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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Is China's corruption-busting AI system ‘Zero Trust' being turned off for being too efficient?
Stephen Chen – South China Morning Post: 5 February 2019

Since 2012, a sophisticated artificial intelligence has dug through big data to find signs of corruption in the Chinese government — but local officials in many areas are now shutting it down. Why?

Saudis launch office to keep up corruption fight after crackdown
Reuters: 5 February 2019

Saudi Arabia has set up a new office to monitor public spending, despite ending its official crackdown on corruption.

For more on this theme:
How deep does South Africa's corruption rabbit hole go?

Corruption, murder and how Ghana's football has ground to a halt

The Scientific Output of Iran: Quantity, Quality, and Corruption
https://iranian-studies.stanford.edu/iran-2040-project/publications/the_scientific_output_of_iran

Brazil unveils tougher measures against crime, corruption
https://ewn.co.za/2019/02/04/brazil-unveils-tougher-measures-against-crime-corruption

Judiciary to change tack in fighting corruption

‘Clean' Denmark proof of universal corruption

Former Maldives President Charged With Corruption, Money-Laundering

Why allegations of corruption against the judiciary are alarming

Handshake shakes up corruption culture in Kenya at a first-of-its kind conference
https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/oped/comment/Handshake-shakes-up-corruption-culture-in-Kenya/434750-4969896-122dg7gz/index.html
DRUG TRAFFICKING

U.S. Prosecutors Sue To Stop Nation’s First Supervised Injection Site For Opioids
National Public Radio: 6 February 2019
The Trump administration is taking legal action against Philadelphia’s safe injection site. Advocates say safe injection sites can help reduce overdose deaths. The U.S. government disagrees.
https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/02/06/691746907/u-s-prosecutors-sue-to-stop-nation-s-first-supervised-injection-site

World Health Organization Recommends Reclassifying Marijuana Under International Treaties
Tom Angell – Forbes: 1 February 2019
The World Health Organization is recommending that marijuana and its key components be downgraded in a 1961 drug convention signed by multiple countries. If adopted, it would signal that the world’s governing bodies believe they have been wrong about marijuana’s harms and therapeutic benefits for decades.

As opium poppies bloom, Mexico seeks to halt heroin trade
Lizbeth Diaz – Reuters: 6 February 2019
Mexico’s new president has promised to demilitarize its war on drugs and focus instead on meeting the needs of the communities that grow the drugs through programs such as crop substitutions and amnesty for low-level dealers and farmers.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-drugs/as-opium-poppies-bloom-mexico-seeks-to-halt-heroin-trade-idUSKCN1PV1B7

For more on this theme:
Almost half a century after it began, here’s how America’s ‘war on drugs’ is still devastating Latin America
https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/latin-america-war-on-drugs-colombia-coca-honduras-donald-trump-a8744266.html

Advocates urge decriminalization, safe injection sites in opioids crisis report

Has Algeria joined Africa’s new ‘cocaine coast’?
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/has-algeria-joined-africas-new-cocaine-coast

Want to know where most drugs cross the border? Look at the Border Patrol’s news releases.

The Rise and Fall of ‘El Chapo,’ Mexico’s Most Wanted Kingpin
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Liberia's eco-vigilantes score arresting success in struggle to end illegal fishing
Liberia was fighting a losing battle against illegal fishing until it partnered with Sea Shepherd, self-styled “eco-vigilantes” that go after foreign vessels stealing fish from the country’s coastline.

Rangers train to tackle wildlife crime
Dene-Hern Chen and Anusak Konglang – Agence France-Presse: 2 February 2019
In Thailand, wildlife rangers are training to be more effective in the fight against wildlife crime. The training focuses on gathering evidence, protecting a crime scene and using forensic analysis.

For more on this theme:
Cartels, Spies, and the Last Days of the Vaquita

Critically endangered turtle is being poached for jewelry

Protecting the Peruvian Amazon
https://theecologist.org/2019/jan/31/protecting-peruvian-amazon

Goa government sets up special court to hear illegal mining cases
https://indianexpress.com/article/india/goa-government-sets-up-special-court-to-hear-illegal-mining-cases-5559022/

Water quality improves after Ghanaian government banned illegal mining

World Animal Protection investigation finds traffickers exploiting Turkish Airlines in illegal wildlife trade

Florida Pioneers The Fight Against Illegal Wildlife Trade

The pangolin races against time even as humans spare no cruel efforts in making it extinct

Hong Kong's new higher penalties strike harder at illegal trade in endangered species
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Researchers Create Hotel-Recognition System to Aid Human Trafficking Investigations
Melanie Ehrenkranz – Gizmodo: 5 February 2019

A group of researchers from George Washington University, Temple University, and Adobe in the U.S. have built a data set containing over a million images from 50,000 hotels across different countries. They hope their public Hotels-50K data set will help spot a human trafficking victim’s location based on the background of an online ad.


Trafficking in Rohingya camps feared rising as crisis rolls on
Naimul Karim – Reuters: 4 February 2019

Anti-trafficking groups fear that human trafficking routes to southeast Asia through the Bay of Bengal are being used to smuggle increasingly desperate Rohingya refugees out of Bangladesh.


For more on this theme:

Piracy and high seas crime growing, becoming more sophisticated, UN Security Council told

The Families of Migrants Held Hostage Are Using Facebook to Raise Money for Smugglers’ Ransoms
http://time.com/5510517/facebook-smuggling-ibya-ransoms/

Interpol cracking down on human smuggling to South America
https://america.cgtn.com/2019/02/06/interpol-cracking-down-on-human-smuggling-to-south-america

Libya Migration Deal - Two Years On, Thousands Drowned in the Mediterranean and Sent Back to Human Rights Abuses

On the Move in a War Zone: Mixed Migration Flows to and through Yemen

No Way Forward or Back: Managing Irregular Migration in Morocco

AU summit 32: Maghreb’s changing politics of migration

UN voluntary return programs help thousands of migrants leave Libya in 2018

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PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Our military wants us to tighten control of the Internet
Ugur Nedim – The Big Smoke: 30 January 2019
Australia’s defense chief called on the government to increase control of the internet to battle cyber threats.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Transformative Technology, Transformative Governance: A New Blog Series on the Future

(Global) Social media, social order
https://lfpress.com/opinion/columnists/social-media-social-order

INTERNET FREEDOM

Research team investigating Internet censorship with tracking system
Lauren Janes – Michigan Radio: 6 February 2019
University of Michigan researchers have created a system that monitors and reports when access to websites is blocked. The purpose is to better understand which websites governments are blocking and why.
http://www.michiganradio.org/post/research-team-investigating-internet-censorship-tracking-system

For more on this theme:
(Russia) The Russian government is planning to isolate the country’s Internet to facilitate censorship and security measures. How is this going to work?

(Venezuela) Venezuelan opposition targeted by internet censors
https://www.apnews.com/d99b8fe46b434d3bb966b7531e04b6e

(Turkey) Sharp increase in Turkey’s internet censorship – NGO
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

China's Privacy Conundrum
Samrn Sacks and Lorand Laskai – Slate: 7 February 2019

China is increasingly protecting its citizens from foreign tech companies, while at the same time increasing its surveillance of Chinese tech companies.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Accenture Study Suggests the Internet May Need a Refresh, as Innovation & Security are Harder To Deliver

(Global) Where Tech Giants Are Getting Slapped Over Privacy

(Global) Facebook Wants You to Have Privacy, Just Not From Facebook

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

Iran Ups its Traditional Cyber Espionage Tradecraft
Kelly Jackson Higgins – Dark Reading: 30 January 2019

Iran is growing more sophisticated in its state-sponsored hacking operation. It once was mainly a destructive force but is becoming more of an intelligence-gathering operation.


For more on this theme:


(ASEAN) Southeast Asia’s internet needs a light touch

(India) India's Digital Path: Leaning Democratic or Authoritarian?
https://www.justsecurity.org/62464/indias-digital-path-leaning-democratic-authoritarian/
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Africa’s NGOs, Facebook push for safer internet
ITWeb Africa: 5 February 2019

Facebook is partnering with nonprofit organizations in over 15 African countries to mark Safer Internet Day 2019 and drive an awareness campaign for a better internet.


For more on this theme:

(Mexico) Medici Land Governance Signs MoU with Tulum Municipality in Mexico

(U.S.) 20 schools join partnership on new C Spire Software Development Pathway pilot program

(Canada) Palo Alto Networks to launch cyber security academy for BC high school students

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Researchers say Chinese hackers carried out attacks on US, European firms
Jacqueline Thomsen – The Hill: 6 February 2019

Security researchers have blamed China-sponsored hackers for a cyber-espionage campaign targeting multiple worldwide organizations. The campaigns were designed to steal intellectual property and create launchpads for attacks on third parties associated with the victims, according to researchers at the cyber security companies Recorded Future and Rapid7.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Setting traps for cyber-thieves with ‘deception technology’: Carolyn Crandall

(EU, Global) EU Weighs Sanctions Against Cyber Crimes Amid China Concerns

(Australia) Australian security services investigate attempted cyber attack on parliament
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Accessibility, local content at the core of Africa’s internet challenge
ITWeb Africa: 7 February 2019

“Removing barriers to content availability and distribution will have significant impacts on the internet in Africa. It will help to make existing international content more accessible,” says Michuki Mwangi, senior development manager for Africa at the Internet Society.


For more on this theme:

(U.S., Global) Too few cybersecurity professionals is a gigantic problem for 2019

(India) ‘Internet for all’: Only way forward

(Switzerland) Crypto Valley: Why Switzerland is a world-leading location for blockchain companies
https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/crypto-valley-switzerland-blockchain-companies/58442/

COMBATING TERRORISM AND CYBER CRIME

The Quickly Spreading Global Cyber Threat
The Cipher Brief: 6 February 2019

While gathered in Davos, Switzerland, last month, executives from the world’s largest tech companies discussed creating a global infrastructure dedicated to defending governments, networks and businesses from cyber attacks. The Cipher Brief spoke with cyber expert Melissa Hathaway about the rapidly changing nature of the global threats and what has to be done to address them.

https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/the-quickly-spreading-global-cyber-threat

For more on this theme:

(Ghana) Collaborate with govt to fight cybercrime – Ursula Owusu

(Global) Cybercrime tools and services becoming increasingly democratized

(Global) Cybercrime attacks and identification of actors
INFORMATION SHARING

ACSC to replace cyber threat sharing platform
Justin Hendry – IT News: 4 February 2019
The Australian Cyber Security Centre wants a new platform to make it easier to exchange threat intelligence with its partners.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Senate Bill Would Send DHS Back to Campus for Cyber Training Work
(U.S.) Why your business needs to work with the government to fight cyber warfare
(U.S.) 3 ways the Pentagon could improve cyber intelligence
https://www.fifthdomain.com/dod/2019/02/05/3-ways-the-pentagon-could-improve-cyber-intelligence/

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Cyber exercise shows need for closer federal-state coordination
Mark Rockwell – FCW: 6 February 2019
The Jack Voltaic 2.0, a joint exercise between the U.S. city of Houston, Texas, and the Army Cyber Institute demonstrated the threats of a combined cyber and physical attack on critical infrastructure. The exercise pushed participants to collaborate closely and combine information technology and emergency response expertise across critical infrastructure sectors and state, local and federal agencies.
https://fcw.com/articles/2019/02/06/jack-voltaic-lessons-learned.aspx

For more on this theme:
(Global) World Economic Forum: Cyber Attacks And Critical Infrastructure
https://www.informationsecuritybuzz.com/expert-comments/world-economic-forum/
(U.S.) America’s cybersecurity in context, not panic mode
(U.S.) Protect the Electric Grid From America’s Enemies
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS

New insights into African terror group, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
Jamie Read – Newsrep: 5 February 2019
Extremist attacks have been on the rise in Burkina Faso, and a group affiliated with ISIS has claimed responsibility. The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara can be traced back to 2017 when ISIS first established a presence in the country.

Battered in the Middle East, Islamic State eyes Southeast Asia as next terrorism hotspot
Malay Mail: 2 February 2019
ISIS holds less than 1 percent of its former caliphate in the Middle East. To make up for this loss, the group appears to be setting its sights on Southeast Asia.

Isis leader believed to have fled coup attempt by his own fighters
Martin Chulov – The Guardian: 7 February 2019
Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, reportedly survived a coup attempt last month launched by foreign fighters in his eastern Syrian hideout. ISIS has since placed a bounty on the main plotter’s head.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/07/isis-leader-believed-to-have-fled-coup-attempt-by-his-own-fighters

For more on this theme:
Online Kurdish ISIS hunters fooled Dutch jihadist with fake wife
Don't let ISIS off the hook
Inside an ISIS religion camp: How I survived the grip of terror
https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/inside-an-isis-religion-camp-how-i-survived-the-grip-of-terror-1.818015
Islamic State 2019: An Assessment
Measuring victory over Islamic State
Patience: Islamic State's newfound focus on Sabr
https://thedefensepost.com/2019/02/06/patience-islamic-state-new-focus-sabr/
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Boko Haram or Islamic State West Africa … or both?
Fergus Kelly – The Defense Post: 1 February 2019
What is Boko Haram called, and how should we refer to its two factions?
https://thedefensepost.com/2019/02/01/boko-haram-islamic-state-west-africa/

Why Do Extremist Groups Thrive in Africa?
Muhammad Fraser-Rahim – The National Interest: 2 February 2019
Extremist groups have popped up across Africa, and ISIS and al-Qaida have significantly grown their presence there. It may be the next important battlefield in the global counterterrorism fight.

For more on this theme:
The Threat Posed by Hezbollah
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/middle-east/the-threat-posed-by-hezbollah

Philippine official: Abu Sayaf harboring suicide bomber
https://apnews.com/976df81b77e44d1eafacff53e260ebf6

Is Somalia losing the war against terrorist group al-Shabaab?
https://thenewsrep.com/113666/is-somalia-losing-the-war-against-al-shabaab/

10 Years Of Boko Haram: The Fate Of A Double Edged Strategy To Tackle Insecurity And Humanitarian Crises In The Lake Chad Basin

US officials say new al Qaeda leader video shows terror group is still a threat

Inside the Al Qaeda heartlands of Yemen

Zawahiri criticizes jihadists in Syria for clinging to territory under Turkey’s protection

Why a Deal With the Taliban Will Prevent Attacks on America

Why is Fatah getting cozy with Hezbollah?

The rise and rise of Hezbollah
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

**Saudi study: Millenial jihadis educated, not outcasts**
*Aya Batrawy – The Associated Press: 7 February 2019*

A sweeping report by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Saudi Arabia challenges the notion that ISIS expanded by attracting disenfranchised foreign young men with few skills who lack legitimate opportunities in society.

[https://www.apnews.com/deba42d611f43e18a1f37acaa45abd](https://www.apnews.com/deba42d611f43e18a1f37acaa45abd)

**Inside deadly Al-Shabaab recruitment cells in the country**
*Mohamed Ahmed – Daily Nation: 3 February 2019*

Al-Shabaab is luring Somali youths into joining the terrorist group by promising them well-paying jobs and scholarships.


*For more on this theme:*

**Hacking ISIS – How to Destroy the Cyber Jihad**

**Launch of National Expert Committee on Countering Radicalization to Violence**

**Bourita: Morocco's Approach to Radicalization, Terrorism is Unique**

**Empowering Parents to Combat Radicalization**
[https://clarionproject.org/empowering-parents-to-combat-radicalization/](https://clarionproject.org/empowering-parents-to-combat-radicalization/)

**Perspective: Family Terror Connections Foster Radicalization**

**Moot warns against radicalisation of youth through internet**
FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Guantanamo prison looms as option as IS fight ends
The Guantanamo Bay detention center would receive its first new prisoners in more than a decade under one option being considered as the U.S. withdraws its forces from Syria.
https://www.apnews.com/2efe302d21a6445db97a3fba3ff0eb86

For more on this theme:
Escape from Syria: the boys stranded after Isis fall

US calls for repatriation of foreign fighters held in Syria
https://apnews.com/377a62fbd303407e8b7ad9cfc59d62fe

Number of foreign ISIS fighters held in Syria surpasses 800 for the first time
https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/01/politics/foreign-fighters-syria/index.html

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES

The importance of women in counter-terrorism
The ASEAN Post: 2 February 2019
As women play an increasing role in terror activities, they must also play a role in counter-terrorism, according to a new study. “Any meaningful approach to preventing violent extremism must engage women activists and community leaders as frontline decisionmakers. Given their social capital, fluency in cultural vocabulary and extensive local knowledge, women are an important asset in shaping the discourse,” stressed the study by the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research.
https://theaseanpost.com/article/importance-women-counter-terrorism

For more on this theme:
Anti-Terrorism in Global Context

Private Security Emerges as a Weak Link in Kenya’s Counterterrorism Strategy

The dynamic monster: changing face of terrorism and counter-terrorism
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

HEALTH SECURITY

The world is too complacent about epidemics. Here’s how to change
Julie Louise Gerberding – World Economic Forum: 7 February 2019
Despite recent epidemics and infectious disease outbreaks, the global community remains complacent about these serious threats.
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/02/harnessing-the-power-of-partnerships-to-tackle-epidemics/

Militaries and Global Health: Peace, Conflict, and Disaster Response
Joshua Michaud, Kellie Moss and Derek Licina, et al. – The Lancet: 19 January 2019
This article examines the varied roles, responsibilities and approaches of militaries in global health, drawing on examples and case studies across peacetime, conflict and disaster response environments.
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)32838-1/fulltext

For more on this theme:
Drug-resistant tuberculosis a ‘blinking red’ global threat

Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: time to sound a global alert?
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)30243-0/fulltext

Protecting those on the frontline from Ebola
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/02/190202171849.htm

Today’s skepticism of vaccines could be as big of a health threat as HIV
https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/02/01/washington-state-measles-vaccine-hesitancy-disease-threat-who-column/2715098002/

Anti-Vaccine Movement Joins Ebola, Drug Resistance on List of Top Global Threats

We Need to Stop Drug-Resistant Malaria at Its Source, Right Now
https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/we-need-to-stop-drug-resistant-malaria-at-its-source-right-now/