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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Cocaine, cartels, and corruption: The crisis in Ecuador, explained
CD Goette-Luciak – Vox: 11 January 2024
Ecuador was known for peace, but it has become one of the most violent countries in South America.

It’s Time to Confront the Taliban’s Corruption
David J. Kramer, Natalie Gonnella-Platts and Jessica Ludwig – The Diplomat: 17 January 2024
Fundamental to the militant group’s vicious pursuit of power is strategic kleptocracy.
https://thediplomat.com/2024/01/its-time-to-confront-the-talibans-corruption/

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Guatemala’s Arevalo Takes Office, Vows to Fight Corruption
Navigating Crises amid Latin America’s Anti-Corruption Overhaul
Euroviews. Kleptocrats in democracy’s clothing: Beijing and Moscow talk anti-corruption at the UN
What Happened in Panama? How Transparency Measures Can Fight Corruption in Mining
Why Cambodia’s Government Cannot Win Its Fight Against Corruption
China amends criminal law related to bribery and corruption
https://fcpablog.com/2024/01/16/china-amends-criminal-law-related-to-bribery-and-corruption/
Rome in push to decriminalise abuse of office despite corruption fears
Albania to create anti-corruption ministry in quest for EU accession
Kenya wins bid to host Africa’s anti-corruption centre
DRUG TRAFFICKING

In Ecuador, the global reach of Mexico’s warring drug cartels fuels a national crisis
Mark Stevenson – The Associated Press: 13 January 2024

Mexico’s two main cartels have long taken their deadly rivalry with them as they expand, but never with such intense streetgang violence and a presidential declaration of a state of “internal armed conflict.”
https://apnews.com/article/ecuador-crisis-kilings-mexican-cartels-2b82e62999b2696e70bd0f-6ce933026f

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‘Absolute flood’: Opioids become more lethal — and more common — on Calgary streets

How China’s Inaction Is Feeding America’s Fentanyl Crisis

How Much Opium Did Afghans Harvest in 2023 After the Taliban Ban?

Drug Quandaries In The Middle East And Transcontinental Transits Via Europe

Locals fight their own war on drugs in Syria’s Daraa Province
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Ecuador: From Darwin To Drug Trafficking

“Golden Triangle” Drug Trade Booms After 2021 Coup In Myanmar

Arresting Malaysian drug lord could solve 70% of Thailand’s trafficking cases:
Thai police

Chaos In Ecuador: Drug Gangs Wreak Havoc Across The Country

‘Children of War’: How Violence and Addiction Rob the Youth of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico

GameChangers 2023: The Cocaine Flash-to-Bang in 2024
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Illegal Mining Regains Strength, and Malnutrition Becomes Part of the Routine for Yanomamis
Vinicius Sassine and Lalo de Almeida – UOL: 15 January 2024
The reactivation of illegal mining fuels the humanitarian crisis among the Yanomamis, impacting access to food and leading to successive malaria outbreaks in the territory.

From forest-listening to advanced remote sensing, can AI turn the tide on deforestation?
Mark Hillsdon – Reuters: 16 January 2024
Breakthroughs in artificial intelligence mean it’s possible to predict areas most at risk, allowing the authorities to take preventative action.

For more on this theme:
Do carbon credits really help communities that keep forests standing?
https://news.mongabay.com/2024/01/do-carbon-credits-really-help-communities-that-keep-forests-standing/

Illegal gold mining threatens Indus River water and biodiversity in Pakistan

Lula vows to win ‘war’ against illegal miners invading Indigenous lands

Extent of illegal sand mining in the Mekong Delta
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These Satellite Maps Reveal Rampant Fishing by Untracked ‘Dark Vessels’ in the World’s Oceans

To Improve Fisheries Management Globally, U.N. Creates a New Forum

The EU fisheries control system gets a major revamp

India’s Escalating Wildlife Trafficking: A Threat to Biodiversity
ORGANIZED CRIME

Corruption, Crypto Test LatAm Money Laundering Laws
Gavin Voss and Vera Sistermans – InSight Crime: 18 January 2024

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean face obstacles in fighting money laundering, even though the region ranks above the world average in its adoption of legal frameworks, according to a report.


For more on this theme:

North Korean hackers, criminals share money laundering networks in Southeast Asia – UN

Costa Rica Strengthens Fight Against Organized Crime

Assessing the Early Days of Ecuador’s War on Gangs

Tether Cryptocurrency Becoming ‘Preferred Choice’ Among Money Launderers And Scammers, UN Warns

Bahamas to Crack Down on Organized Crime

Organized crime puts a price on Mexican agriculture

Mexico’s 2024 Election Could Spark Violent Criminal Realignments

Self-defence groups as a response to crime and conflict in West Africa

Op-Ed: The state of global organized crime — You won’t like it

Casinos and Crypto Major Drivers of Money Laundering in East and Southeast Asia

In Declaring Serbia Free of Organised Crime, Govt Ignores the Obvious
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

2023 has been a challenging year for internet freedoms, here’s why
Chiara Castro – TechRadar: 10 January 2024

Internet shutdowns, social media blocks, online censorship and alleged misuse of data were the digital issues.

https://www.techradar.com/computing/cyber-security/2023-has-been-a-challenging-year-for-internet-freedoms-heres-why

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The implications of the AI boom for nonstate armed actors
Valerie Wirtschafter – Brookings: 16 January 2024

How might artificial intelligence be exploited by criminal organizations, terrorist groups and others in 2024?

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(Global) Data as Ammunition: Hyper-Personalized Warfare in the Digital Age

(China) China’s State-affiliated Hacking: A Rising Threat to Global Cybersecurity
CYBERATTACKS

Switzerland hit by cyberattack after Ukraine president’s visit

Swissinfo.co: 17 January 2024

Government websites were the victims. The Russian-linked hacker group NoName claimed responsibility, citing Volodymyr Zelensky’s attendance at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos.

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CYBERCRIME

Scams Against Americans are Skyrocketing. The US Tech Sector and Government can Turn the Tide

Ken Westbrook – OODA Loop: 16 January 2024

A recent Gallup poll and a Federal Trade Commission estimate of fraud losses show that criminals are stealing billions of dollars from Americans each year. The perpetrators are mainly foreign organized-crime gangs.


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(U.S., China) AI is helping U.S. spies catch stealthy Chinese hacking ops, NSA official says
https://cyberscoop.com/ai-china-hacking-operations/
PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Chinese-manufactured drones ‘pose a significant risk to critical infrastructure and U.S. national security,’ DHS and FBI warn


The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are warning that such drones could steal data.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Protecting those below the cyber-poverty line is critical to everyone


(Global) The biggest cyber threats to public safety agencies


(Global) Five steps to secure the Low Earth Orbit satellite environment

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PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Iran terror blast highlights success – and growing risk – of ISIS-K regional strategy
Amira Jadoon and Nakissa Jahanbani – The Conversation: 11 January 2024
Since the Taliban takeover in 2021, the Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate has sought to internationalize its operational and recruitment campaign.

For more on this theme:

Why Iran tried to kill ISIS commanders in Syria with ballistic missiles

Why the Islamic State Bombing in Iran Should Have Western Leaders Worried
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The Cascading Risks of a Resurgent Islamic State in the Philippines
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The Islamic State's South Asian Branches are Spearheading an Anti-China Campaign
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Vantage | Why Islamic State eyeing Pakistan isn't surprising yet worrisome

Al Qaeda's Regional Affiliates Continue to Threaten Global Security

Islamic State attempts a comeback

The post-organizational terrorism in the European Union and beyond

Sub-Saharan Africa most conflict-affected region globally — IISS

ATMIS to continue “degrading” al-Shabaab in 2024
ISRAEL/HAMAS

Hamas fights with a patchwork of weapons built by Iran, China, Russia and North Korea

An Associated Press analysis of more than 150 videos and photos taken in the three months of combat since the attack on Israel found Iranian sniper rifles, AK-47 assault rifles from China and Russia, and North Korean- and Bulgarian-built rocket-propelled grenades.

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Hezbollah and the Axis of Resistance in 2024

ISIS and Hamas have two very different ideologies. But are their tactics becoming more similar?

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European Sting Operations Target Suspected Hamas Operatives
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What Will the International Court of Justice Order on Genocide in Gaza?

How Russia And China Will Try To Exploit The Houthi Red Sea Blockade
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Houthi Terrorism: Russia’s hand in the Yemeni Crisis

War against Hamas in Gaza is act of self-defence, Israel tells world court

EU sanctions Hamas' Gaza leader over October 7 attacks on Israel
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India-Middle East Relations Unsettled by Israel-Hamas Conflict
ISRAEL/HAMAS

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Future of Gaza: Will displaced Palestinians return home?

Iran missile strikes in Pakistan show tension fueled by Israel-Hamas war spreading

Many fear Israel-Hamas war could spread across Middle East

Five questions and answers about South Africa's genocide case against Israel

Hamas hostage-taking must not go unpunished. The ICC must make a case against the terrorist group.
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In 100 days, the Israel-Hamas war has transformed the region. The fighting shows no signs of ending
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100 days on, what's the state of play in Israel-Hamas war?
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Are Hezbollah and Israel edging closer to war?
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Normalization Survives Despite the Gaza War
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Israel’s Actions in Lebanon offer a Warning for Tehran and Moscow

After Gaza: A Political and Economic Path Forward

Who Governs the Palestinians?
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Red Sea: Time to treat the cause, not the symptom

Israel and Hezbollah Could Stumble Into a War Neither Wants
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine’s Zelenskyy rules out a cease-fire with Russia, saying Moscow would use it to rearm

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says the Kremlin’s forces would use the pause to rearm and regroup in order to overwhelm Kyiv’s troops.

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Russia’s intense attacks on Ukraine has sharply increased civilian casualties in December, UN says
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More countries join talks on Ukraine leader’s peace formula. But Russia is absent and war grinds on
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EU, US urge sustained support for Ukraine in war against Russia

Russia’s ally China needed to end Ukraine war, Swiss diplomat says

Arsenal of Autocracy: North Korea and Iran are arming Russia in Ukraine

It is time to use Russia’s frozen assets to help Ukraine
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With ‘God’s-eye view,’ secretive surveillance flights keep close watch on Russia and Ukraine
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Russia doubles down on fast, cheap, unguided bombs to attack Ukraine

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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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Top NATO military officer urges allies and leaders to plan for the unexpected in Ukraine
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Flashpoint Ukraine: Russia’s Gold-Fueled War

Russian election candidate calls Ukraine war a ‘big mistake’ by Putin

Confident Putin boasts of Russian “conquests” in Ukraine

Europe steps up support for Ukraine in fight against Putin’s Russia
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Russia's Lavrov Thanks North Korea for Supporting Ukraine War

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As Election Looms, Putin Is in a Wartime Trap of His Own Making
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‘Perfectly understandable’: Russia’s neighbors back Ukraine’s refusal to negotiate on peace talks

War In Ukraine Having Consequences For Russia’s Health-Care System, U.K. Says

Russia has shifted beyond its ‘stupid’ missile attack strategy, and it is bad news for Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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Russia's Tightening Abkhazian Stranglehold Threatens Western and Georgian Interests

How Russian officials and their collaborators spirit away Ukraine's children

Russia's Heavy Losses Could Scupper Golden Opportunity

Putin gathers re-election signatures in Russian-held Ukraine

How one officer class offers a glimpse into Russia's military amid Ukraine war

Putin waged a trade war long before bombing Ukraine. Which side is winning?

Ukraine war: MPs reject bid to crack down on draft dodgers

Russia's Fake News About Ukraine, Explained

Russia Says It Sentenced More Than 200 Ukrainian POWs
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Russia Failed To Capitalize on Victories As Ukraine War Hits Stalemate: UK

Bloodied and exhausted: Ukraine’s effort to mobilize more troops hits trouble

Inside a POW Camp for Russian Soldiers in Ukraine

Russian Hackers Had Backdoor Access to Ukraine's Largest Telecoms Provider For Over Half of 2023
https://www.cpomagazine.com/cyber-security/russian-hackers-had-backdoor-access-to-ukraines-largest-telecoms-provider-for-over-half-of-2023/

Could a Ukraine-Russia Deal Have Cut Moscow's Invasion Short? Not So Fast
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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Ukraine's Long-Term Path to Success: Jumpstarting a Self-Sufficient Defense Industrial Base with US and EU Support

Russia-Iran Outlaw Alliance Prospers, a Little
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Negotiate with Moscow? Consider Georgia’s Experience
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Russia Steps Up The Competition In Africa – Analysis

Painting Ukraine as a Junta: Decoding Russia's Disinformation Tactics

How the Russian government silences wartime dissent

From Russia With Love: How Moscow Courts The Global South – Analysis

Digital Resistance: Ukraine’s social media language shows less Russian and More Ukrainian since invasion started

Analysis of Warfare Dynamics: Ukraine-Russia Conflict and Potential Taiwan-China Escalation