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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

World’s Biggest Wealth Fund Set to Target National Oil Giants
Lars Erik Taraldsen and Ott Ummelas – Bloomberg: 4 February 2021
Norway’s $1.3 trillion wealth fund is taking a critical look at the stakes it holds in national oil companies that might be tied to corruption. The Oslo-based fund, the world’s biggest of its kind, has already steered away from tobacco, weapons, coal and palm oil following recommendations from the fund’s ethics council.

Corruption in Putin’s Russia Thrives While Economic Freedom Dies
James M. Roberts – The Daily Signal: 9 February 2021
Russian protesters have taken to the streets in recent weeks to express widespread anger and frustration with ongoing corruption in their country.

For more on this theme:
China Executes Former Banking Official for Graft
A Key Player in Malaysia’s Biggest-Ever Corruption Scandal Found Sanctuary in Cyprus With Help From a Major London Firm
Australia is out of the top ten in global anti-corruption rankings — why?
Corruption, the Perception of Corruption, and Violence: Exploring the Linkages in Mexico
Corruption in the Pacific: no change in perceptions in 2020
Whistleblowers Report COVID-19 Corruption in South Africa
Cyprus unveils anti-corruption steps to quell public angst
https://apnews.com/article/cyprus-nicos-anastasiades-0debb82d751435f7e9858975c10ed57f
Brazil’s anti-corruption ‘Car Wash’ task force ends in gloom
https://apnews.com/article/brazil-latin-america-fires-sao-paulo-alejandro-toledo-5883d4d8c-0c81ae73b17d75b02b33a06
Meet the Nigerian Corruption Cop Lagarde Expects Will ‘Rock’ the WTO
**DRUG TRAFFICKING**

**China Turns Blind Eye To Lucrative Cartel Chemical Trade, DEA Says**  
*Max Daly – VICE: 3 February 2021*

China and Mexico are reportedly not doing enough to stem the global trade in chemicals used to make fentanyl and methamphetamine. China is ignoring a chemical industry that is fueling the deadly U.S. drug crisis because it brings huge profits into the country, senior U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials have told VICE.


**Honduras President Targeted Again in US Criminal Investigation**  
*Parker Asmann – InSight Crime: 10 February 2021*

U.S. prosecutors are investigating Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez, according to a new court filing, piling pressure on a leader whom prosecutors have already accused of participation in the nation’s bloody narcotics trade.


*For more on this theme:*

**Women on the ‘high’way**
[https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/2021/feb/03/women-on-the-highway-2258680.html](https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/2021/feb/03/women-on-the-highway-2258680.html)

**Criminal Distancing: Drug Cartels and the State during Covid-19**

**Gang violence poses ‘threat to public security’ in Europe**

**Addressing the Mafia Problem in Italy**

**Increased risk for Nigerians as drug smugglers rebrand Tramadol**
[https://issafrica.org/iss-today/increased-risk-for-nigerians-as-drug-smugglers-rebrand-tramadol](https://issafrica.org/iss-today/increased-risk-for-nigerians-as-drug-smugglers-rebrand-tramadol)

**The Little-Known Bolivia-Asia Drug Route**

**Large seizures reflect booming drug trade, say gardaí**

**Brazilian Authorities Target Growing Ecstasy Trade**

**Cocaine: falling coffee prices force Peru’s farmers to cultivate coca**

**Cryptocurrency vs. Fiat: Drug Dealers Prefer Traditional Money to their Digital Alternative**
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Inside China’s deadly Rhinoceros horn trade: Corrupt officers, personnel and prosecutors
Abbianca Makoni – Evening Standard: 11 February 2021

Prosecutors, police officers, international airlines and even diplomats in Southeast Asia have been working with criminal gangs to smuggle millions of pounds worth of endangered rhinoceros horns through border crossings to reach customers in China and Vietnam.


How smugglers are being caught by their own mobile phone data
Namita Singh – The Independent: 11 February 2021

Technology that can find links in complex criminal webs has become the latest tool in the fight against poachers.


For more on this theme:
Fears for rosewood as Guinea-Bissau prepares to lift six-year logging ban

Indigenous groups blast Amazon state’s plan to legalize wildcat mining

US officials working to address IUU fishing in Latin America

Tunisia deploys satellite monitoring system for fishing vessels
https://africanews.space/tunisia-satellite-monitoring-system-fishing-vessels/

Australia to monitor illegal activities in marine parks in drone trial

Banks can help stop illegal wildlife trade
https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2021/02/01/banks-can-help-stop-illegal-wildlife-trade-.html

The lowtech tools of an ugly trade
https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lifestyle/lowtech-tools-ugly-trade

How loopholes in China’s animal protection law risk new virus outbreaks

‘A crime against nature’: Sale of African elephants linked to corruption, critics fear
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/african-elephants-sale-auction-b1794287.html

Legal failings leave illegal loggers unpunished and certified in Indonesia
https://news.mongabay.com/2021/02/illegal-logging-law-enforcement-indonesia-study/
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Human Trafficking Accompanies Illegal Mining in Venezuela’s Orinoco
InSight Crime: 9 February 2021

A new report on human trafficking in Venezuela’s Bolívar state shows that desperate Venezuelans who come to the mining region in search of work are forced to labor in dangerous mining tunnels in conditions akin to slavery, and women face being sexually exploited.

For more on this theme:

Executive Order on Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework to Address the Causes of Migration, to Manage Migration Throughout North and Central America, and to Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border

A Moroccan Initiative Challenges Stereotypes About Migrants

‘A work in progress’: Refugees, migrants must have vaccine access, UN says

Systemic forced labour and child labour has come to an end in Uzbek cotton

What Role Should Anti-Trafficking Play in U.S. Development Efforts?
https://www.cfr.org/blog/what-role-should-anti-trafficking-play-us-development-efforts

Human Mobility along the Chilean-Bolivian borders
https://www.ifrc.org/docs/Appeals/21/IB09022021B.pdf

Colombia to give temporary protective status to Venezuelan migrants
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/02/colombia-protective-status-venezuelan-migrants

Ecuador& Peru: Human Mobility Border Closure
https://www.ifrc.org/docs/Appeals/21/IB09022021A.pdf

Europe could face another big migration wave after the pandemic
https://www.ekathimerini.com/262048/article/ekathimerini/comment/europe-could-face-another-big-migration-wave-after-the-pandemic
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Digital siege: Internet cuts become favored tool of regimes
Kelvin Chan – The Associated Press: 11 February 2021

Around the world, shutting down the internet has become an increasingly popular tactic of repressive and authoritarian regimes and some illiberal democracies. “Internet shutdowns have been massively underreported or misreported over the years,” said Alp Toker, founder of internet monitoring organization Netblocks.

https://apnews.com/article/world-news-uganda-myanmar-army-media-2395b6db25272a95bdc6d-1b2238e5e9e

For more on this theme:
(China) ‘The police will visit you’: why GameStonk won't come to China
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-retail-trading-china-idUSKBN2A50HJ

(China) China Blocks Clubhouse App After Users Embrace ‘Sensitive’ Political Topics

(Russia) Russia: Social Media Pressured to Censor Posts
https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/05/russia-social-media-pressured-censor-posts

(Russia) The Kremlin May Make Foreign Internet Companies Open Offices in Russia
https://slate.com/technology/2021/02/russia-kremlin-internet-controls-foreign-companies-offices.html

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Google moves away from diet of ‘cookies’ to track users
Agence France-Presse: 7 February 2021

Google is trying to balance the rising demands of privacy-conscious consumers with the financial needs of developers and advertisers.


For more on this theme:
(China) How will China’s privacy law apply to the Chinese state?

(Morocco) Kaspersky: Moroccans Not Concerned About Cybersecurity

(Global) These two technologies could supercharge our privacy on the internet
https://www.fastcompany.com/90602972/encryption-and-decentralization-privacy
CYBER STATECRAFT

Russia-Iran cooperation poses challenges for US cyber strategy, global norms
John Hardie and Annie Fixler – C4ISRNET: 9 February 2021

Russia and Iran inked an agreement last month on information security. Such cooperation will help these authoritarian regimes continue to suppress internal dissent and expand joint efforts to counter the Western goal of preserving an open and free internet.

https://www.c4isrnet.com/thought-leadership/2021/02/08/russia-iran-cooperation-poses-challenges-for-us-cyber-strategy-global-norms/

For more on this theme:
(China) China has stolen the personal data of 80% of American adults

(Australia) Aussie govts urged to adopt global cyber security standards for cloud

(Pakistan) Ministry drafts National Cyber Security Policy 2021

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Connecting the Dots: Australia and Digital Infrastructure Development in the Pacific Islands
Tom Corben and Euan Moyle – The Diplomat: 6 February 2021

COVID-19 has highlighted the reactive nature of Australia’s approach to digital infrastructure development in the region.


For more on this theme:
(Philippines) ‘Telcos have no excuse not to improve services’
https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/02/08/news/national/telcos-have-no-excuse-not-to-improve-services/837974/

(Indo-Pacific) Indo-Pacific tech sector ‘ripe for investment’ and cyber defence cooperation: Research

(Europe, Global) Sustainability should be ‘underlying principle’ of digital policy: German minister
CYBER CRIME

Cybercrime Goes Mainstream
Marc Wilczek – Dark Reading: 5 February 2021

Organized cyber crime is global in scale and the second-greatest risk over the next decade.
https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities---threats/cybercrime-goes-mainstream/a/d-id/1340012

For more on this theme:
(Global) How security can use deep intelligence to fight cybercrime
https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/94099-how-security-can-use-deep-intelligence-to-fight-cybercrime

(U.K.) Fraud and cyber crime still vastly under-reported

(Global) Cybercrime on the rise: Plotting a way forward
https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/94527-cybercrime-on-the-rise-plotting-a-way-forward

(Global) Deconstructing Cybercrime: Top 10 Attack Methods Attackers Use
https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/02/04/deconstructing-cybercrime-top-10-attack-methods-attackers-use/?sh=91547b162e12

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Global Public-Private Partnerships Key to Fighting Cybercrime
James Coker – Infosecurity: 27 January 2021

The cyber-threat landscape has evolved since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the tactics used by cyber criminals have not changed significantly because they were already operating in the digital space, the shift to remote working has made it easier to target organizations. In this increasingly dangerous landscape, the need for law enforcement agencies to work across borders and with multiple private entities has grown substantially.

(India) Centre of excellence in cyber security mooted in Hyderabad

(U.S., Global) Defining success and mapping the road ahead for public-private partnership and critical infrastructure cybersecurity
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

UN experts: COVID-19 upped extremist threats in conflicts

The threat to international peace and security posed by ISIS terrorist fighters is “on the rise again,” the United Nations’ counterterrorism chief told the Security Council.


Into the Grey Zone: The ‘offensive cyber’ used to confuse Islamic State militants and prevent drone attacks
Deborah Haynes – Sky News: 8 February 2021

A secret United Kingdom cyber operation to undermine ISIS ideology and weaken its fighters on the battlefield involved disabling drones, jamming phones and targeting servers to block online propaganda, according to military and security chiefs.


For more on this theme:

ISIS Exploits Lebanon’s Power Vacuum
https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2782481/isis-exploits-lebanon%E2%80%99s-power-vacuum

Boko Haram: A Reflection of IS on Africa
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/01/29/boko-haram-a-reflection-of-is-on-africa/

Years After a Massacre, Yazidis Finally Bury Their Loved Ones

ISIS IT Group Warns of Vulnerability of Google Play Store Messaging App
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/isis-it-group-warns-of-vulnerability-of-google-play-store-messaging-app/

Kurds Warn of Growing Islamic State Capabilities in Iraq

Residents of Hasaka’s Shaddadi town fear return of ISIS
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/100220212

Islamic State regrouping in northern Iraq and relying on women operatives
https://www.middl easteye.net/news/iraq-islamic-state-regrouping-northern-women-operatives

Islamic State Poised for Possible Resurgence in Afghanistan, US Officials Warn
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al Qaeda’s leader in Yemen under arrest, UN report reveals
Paul Cruickshank – CNN: 4 February 2021

Khalid Batarfi was arrested in October, and the terror group has since suffered an erosion of its ranks caused by desertions, according to a recent United Nations report.


For more on this theme:

Al-Qaeda-linked leader again descends on Idlib streets to polish his image

Tiny Drones Are the Biggest Threat in the Middle East Since IEDs, Top General Says

Al-Qaeda Leaders Still Sheltered & Protected by Taliban in Afghanistan: UN Watchdog

Crypto Use in Terrorism ‘a Growing Problem,’ Yellen Says

Prominent Hezbollah critic Slim killed in Lebanon

Atlassian software hit by Hezbollah-backed hackers

Afghanistan- Taliban Deny Claims That Freed Prisoners Have Returned to Battlefield
https://menafn.com/1101575431/Afghanistan-Taliban-Deny-Claims-That-Freed-Prisoners-Have-Returned-to-Battlefield

Afghan Officials: Taliban Intensified Violence Amid Stalled Peace Talks

Hezbollah and Other Non-State Actors Acquire Asymmetric Tools in Cyberspace
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

COVID pandemic can make teens easy targets for radicalization
Kathleen Schuster – Deutsche Welle: 6 February 2021

Teens at home under coronavirus lockdown are dealing with unprecedented uncertainty about the future. German teachers are seeing an upswing in “existential fears” that could make students easy targets for extremist groups.

https://www.dw.com/en/covid-pandemic-can-make-teens-easy-targets-for-radicalization/a-56469580

For more on this theme:

Anti-radicalisation experts are dealing with dozens of calls a month

Radicalisation in the EU: What is it? How can it be prevented?
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/02/07/radicalisation-in-the-eu-what-is-it-how-can-it-be-prevented/

The Internet and self-radicalisation

Far right vs Islamists: a vicious circle of extremism in Southeast Asia?

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES

The View From Tehran: Iran’s Militia Doctrine
Saeid Golkar and Kasra Aarabi – Tony Blair Institute for Global Change: 11 February 2021

This report exposes the vast network of violent organizations supported by the Iranian regime. It details the militias supported by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the fastest-growing form of Tehran-backed proxy terrorist outfits in the Middle East and goes on to argue that militias supported, trained and supplied by the IRGC pose the greatest threat to regional stability.

https://institute.global/policy/view-tehran-irans-militia-doctrine

For more on this theme:

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Is Radicalizing Young Men Across the Middle East. The U.S. Needs a Counterinsurgency Strategy
https://time.com/5937567/iran-revolutionary-guard-ideology/

Iran: Still a State-Sponsor of Terrorism, and Growing Bolder
IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

China and Russia’s ‘aggressive’ master plan
Jamie Seidel – The Queensland Times: 6 February 2021

NATO members are increasingly concerned about growing cooperation between Russia and China in areas of common interest, NATO’s top general said.


For more on this theme:

A scathing new documentary from HBO alleges a Chinese coverup on the coronavirus

Ukraine shuts TV channels owned by Russia-friendly tycoon
https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-europe-television-europe-russia-9b4b27d0c-714273175399850cc635a2

Why is Kremlin Tagging Protesters ‘Political Pedophiles’?

Inside a Pro-Huawei Influence Campaign

Think tank draws lessons from Taiwan’s battle against Chinese disinformation

Anatomy of a disinformation campaign: The who, what and why of deliberate falsehoods on Twitter