenges the government’s move to eliminate the special anti-graft prosecutor
https://apnews.com/article/slovakia-president-complaint-corruption-4594dde7add60cb68158c2b1f7e7411d

Ukraine is making progress toward tackling corruption
https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/ukraine-is-making-progress-toward-tackling-corruption

Ukraine anti-graft police probing dozens of defence-related cases

A slide in global corruption rankings is bad for ‘Brand NZ’ – what can the government do?

LatAm in Focus: How Courts Can Make or Break Latin America’s Corruption Battle
https://www.as-coa.org/articles/latam-focus-how-courts-can-make-or-break-latin-americas-corruption-battle

Global: Foreign Extortion Prevention Act — Congress expands DOJ's authority to pursue corrupt non-US government officials
ELN, Ex-FARC Mafia Drive Rising Cocaine Production in Zulia, Venezuela
InSight Crime: 15 February 2024

Large-scale drug seizures in a border state suggest the groups are expanding cocaine processing in a region that was once used only as a trafficking route from Colombia.


Cocaine City? Gang wars on the rise as drug dealers fight for territory in EU capital Brussels

Shootings among rivals rage close to the very heart of Brussels. Police seize drugs and arrest traffickers almost daily, but dealers keep coming back. The population is fed up.

https://apnews.com/article/belgium-drugs-violence-brussels-cocaine-14a1b6cb06fe0a23e4acb4ec52b77df6b

For more on this theme:
Brussels drug violence ‘to get worse before it gets better,’ Justice Minister says

How drug gangs took over Antwerp’s port
https://www.brusselstimes.com/931260/how-drug-gangs-took-over-antwerp’s-port

Anti-drug crusader or cartel secret weapon? Honduras ex-president’s trial kicks off

Latin America’s newest export: Narcoculture
https://globalvoices.org/2024/02/13/latin-americas-newest-export-narcoculture/

Meth seizures double amid economic woes
https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2738909

From Golden Triangle to Darknet: India’s war on drugs
https://www.indiablooms.com/news-details/N/94900/from-golden-triangle-to-darknet-india-s-war-on-drugs.html

The secret snitch who brought down the narcos

Moroccan hashish suppliers ‘boycott Israeli dealers’ over Gaza war
https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/morocco-hashish-sellers-boycott-israel-dealers-gaza-war

ICS: How the maritime industry tries to tackle drug smuggling

Evolving drug trends in wartime Ukraine
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/evolving-drug-trends-in-wartime-ukraine/

A month of war: How did once-serene Ecuador descend into a nightmare of narco violence?
A strategy for integrating online digital data for monitoring biodiversity
University of Helsinki: 16 February 2024

Scientists around the world propose a strategy for integrating online digital data from media platforms. The goal is to complement monitoring efforts to help address the global biodiversity crisis in light of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.


For Sale: Shark Jaw, Tiger Claw, Fish Maw
Marina Wang – Hakai Magazine: 20 February 2024

With little enforcement or legal culpability, social media helps wildlife trafficking thrive in plain sight.

https://hakaimagazine.com/features/for-sale-shark-jaw-tiger-claw-fish-maw/

Dozens feared dead and others trapped following gold mine collapse in Venezuela


Chilean Navy Deploys Submarine to Monitor Chinese Fishing Vessels


Experts are using forensic science to fight wildlife trafficking


From poachers to conservationists

https://www.fairplanet.org/story/poaching-wildlife-rescue-kenya-hunting/

Concern for Mexico’s vaquita as totoaba swim bladder trafficking surges online


How Latin America is using the law to fight environmental crime


Chinese Fishing Fleet under the Limelight in Latin American Waters


Critics decry controversial bill that loosens deforestation restrictions in Peru


Illegal logging ops discovered in Narra


Uganda, African states agree on new ways to fight illicit wildlife trade


‘Brutal’ donkey skin trade banned by the African Union


Cerrado: Beef trade risks key Brazil ecosystem – campaigners

ORGANIZED CRIME

Colombian Criminals Use Music Industry to Launder Money
Sara Garcia – InSight Crime: 22 February 2024
A recent case, together with several past investigations, shows how the music and events industry is being used by organized crime groups.

Chinese Criminal Networks and Their Reach in Latin America
Julia Pelcastre – Diálogo: 16 February 2024
Despite violence and corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean driven by criminal organizations from the hemisphere, a study at Florida International University highlights the growing impact of Chinese criminal networks in the region and exposes their link to state-owned companies.

For more on this theme:
US takes aim at real estate money laundering

Treasury proposes new anti-money laundering regulations for investment advisers
https://apnews.com/article/investment-transparency-treasury-fincen-money-laundering-9d64b58bbdb1ac099d999dce36c14693e

Crypto Is Bad? Cash Still the Primary Tool for Money Laundering, US Treasury Reports
https://cryptopotato.com/crypto-is-bad-cash-still-the-primary-tool-for-money-laundering-us-treasury-reports/

Feds accuse alleged Japanese crime boss of conspiring to traffic nuclear material
https://apnews.com/article/ebisawa-myanmar-nuclear-charges-plutonium-7b41f88bf6d8e18b2bb43c28d400bf9b

Study: Africa leads in illegal drug smuggling, piracy, fishing

The war of thieves: Illicit networks, commoditized violence and the arc of state collapse in Sudan

Is Organized Crime Activity Threatening Tijuana’s Nearshoring Boom?

Organised crime gangs ‘recruiting junior staff at firms for insider trading’

Hong Kong customs arrests 7 in a $1.8 billion money laundering case linked to transnational crime
https://apnews.com/article/money-laundering-hong-syndicate-indiac2e4f300ccf4882150b909e0c849ca1d

The 2024-2026 Strategy — New Ways to Think and Act
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/global-initiative-gitoc-strategy-2024-2026/
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The Dangers of Moving Key Internet Governance Functions to Amazon’s Cloud: The Case of the Netherlands
Corinne Cath and Bert Hubert – Tech Policy: 9 February 2024

The SIDN domain registry manages more than 6 million of the country’s .nl websites, including government sites. Recently, it surprisingly decided to outsource part of its work to Amazon Web Services.


For more on this theme:

(India) India’s AI Strategy: Balancing Risk and Opportunity

(Global South) Data Protection Regulation in the Global South

(Global) Virtual homesteaders built an internet of ‘little autocracies.’ Is digital democracy doomed?
https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/news/2024/02/20/research-media-studies-schneider-democracy-internet-technology

(Global) Digital Governance Discussion Group (DGDG): One World, One Internet, Many Voices

INTERNET FREEDOM

Google’s retiring of Internet archiving tool draws ire of China researchers
Erin Hale – Al Jazeera: 20 February 2024

The search giant’s cached links long helped researchers keep track of the country’s heavily censored internet.


For more on this theme:

(China) China could be doing better at censorship, think tank finds
https://www.theregister.com/2024/02/21/china_censorship_underfunded/

(Turkey) Erdogan’s grand plan

(Pakistan) X platform restored in Pakistan over 24 hours after ‘nation-scale’ shutdown
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2462481/amp
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas Wars Reveal All [Cyber] Conflicts Are Global
Yochai Corem – The Defense Post: 9 February 2024

The fusion of traditional "hacktivism" with actions by nation-states and cybercriminals highlights the complexity of cyber warfare.

https://www.thedefensepost.com/2024/02/09/cyber-war-global/

For more on this theme:
(Ukraine, Global) Ukraine highlights significance of cyber warfare during international forum

(Global) The Pall Mall Process on Cyber Intrusion Tools: Putting Words into Practice

CYBERATTACKS

UK universities left scrambling in wake of cyber attacks
Emma Woollacott – ITPro: 22 February 2024

The Anonymous Sudan hacker group, thought to be Russian-backed, has claimed responsibility.


For more on this theme:
(UK, Global) Why some cyber-attacks hit harder than others

(Germany) Cyberattack Disrupts German Battery-Production Lines
https://www.darkreading.com/cyberattacks-data-breaches/cyberattack-disrupts-german-battery-production-lines

(Israel) Future of Israel’s State Archive Website ‘Uncertain’ Following Cyberattack
CYBERCRIME

Global Operation Smashes ‘Most Harmful Cyber Crime Group’
Agence France-Presse: 20 February 2024

The action led by United Kingdom and United States law enforcement has severely disrupted the “world's most harmful cybercrime group,” the Russia-linked ransomware specialist LockBit, officials said.


For more on this theme:
(Australia) Paying cyber-ransoms still lands organisations in hot water

(U.S.) Using AI in a cyberattack? DOJ’s Monaco says criminals will face stiffer sentences
https://therecord.media/ai-cybercrime-sentencing-guidelines-lisa-monaco-munich

(Global) A dream deferred or a near miss?: UN committee postpones decision on cybercrime convention
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/un-committee-postpones-decision-cybercrime-convention/

(EU) A European cybercrime breakthrough is good news but only half the battle
https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/02/european-cybercrime-breakthrough-good-news-only-half-battle

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Japan sees increased cyberthreats to critical infrastructure, particularly from China
Daryna Antoniuk – The Record: 16 February 2024

China-backed hackers are increasingly targeting telecom carriers, internet providers and other critical infrastructure in Japan, according to the country’s National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity.

https://therecord.media/japan-critical-infrastructure-cyberthreats

For more on this theme:
(Global) Silent battles, audible woes: The human cost of cyberattacks against critical infrastructure

(U.S., Global) Critical infrastructure attacks aren't all the same: Why it matters to CISOs

(U.S.) US Moves to Shore Up Port Security Against Cyberattacks
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Column: Is Pakistan a New Safe Haven for ISIS and Al Qaeda?
Mahmut Cengiz – Homeland Security Today: 15 February 2024
The country has recorded increasing attacks by the terrorist groups since the Taliban’s takeover in Afghanistan.

For more on this theme:
UN: Al-Qaida, Afghan Taliban Assist TTP With Attacks in Pakistan

The Taliban vowed to cut ties with al Qaeda, but the terror group appears to be growing in Afghanistan

Using AI to monitor the internet for terror content is inescapable — but also fraught with pitfalls

Somalia Says It Has Blocked Websites Used by Al-Shabab

Top general leading U.S.-backed Kurdish forces in Syria warns of ISIS resurgence

Life after al-Hol: Iraqi women’s uneasy return from ranks of ISIS

The ISIS Threat Is Not to Be Forgotten
https://manaramagazine.org/2024/02/the-isis-threat-is-not-to-be-forgotten/

How an Afghan Drug Kingpin Became Beijing’s Man in Kabul
https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/10/noorzai-afghanistan-taliban-china-mining-drug-kingpin/

Afghan opium’s big high

Pakistan’s TTP Challenge and Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations

Afghanistan’s Ill-fated National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism

The Islamic State group poses rising threat in Africa despite progress, UN experts say
https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-islamic-state-africa-27c309f74a92429a9ef72d2811956efb

Women Of ISIS: An Exclusive Journey Inside The Terror Group’s Female Network
https://worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/isis-women
EU's top diplomat warns Israel can't defeat Hamas by military means

Antoaneta Roussi – Politico: 18 February 2024

Foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said the country needs a political solution to the conflict with Palestinians.


For more on this theme:

The future of Saudi-Israeli relations is a balancing act between Palestinian and regional interests


IntelBrief: After October 7th, Is Saudi-Israeli Normalization Just a Mirage?

https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2024-february-14/

A steady escalation along the Lebanon-Israel border — and no end in sight

https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/gaza-hezbollah-israel-war-ghaziye-escalation/

IntelBrief: Diplomatic Flurry Fails to Quell Gradual Israel-Hezbollah Escalation

https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2024-february-20/

U.S. Condemns Houthis’ “Piracy” and “Terrorism” in the Red Sea


Hezbollah’s threats to northern Israel: The evolution of drone warfare

https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-787936

Comparing Arsenals of Israel, Hezbollah as Strikes Escalate


Iran and Hezbollah Hackers Launch Attacks to Influence Israel-Hamas Narrative

https://thehackernews.com/2024/02/iran-and-hezbollah-hackers-launch.html

Looking at causes, measuring effects of Israel-Hamas war


Why Gaza Forces Europe to Act

https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/91674

Israeli Security After October 7

https://carnegieendowment.org/2024/02/21/israeli-security-after-october-7-pub-91702

Governing Gaza After the War: The Regional Perspectives

https://carnegieendowment.org/2024/02/16/governing-gaza-after-war-regional-perspectives-pub-91663

Rafah attack: How Israel plans to hit Hamas and scale back war


Top UN court to hold hearings on legality of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian-claimed lands

https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-court-gaza-occupation-8e194a5d96bc6a2264a0bb3de8576210
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Israel Rejects International Calls for Palestinian Statehood

As Thousands Protest in Tel Aviv, Netanyahu Dismisses Calls for Early Elections

Israel’s economy fights to recover as Israel-Hamas war rages on

Two Critical Goals Regarding Israel-Hamas Conflict

The UN’s Palestinian Aid Controversy: What’s at Stake

UNRWA Under Fire
https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/unrwa-under-fire

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Navalny’s life and death show Putinvism isn’t inevitable
Doug Klain – Atlantic Council: 16 February 2024
Death was probably the only way Alexei Navalny would ever escape his imprisonment on trumped-up charges in Russia: either his own or President Vladimir Putin’s.

For more on this theme:

Navalny’s legacy: His ceaseless crusade against Putin and corruption
https://www.npr.org/2024/02/16/1231980139/alexei-navalny-who-was-he

Navalny’s Legacy: The Twilight of Russian Oppositional Thought?

Navalny’s Heroism in the Face of Putin’s Revenge
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/navalnys-heroism-face-putins-revenge

The Death of Alexei Navaln — and His Alternative Russia
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91665

Military Justice Reform in Ukraine Is Urgently Needed

Ukrainian long-range drones target Putin’s war machine inside Russia
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Putin's unpunished Crimean crime set the stage for Russia's 2022 invasion

Outgunned Ukraine bets on drones as Russian invasion enters third year

Ukraine outnumbered, outgunned, ground down by relentless Russia

The Threat from Russia's Unconventional Warfare Beyond Ukraine, 2022–24

Western Support Critical to Ukraine’s Fight
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/western-support-critical-ukraines-fight

The Slippery Slope of Speculating on Ukraine
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/91677

Official Says Without U.S. Funding, Ukraine's Defense Will Likely Collapse
https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3679991/official-says-without-us-funding-ukraines-defense-will-likely-collapse/

How to Make Russia Pay to Rebuild Ukraine
https://www.justsecurity.org/92460/how-to-make-russia-pay-to-rebuild-ukraine/

Ukraine, Russia, and the Minsk agreements: A post-mortem

Wars and elections: How European leaders can maintain public support for Ukraine
https://ecfr.eu/publication/wars-and-elections-how-european-leaders-can-maintain-public-support-for-ukraine/

Does the West’s Ukraine policy need a reality check? A Brookings debate
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/does-the-wests-ukraine-policy-need-a-reality-check-a-brookings-debate/

When Ukraine set course for Europe
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/when-ukraine-set-course-for-europe/

Russia’s War On Ukraine – Two Years On
https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2024/02/18/russias-war-on-ukrainetwo-years-on/?sh=5ea199c977b5

Global Perspectives on Ending the Russia-Ukraine War

Putin is trying to take advantage of a stalemate in Ukraine but the war is also draining for Russia
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-putin-anniversary-fb2db02ef51683eb6d7c85c0235577f0
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Analysis: A key withdrawal shows Ukraine doesn't have enough artillery to fight Russia
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-avdiivka-war-063ab1bd47a500ad4a815b12f3d1386d

US Official: Russia Suffers Staggering Losses Despite Ukraine’s Supply Shortages

Ukraine war has cost Russia up to $211 billion, Pentagon says
https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2024/02/16/ukraine-war-has-cost-russia-up-to-211-billion- pentagon-says/

How the Kremlin weaponized Russian history — and has used it to justify the war in Ukraine
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-history-putin-propaganda-80cb70ff9820357edd83170695dbb

Two Years On: Russia’s Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine
https://www.gmfus.org/focus-areas/two-years-russias-full-scale-invasion-ukraine

DOJ: Confiscated Russian funds will support Ukraine — via Estonia

What the U.S. Has to Gain from Supporting Ukraine
https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/what-the-us-has-to-gain-from-supporting-ukraine

The Ukraine war grinds on — 4 ways the conflict with Russia could end

Most Europeans think Ukraine will lose the war, according to survey

Ukraine’s Future Hangs by a (European) Thread
https://time.com/6695251/europe-must-step-up-ukraine/

Russia can sustain major losses in Ukraine for another two years, war analysts say

Russia Might Win in Ukraine. China Can't
https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2024-02-21/ukraine-war-anniversary-even-a-russian- victory-would-be-loss-for-china

5 ways the EU could help end the war in Ukraine
https://www.politico.eu/article/5-things-eu-help-end-war-ukraine/

Ukraine can still win against Russia, but a few very important things need to happen this year, war experts say

Moscow’s Aggression, Moldova’s Defiance
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/moscows-aggression-moldovas-defiance
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

In Search of a Formula for Lasting Peace in Ukraine
https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/02/search-formula-lasting-peace-ukraine

Ukraine Two Years On: Sobriety, Sadness, and an Absolute Determination to Fight
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-two-years-on-sobriety-sadness-and-an-absolute-determination-to-fight/

How Ukraine could become Putin’s ‘Vietnam,’ say military analysts

French Ambassador to U.S.: For NATO Countries Bordering Russia, ‘Real War is Possible’
https://news.usni.org/2024/02/21/french-ambassador-to-u-s-for-nato-countries-bordering-russia-real-war-is-possible

Russia-linked information campaign aims to ‘sow doubt’ among Ukrainians
https://therecord.media/information-campaign-aimed-at-ukrainians-sow-doubt

Reflections on the Ukraine War
https://www.csis.org/analysis/reflections-ukraine-war

Ukraine Military Situation: Russian Military Pursuing Costly Offensive Campaign – Analysis

The Kremlin's Occupation Playbook: Coerced Russification and Ethnic Cleansing in Occupied Ukraine

The Kremlin Feared Navalny in Life and Continues to Fear Him in Death (Part One)

The Kremlin Feared Navalny in Life and Continues to Fear Him in Death (Part Two)

Ukraine: why we must stay the course

Putin unrivalled
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/putin-unrivalled

Putin believes that time is on Russia’s side — and, sadly, he has a point
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/putin-believes-time-russia-s-side-sadly-he-has-point