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A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Wartime Ukraine ranks among world's top performers in anti-corruption index Peter Dickinson – Atlantic Council: 1 February 2024

Ukraine recorded solid progress in 2023 in its long struggle with corruption, according to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/wartime-ukraine-ranks-among-worlds-top-performers-in-an-ti-corruption-index/

Thousands rally in Slovakia to accuse new government's plan of going easier on corruption

The Associated Press: 7 February 2024

Protesters condemn a plan by the new government of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico to eliminate the office of the special prosecutor dealing with major crime and corruption.

https://apnews.com/article/slovakia-penal-code-protests-prime-minister-65274f8782149729ff8c5b1f-3c8f057f

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Ukraine's fight to root out corruption

https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2024/01/30/exp-ukraine-corruption-concerns-michael-bociurkew-intv-013002aseg1-cnni-world.cnn

Zelensky's Corruption Problem

https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-zelensky-corruption-problem-1863644

Can Guatemala's New President Reignite Fight Against Corruption and Crime?

https://insightcrime.org/news/guatemalas-new-president-reignite-fight-against-corruption-crime/

Committing to Combat Kleptocracy: A Guide for OGP Members

https://www.ndi.org/publications/committing-combat-kleptocracy-guide-ogp-members

Kenya's president blames corruption and incompetence for huge fireball that hurt hundreds in Nairobi

https://apnews.com/article/kenya-fire-68dd1c1e73998c6b4e392b3d79e10d12

'Reputational damage': Singapore's ruling party grapples with scandal

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Chinese nuclear fuel engineer Li Guangchang caught in anti-corruption net targeting 'high-risk' areas

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3250877/chinese-nuclear-fuel-engineer-li-guangchang-latest-corruption-net-clean-drive-high-risk-areas

Vanished kids and rampant corruption: Horrors behind Turkey's earthquake linger

https://www.politico.eu/article/a-year-on-from-turkeys-earthquake-devastation-continues/

DRUG TRAFFICKING

From drug trafficking to tobacco: Cigarettes become a new branch of business for Mexican cartels

Karina Suárez – El País: 5 February 2024

The black market in cigarettes accounts for up to 30% of a \$25 billion smuggling industry.

https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-02-05/from-drug-trafficking-to-tobacco-cigarettes-become-a-new-branch-of-business-for-mexican-cartels.html

What Is Behind the Criminal Conflict Raging in Chiapas, Mexico?

Juliana Manjarrés – InSight Crime: 8 February 2024

The new year started with a surge in violence between the Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco Cartel New Generation in what is just the latest flare-up of a prolonged conflict between the rival groups. https://insightcrime.org/news/behind-criminal-conflict-raging-chiapas-mexico/

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Honduras ex-police chief pleads guilty to US drug charge before ex-president's trial

https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/honduras-ex-police-chief-pleads-guilty-ahead-ex-presidents-us-drug-trial-2024-02-07/

Hitwomen on the Rise in Latin American Cartels

https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/hitwomen-on-the-rise-in-latin-american-cartels/

Ecuador's crackdown on violent crime helped turn the country into a narco state

https://theconversation.com/ecuadors-crackdown-on-violent-crime-helped-turn-the-country-into-a-narco-state-220920

Police Officers Fighting Drug Trafficking And Gangs In Marseille

https://www.barrons.com/news/police-officers-fighting-drug-trafficking-and-gangs-in-marseille-01eeeeea

US and China launch talks on fentanyl trafficking in a sign of cooperation amid differences

https://apnews.com/article/china-us-fentanyl-opioid-precursor-b296aeb56a3df511103ff3b2790c6450

Jordan: Crackdown on Syrian drugs, weapons depends on deals

https://www.dw.com/en/jordan-crackdown-on-syrian-drugs-weapons-depends-on-deals/a-68095433

How Rosario Became Argentina's Drug Violence Capital

https://insightcrime.org/news/how-rosario-became-argentinas-capital-drug-violence/

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https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/only-truth-will-set-mexico-freefrom-cartels

'Cocaine for the poor' threatens lives in Morocco

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/cocaine-for-the-poor-threatens-lives-in-morocco

International drug smuggling operation stuffs meth into baby dolls

https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/fbi-search-warrant-results-in-five-arrests-in-connection-with-meth-trafficking-operation-in-rosemead/

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Inside the Crime Rings Trafficking Sand

David A. Taylor - Scientific American: 1 February 2024

Organized crime is mining sand from rivers and coasts to feed demand worldwide, ruining ecosystems and communities. Can it be stopped?

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/sand-mafias-are-plundering-the-earth/

From murder to mining, threats abound in Colombian Amazon Indigenous reserves *Dora Montero – Mongabay: 5 February 2024*

A reporting team analyzed the impact of environmental crimes in 320 reserves that are part of the country's Amazon biome.

https://news.mongabay.com/2024/02/from-murder-to-mining-threats-abound-in-colombian-amazon-in-digenous-reserves/

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Unilateral efforts to combat illegal fishing may spur piracy in certain regions

https://phys.org/news/2024-02-unilateral-efforts-combat-illegal-fishing.html

'Leave the gold in the ground': Ecuador's forest guardians mobilise against illegal mining in Amazon

https://amazonfrontlines.org/chronicles/leave-the-gold-in-the-ground-ecuadors-forest-guardians-mobilise-against-illegal-mining-in-amazon/

Forensic science combats wildlife trafficking

https://news.vt.edu/articles/2024/02/cnre-wildlife-forensic-center.html

Singapore court gets tough on rhino horn smuggler

https://www.traffic.org/news/singapore-rhino-horn-smuggler-24/

An ASU professor is cracking open the weirdly profitable world of criminal bug smuggling

https://www.12news.com/article/life/animals/asu-professor-insect-smuggling-arizona-trade-weird-profit/75-ca0f6819-7b6f-4b55-aff5-0678b6eeb78a

Global efforts in curbing wildlife crime not enough

https://www.newsday.co.zw/theindependent/business-digest/article/200022569/global-efforts-in-curbing-wildlife-crime-not-enough

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https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-boakais-justice-minister-pick-is-a-serial-illegal-logger/

Illegal sand mining in Goa - Seeking solutions

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Illegal mining a "war on economy" says South African mining minister

https://www.miningmagazine.com/operational-excellence/news/4170481/illegal-mining-war-econo-my-south-african-mining-minister

ORGANIZED CRIME

Russia, Ukraine, and organized crime and illicit economies in 2024

Vanda Felbab-Brown and Diana Paz García – Brookings: 6 February 2024

Moscow's war significantly affected regional illicit economies and criminal networks, but the basic power balance between the Russian state and criminal groups has not changed.

https://www.brookings.edu/articles/russia-ukraine-and-organized-crime-and-illicit-economies-in-2024/

Organized crime declares war: The road to chaos in Ecuador

Felipe Botero Escobar – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: 2 February 2024

For years, Ecuador enjoyed a relative degree of peace. However, things have changed dramatically, and President Daniel Noboa said the country was in internal armed conflict against 22 criminal groups that he called narco-terrorists.

https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-road-to-chaos-ecuador/

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Mexico: the world's crime market par excellence

 $https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-02-02/mexico-the-worlds-crime-market-par-excellence. \\ html$

How Chinese mafia run a scam factory in Myanmar

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Pacific Islands: Spillover threats from transnational organised crime

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Organized Crime Advances in Amazon Basin

https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/organized-crime-advances-in-amazon-basin/

Number of organized-crime related homicides in Mexico from 2009 to 2020

https://www.statista.com/statistics/267224/drug-related-murders-in-mexico/

Democracy Dialogues: Battling Organized Crime in Haiti, Guatemala, and Beyond

https://www.as-coa.org/watchlisten/democracy-dialogues-battling-organized-crime-haiti-guatema-la-and-beyond

How the Kremlin uses Italian organized crime groups to sponsor pro-Russian forces in Slovakia

https://lansinginstitute.org/2024/02/05/how-the-kremlin-uses-italian-organized-crime-groups-to-spon-sor-pro-russian-forces-in-slovakia/

Organized crime, including Mexican cartels, smuggling migrants to Canada

https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-organized-crime-including-mexican-cartels-smuggling-migrants-to-canada/

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Censorship, AI, Disinformation, and Repression Undermine Asia's Elections *Mong Palatino – The Diplomat: 29 January 2024*

Old forms of repression, fortified by new technologies, have altered the political atmosphere across the region.

https://thediplomat.com/2024/01/censorship-ai-disinformation-and-repression-undermine-asias-elections/

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(Global) Report: election wave will bring tsunami of internet shutdowns

https://cybernews.com/news/report-elections-internet-restrictions-2024/

(Africa) Are Some African Governments Threatened By The Capabilities Of Starlink?

https://techlabari.com/are-some-african-governments-threatened-by-the-capabilities-of-starlink/

(Global) The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence

https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2023/repressive-power-artificial-intelligence

(Sudan) The International Community Must Protect Internet Freedom: A Lesson From Sudan

https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2024/02/the-international-community-must-protect-internet-free-dom-a-lesson-from-sudan/

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Is ASEAN Ready for Asia's First Cyber War?

Gavin Harris - The National Interest: 1 February 2024

What is the threat to ASEAN countries, and are their militaries equipped to respond?

https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/asean-ready-asia%E2%80%99s-first-cyber-war-208998

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(Philippines) Expanding scope of national security: From maritime to digital domains

https://www.philstar.com/news-commentary/2024/01/28/2329157/expanding-scope-national-security-maritime-digital-domains

(U.S., Global) Navy looking to increase cyber partnerships with foreign nations

https://defensescoop.com/2024/01/26/navy-cyber-partnerships-foreign-nations-increase/

(UK) UK government charges ahead in national cyber strategy

https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/uk/news/cyber/uk-government-charges-ahead-in-national-cyber-strategy-474893.aspx

(Ireland) Cyber Ireland unveils strategy to grow cyber security sector by 2030

https://businessplus.ie/news/cyber-ireland-cyber-security-strategy/

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Singapore Moves Ahead to Establish the ASEAN Regional CERT to Strengthen Regional Cybersecurity

CSA Singapore: 2 February 2024

The country is working closely with members to establish the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) to promote and facilitate information-sharing on cyber incidents.

https://www.csa.gov.sg/News-Events/Press-Releases/2024/singapore-moves-ahead-to-establish-the-ase-an-regional-cert-to-strengthen-regional-cybersecurity

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(Australia, South Pacific) Australians know about 'Fibre to the Premises', but what about 'Fibre to the Pacific'?

https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australians-know-about-fibre-to-the-premises-but-what-about-fibre-to-the-pacific/

(Nepal) Govt all set to establish the National Cybersecurity Center. How is it going to work?

https://english.onlinekhabar.com/national-cybersecurity-center.html

CYBERATTACKS

Philippine lawmakers demand briefing following China-linked cyberattack *Alexander Martin – The Record: 5 February 2024*

The government's announcement that it repelled an attack from hackers prompts an urgent call for a meeting on the national security issue.

https://therecord.media/philippine-lawmakers-demand-briefing-on-china-linked-cyberattack

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(U.S.) Cyberattacks on Guam could sap US forces in Indo-Pacific, Nakasone says

https://www.c4isrnet.com/cyber/2024/01/31/cyberattacks-on-guam-could-sap-us-forces-in-indo-pacific-nakasone-says/

(U.S., Global) 23andMe: Raw genetic data stolen in months-long cyberattack

https://www.scmagazine.com/news/23andme-raw-genetic-data-stolen-in-months-long-cyberattack

(U.S.) Cyberattack on Pennsylvania courts didn't appear to compromise data, officials say

https://apnews.com/article/cyberattack-pennsylvania-courts-hackers-cybersecurity-187de27a9d4eab-485b56a65e869bf298

(Albania) Albania's Institute of Statistics suffers cyberattack, some systems affected

https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/albanias-institute-statistics-suffers-cyberattack-systems-affected-106857357

CYBERCRIME

South Korea's National Intelligence Service Reveals North Korean Hackers' New Al Strategy

Sharad Natani - The 27 :420 January 2024

The hackers utilize generative artificial intelligence for planning attacks, raising concerns globally about AI's role in cybersecurity.

https://www.the 420.in/south-koreas-national-intelligence-service-reveals-north-korean-hack-ers-new-ai-strategy/

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(Nigeria) Nigeria's Cybersecurity Challenge: Four Steps To Curb Cybercrime

https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2024/02/06/nigerias-cybersecurity-challenge-four-steps-to-curb-cybercrime/?sh=3235591d34ce

(India) Kerala Police get more teeth to fight cyber crimes

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/kerala-police-gets-more-teeth-to-fight-cyber-crimes/article67818131.ece

(Global) Teens Committing Scary Cybercrimes: What's Behind the Trend?

https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/teens-committing-scary-cybercrimes-trend

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

GAO: Federal agencies lack insight on ransomware protections for critical infrastructure

Matt Bracken – CyberScoop: 30 January 2024

The United States Government Accountability Office finds that agencies overseeing key infrastructure don't know if defenses have been adopted.

https://cyberscoop.com/gao-ransomware-attacks-critical-infrastructure/

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(Global) Global critical infrastructure faces relentless cyber activity

https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2024/01/29/ot-persistent-attacks/

(Ukraine, Russia) Series of Cyberattacks Hit Ukrainian Critical Infrastructure Organizations

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(U.S., Iran) US sanctions Iranian military hackers for attacks on water facilities

https://therecord.media/sanctions-iran-hackers-us-water-utilities-attacks

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

UN experts: Terrorist threat is high in Africa conflict zones and Afghanistan, and rose in Europe

Edith M. Lederer – The Associated Press: 1 February 2024

They say the terrorist threat from al-Qaida, the Islamic State group and their affiliates remains high.

https://apnews.com/article/al-qaida-islamic-state-terrorist-threats-africa-afghanistan-162c899b2ed-71c7be1724eb03ece772b

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Deaths Linked to Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Continue to Spiral

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Madrasahs Go Mainstream: Taliban To Grant University Degrees To Religious Students In New Blow To Secular Education

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Combating the financing of terrorism: A never-ending battle

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ISRAEL/HAMAS

2-state solution remains key to ending Israel-Hamas war, Sullivan says *Katherine Long – Politico: 4 February 2024*

United States President Joe Biden remains keen on such a plan as a resolution, national security adviser Jake Sullivan said.

https://www.politico.com/news/2024/02/04/israel-hamas-war-sullivan-00139503

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What the U.S. recognizing a Palestinian state would mean

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Has Diplomacy Run Its Course in the Israel-Hamas War?

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Scoop: U.S., allies hope to soon announce steps to end Israel-Hezbollah fighting

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What is Hezbollah and how is it linked to the Israel-Gaza war? I Start Here

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Explainer: How Hamas Ended Up on US List of Terrorist Groups

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Hezbollah-Linked Media Spread Falsehoods to Undermine US Efforts to Secure Red Sea from Houthi Attacks

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Israel issues its most detailed warning yet to Hezbollah, while the war in Gaza marks 4 months

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Why Choosing the Right Historical Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Matters https://time.com/6588848/israeli-palestinian-conflict-historical-approach/

Israel and Hamas are far apart on a Gaza cease-fire and hostage deal. What are the sticking points?

https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-hamas-hostages-ceasefire-9f57efb1a01afebb9a921cfbf01648bb What's in Hamas's 135-day proposal for a Gaza truce?

https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/7/whats-in-hamass-135-day-proposal-for-a-gaza-truce

Hamas shows signs of return in Gaza City after Israel withdraws most of its troops from area

https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/hamas-shows-signs-of-return-in-gaza-city-after-israel-withdraws-of-its-most-troops-from-area

Analysis shows destruction and possible buffer zone along Gaza Strip's border with Israel

https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-war-gaza-strip-buffer-zone-72a782ddd532a4331b660a735e 36acb0

Israel making progress in tunnel hunt for Hamas leader Sinwar, Israeli officials say

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UN: Gaza Crisis Deepens as Donor Nations Cut Aid

https://www.voanews.com/a/israel-hamas-battle-in-gaza-as-warring-sides-consider-new-temporary-cease-fire-/7466317.html

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Has the Gaza War Helped Hezbollah?

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The Day After in Gaza: Four Post-War Scenarios

https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/91561

The EU is worried that Israel might extend the war in Gaza to a 'pressure cooker' town near Egypt

https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-eu-gaza-rafah-62d7272225a016fd51122fd57cfcd04f

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https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2024-02/israel-palestine-chance-end-cy-cle-conflict

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Microsoft uncovers extensive Iranian AI-based cyber ops against Israel amid Gaza war

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Qatar's Gaza War Mediation May Be A Double-Edged Sword – Analysis

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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

The anniversary of war in Ukraine — **10 years, not two years** Andrew Maher – The Strategist: 7 February 2024

In the coming weeks, a flood of analysis can be expected marking the end of the second year. In fact,

the war began 10 years ago when Russia seized Crimea.

https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-anniversary-of-war-in-ukraine-10-years-not-two-years/

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Ukraine: Digital government is central to resilience

https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ukraine-digital-government-is-central-to-resilience/

Europe and NATO are stepping up on Ukraine

https://www.brookings.edu/articles/europe-and-nato-are-stepping-up-on-ukraine/

An Australian strategy for improved aid to Ukraine

https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/australian-strategy-improved-aid-ukraine

In Year Three of the Ukraine War, It's Time to Learn the Lessons of the First Two

https://carnegieendowment.org/2024/02/07/in-year-three-of-ukraine-war-it-s-time-to-learn-lessons-of-first-two-pub-91580

Making Attrition Work: A Viable Theory of Victory for Ukraine

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https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91556

Amid Frontline Stalemate, Kyiv Targets Ukraine's Beleaguered Diaspora in Russia

https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91536

A long war works against Ukraine — and the West's own security

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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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How peace in Ukraine might be negotiated

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Putin casts the Ukraine conflict as a fight for Russia's survival as he seeks reelection

https://apnews.com/article/russia-putin-election-822c76b8ee3665a04d57cded0b42b225

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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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Black Sea Successes and Ukraine's Path to Victory

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