CONTENTS

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)
  Corruption
  Drug Trafficking
  Trafficking in Scarce or Protected Resources
  Organized Crime

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)
  Internet Governance
  Internet Freedom
  Cyber Strategy and Risks
  Cyber Capacity Building
  Cybercrime
  Protection of Critical Infrastructure

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
  Terrorism Around the World
  Israel/Hamas
  Russia/Ukraine
COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Guatemala’s long shadow of corruption
Sara Meyer – IPS: 12 February 2024

President Bernardo Árabe has promised to fight corruption, but he faces the mammoth task of dismantling the deeply flawed structures of his predecessors.


Slovak law change roils corruption, rape prosecutions
Tom Nicholson – Politico: 9 February 2024

The amendment was prepared by members of Parliament currently under indictment and would favorably affect the outcome of their court cases, the president notes.


For more on this theme:

EU corruption scandal: Chief inspector’s leaked comments threaten to blow up case
https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/02/05/eu-corruption-scandal-chief-inspectors-leaked-comments-threaten-to-blow-up-case

A New Era for China’s Overseas Anti-Corruption Campaign
https://thediplomat.com/2024/02/a-new-era-for-chinas-overseas-anti-corruption-campaign/

British intelligence points to corruption as significant problem for Russian military
https://news.yahoo.com/british-intelligence-points-corruption-significant-121800646.html

Malawi Journalist in Hiding After Exposing Government Corruption

Kenya: Report exposes flaws in President Ruto’s war on corruption

Malaysians outraged by reduced jail sentence for corrupt former prime minister Najib Razak as departing king grants leniency

The world urgently needs an international anti-corruption court

Kuwait: former ministers quizzed over corruption
https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-former-ministers-quizzed-over-corruption-1.100787200

In the Pacific, Corruption and Poor Policing Open a Door to China

Qatargate corruption inquiry widens as police question new suspect MEP Maria Arena
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Former Premier of British Virgin Islands Guilty in Landmark Drug Case
Gavin Voss – InSight Crime: 12 February 2024

Andrew Fahie has been convicted on drug-trafficking charges in the United States, highlighting how systemic corruption makes the island territory a formidable hub in the cocaine trade.

Why Drug Cartels Are Expanding to Asia
Carolina Sampó and Valeska Troncoso – Americas Quarterly: 14 February 2024

As cocaine flows to remoter markets, transnational illicit traffic poses a global risk.
https://americasquarterly.org/article/why-drug-cartels-are-expanding-to-asia/

For more on this theme:

Former Drug Smugglers Share How Drug Trafficking Actually Works

The Opium Trade: From Empire Survival to Synthetic Opiates
https://medriva.com/addictions/the-opium-trade-from-empire-survival-to-synthetic-opiates/

Brokers: Lynchpins of the Precursor Chemical Flow to Mexico
https://insightcrime.org/investigations/brokers-lynchpins-precursor-chemical-flow-mexico/

Mexican cartel violence likely to increase in 2024, experts say

Murder, Corruption, and Drugs: The Ledgers That Could Sink Honduras’ Ex-President

ELN, Ex-FARC Mafia Drive Rising Cocaine Production in Zulia, Venezuela

Unpacking Criminal Violence in Durán, Ecuador’s Cocaine Warehouse

Mexican drug cartels are targeting America’s ‘last best place’

Costa Rica asks EU for help to fight surging drug trafficking and violence in the country

Myanmar is now the main global supplier of opium, but some who’ve left the trade think there’s a better option

Can Ecuador Avoid Becoming a Narco-State
https://www.cfr.org/blog/can-ecuador-avoid-becoming-narco-state

Revealed: The eye-watering amounts drug cartels offer young people to work for them in the Campo de Gibraltar – one of the poorest areas of Spain
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

An Assessment of Wildlife Trade in Central Asia
Traffic: 12 February 2024

A first-of-its-kind analysis sets out to establish a baseline assessment of both legal and illegal wildlife commerce, paving the way for studies to delve deeper into the species involved, their purposes and evolving trade dynamics.

Rio's Carnival parade makes urgent plea to stop illegal mining in Indigenous lands

Carnival dancers took to the biggest stage in Rio de Janeiro to pressure the president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, to deliver on promises to eradicate the practice.

For more on this theme:

A Review Of The Laws Related To The Use And Trade Of Wild Species In Four Central Asian Countries

Liberia: Illegal Miners Mine Sand in Historic Beach Graveyard

Major seafood buyers support US proposal to address IUU fishing, human rights violations in South Pacific

Temperatures rising: Illegal and unregulated fisheries, climate change, and armed conflict at sea

Haryana: Illegal mining a big ‘threat’ to Yamuna ecosystem, says Parliamentary panel

Nigeria’s Federal Government Declares War on Illegal Mining
https://bnnbreaking.com/politics/nigerias-federal-government-declares-war-on-illegal-mining/

Illegal mining threat to economy, security of West Africa-Bio

Eyes in the Sky, Guardians of the Deep: How AI Drones are Combatting Illegal Fishing and Protecting Our Oceans
https://medium.com/@realreitberg/eyes-in-the-sky-guardians-of-the-deep-how-ai-drones-are-combatting-illegal-fishing-and-f482b0d10e07

‘Incognito’ fishing vessels deny Africa $11bn in annual revenues
ORGANIZED CRIME

Criminal Violence Paralyzes Mexico's Southern State of Guerrero
Sara Garcia and Daniela Valle – InSight Crime: 13 February 2024
Battles between crime groups over lucrative criminal economies such as extortion have sparked a new wave of violence in the state, highlighting the many factors driving insecurity in the region.

'We just want to find our children': Understanding disappearances as a tool of organized crime
People from all walks of life have disappeared during Mexico’s so-called war on drugs: Many have become victims of human trafficking as migrants — often displaced by criminal groups — go missing as they seek a better life elsewhere.
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/disappearances-we-just-want-to-find-our-children/

Why anti-money laundering policies are failing
Elisabeth Krecké – GIS: 15 February 2024
Current methods are costly, ineffective and excessively regulatory. New tools are on the way.
https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/why-anti-money-laundering-policies-are-failing/

For more on this theme:
Violence is contagious among members of Italian mafia groups, study shows
Mapping Transnational Crime Networks
Operation Ignis Deals Blow to Organized Crime in Paraguay
Canada needs to get tough on organized crime to tackle vehicle theft
N Korea peddles illicit gambling sites to South's criminal ring
Haiti’s gang crisis and international responses
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/haiti-gang-crisis-and-international-responses/
Montenegro's Struggle: Exposing the Nexus of Patriarchy, Power, and Organized Crime
Storming of Ecuador TV station by armed men has ominous connection: Mexican drug cartels
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Licensing AI is not the answer — but it contains the answers
Tom Wheeler – Brookings: 12 February 2024

Licensing artificial intelligence promises to be impractical and anti-competitive, and it is not the answer for regulation.

https://www.brookings.edu/articles/licensing-ai-is-not-the-answer-but-it-contains-the-answers/

For more on this theme:
(India, Global) How India engages with the polarising global debate on cybersecurity norms
https://scroll.in/article/1062127/how-india-engages-with-the-polarising-global-debate-on-cybersecurity-norms

(Global) Would the “Mensch” in the Room Please Stand Up!

(ASEAN) Asean digital ministers pledge cooperation to fight cybercrime, control AI
https://www.nationthailand.com/thailand/general/40035211

INTERNET FREEDOM

Russia Combats Internet Freedom

The conflict in Ukraine has prompted Moscow to take unprecedented measures against uncensored information and internet encryption.

https://jamestown.org/program/russia-combats-internet-freedom/

For more on this theme:
(Russia) Russians are trying to escape online censorship

(Global) New Report Measures Attempts to Impose, and Evade, Internet Repression

(China) China’s VPN Usage Nearly Doubles Amid Internet Censorship

(Sri Lanka) Sri Lanka To Amend Online Censorship Law After Backlash From Tech Giants
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

PBBM approves National Cybersecurity Plan to fortify Philippines against various threats
ETCIO SEA: 13 February 2024

Department of Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John Uy said the plan was created in consultation with the public and private sectors and was compared with the cybersecurity efforts of other countries.


For more on this theme:
(France) French government launches health institutions cyber defense plan

(Russia) Russia’s Countervalue Cyber Approach: Utility or Futility?
https://carnegieendowment.org/2024/02/05/russia-s-countervalue-cyber-approach-utility-or-futility-pub-91534

(Global) Lieber Studies Big Data Volume – Attacking Big Data: Strategic Competition, the Race for AI, and Cyber Sabotage

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

UAE Banks Conduct Cyber War Games Exercise
Deanna Ritchie – ReadWrite: 7 February 2024

Cyber Wargaming 2024 is being conducted under the supervision of the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates and the government’s Cyber Security Council.


For more on this theme:
(Nepal) Govt all set to establish the National Cybersecurity Center. How is it going to work?

(Global) Why Demand for Tabletop Exercises Is Growing
https://www.darkreading.com/cybersecurity-operations/why-demand-for-tabletop-exercises-is-growing

(UK) UK cyber skills gap risk to businesses and national security
CYBERCRIME

A European cybercrime breakthrough is good news but only half the battle
Emily Taylor – Chatham House: 9 February 2024

While the framework is an important step, major differences with other parts of the world must be overcome to achieve real progress in the fight against cybercrime.

https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/02/european-cybercrime-breakthrough-good-news-only-half-battle

For more on this theme:

(Global) Lessons Learned From Tracing Cybercrime’s Evolution On The Dark Web

(Global) Civil Society Warns of ‘Critical Gaps’ in UN’s Draft Cybercrime Treaty

(Global) Cybercriminals are creating their own AI chatbots to support hacking and scam users
https://theconversation.com/cybercriminals-are-creating-their-own-ai-chatbots-to-support-hacking-and-scam-users-222643

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical infrastructure cyber law needed ‘more than ever,’ Parliament told
Howard Solomon – IT World Canada: 6 February 2024

The Canadian government’s proposal to force providers to toughen their cybersecurity is “needed now more than ever,” an expert says.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Where’s the federal legislation for state water utility cybersecurity?

(U.S.) Safeguarding Critical Infrastructure In The Transportation Sector

(UK) Cybersecurity solution for critical infrastructure
https://www.theengineer.co.uk/content/news/cybersecurity-solution-for-critical-infrastructure

(UK) UK Water Infrastructure Faces Heightened Cybersecurity Threats
https://theatlasnews.co/analysis/2024/02/05/uk-water-infrastructure-faces-heightened-cybersecurity-threats/
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Musk's X sold checkmarks to Hezbollah and other terrorist groups, report says
The nonprofit Tech Transparency Project said the platform formerly known as Twitter is providing premium services to the groups' accounts.

For more on this theme:

Nigeria’s anti graft body discovers religious sect laundering money for terrorist groups

Latin American Governments Must be Prepared for Iran-Backed Terrorism Threat
https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/latin-american-governments-must-be-prepared-for-iran-backed-terrorism-threat/

Brief: Can Mozambique Keep Cabo Delgado Secure from Islamic State Fighters?
https://jamestown.org/program/brief-can-mozambique-keep-cabo-delgado-secure-from-islamic-state-fighters/

Generating Terror: The Risks of Generative AI Exploitation
https://ctc.westpoint.edu/generating-terror-the-risks-of-generative-ai-exploitation/

The Online Frontline: Decoding al-Shabaab's Social Media Strategy
https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-online-frontline-decoding-al-shabaabs-social-media-strategy/

Is Left-Wing Terrorism Making a Comeback in Germany? Analyzing the “Engel-Guntermann Network”
https://ctc.westpoint.edu/is-left-wing-terrorism-making-a-comeback-in-germany-analyzing-the-engel-guntermann-network/

Tower 22: Innovations in Drone Attacks by Non-State Actors

Ibn Taymiyyah’s Medieval 'Inghimas' Tactic as Daesh’s Modern Propaganda Instrument

China’s recognition of the Taliban sets a dangerous precedent

AI Caliphate: The Creation of Pro-Islamic State Propaganda Using Generative AI
https://gnet-research.org/2024/02/05/ai-caliphate-pro-islamic-state-propaganda-and-generative-ai/

Grooming for Violence: Similarities Between Radicalisation and Grooming Processes in Gaming Spaces
Opinion: Hamas and the “Two-State Solution”
Elliott Abrams – Council on Foreign Relations: 13 February 2024

News reports that the militant organization will agree to such a plan actually show an effort to improve its political standing.

https://www.cfr.org/blog/hamas-and-two-state-solution

For more on this theme:

What Is Hezbollah's Role in the Israel-Hamas War?

Iran vows to keep backing Hezbollah during regional tensions linked to Israel-Hamas war
https://apnews.com/article/lebanon-iran-hezbollah-amirabdollahian-hamas-125f8a9daef7a54da95b2c8a32c4120

Lebanon is using Hezbollah to blackmail Israel on border talks
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/hezbollah-lebanon-israel-border-blackmail/

The Inevitable War Between Israel And Hezbollah – Analysis

The Israel-Hezbollah Conflict Is Escalating and IDF Warns It's Just the Start

Nasrallah reiterates Hezbollah won't halt attacks before Gaza war stops

The Israel-Hamas War: The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza

Gaza cease-fire and hostage release talks appear to stall as Netanyahu and Hamas trade blame
https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-02-14-2024-15eb8cbd5f15d52928711193081fe9c6

The Gaza Crisis: Only a Part of Iran’s Regional Menace
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/gaza-crisis-only-part-irans-regional-menace

On GPS: Can Israel achieve its political and military goals in Gaza?

Israel Discovers Hamas Tunnels Under UNRWA Gaza Headquarters

Families of hostages visit international court to urge the arrest of Hamas leaders
https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hostages-hamas-icc-898ac56c33f13fa04fa9acece622e2d

Google: Iranian, regional hacking operations that target Israel remain opportunistic but focused
https://cyberscoop.com/google-iranian-regional-hacking-operations-that-target-israel-remain-opportunistic-but-focused/

Egypt is threatening to void its decades-old peace treaty with Israel. What does that mean?
https://apnews.com/article/israel-egypt-peace-treaty-hamas-war-rafah-46df917a975ed4c4f88d5de01a8508e0
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Invasion of Rafah could threaten key Israel-Egypt peace treaty: Report

South Africa asks UN court to urgently examine Israel's targeting of Rafah in ongoing genocide case
https://apnews.com/article/south-africa-israel-court-rafah-gaza-0c5d0d34002cea87cb53d7ec3280271a

Russia's Dangerous New Friends: How Moscow Is Partnering With the Axis of Resistance
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/russias-dangerous-new-friends

Israel's Targeting AI: How Capable is It?
https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/israels-targeting-ai-how-capable-it

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Leadership Change in Russia
Liana Fix and Maria Snegovaya – Council on Foreign Relations: 15 February 2024
Vladimir Putin’s grip on power no longer appears ironclad. The United States should prepare for potential leadership change in Moscow and develop strategies with allies to mitigate fallout.
https://www.cfr.org/report/leadership-change-russia

Jailed Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny dies, prison service says
Anna Chernova and Christian Edwards – CNN: 15 February 2024
The outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin made global headlines when he was poisoned with a nerve agent in 2020. His reported death at 47 comes shortly before March’s presidential election.

For more on this theme:

Will Ukraine Survive?
https://www.cfr.org/article/will-ukraine-survive

The State of Ukraine’s Energy Sector after Ten Years of War
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/state-ukraines-energy-sector-after-ten-years-war

Will Zelenskyy’s new commander-in-chief change Ukraine’s fortunes on the battlefield?
https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/02/will-zelenskyy-s-new-commander-chief-change-ukraines-fortunes-battlefield

Can Europe Hold the Line on Ukraine?
https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/02/can-europe-hold-the-line-on-ukraine/

Russian Elections Have a Purpose, But Not Evicting the Regime
https://cepa.org/article/russian-elections-have-a-purpose-but-not-evicting-the-regime/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Ukraine Struggles to Find Troops for the Frontline
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-struggles-to-find-troops-for-the-frontline/

War on the Cheap Won't Defeat Russia
https://cepa.org/article/war-on-the-cheap-wont-defeat-russia/

Understanding Ukraine’s Military Shakeup
https://cepa.org/article/understanding-ukraines-military-shakeup/

Ukraine and EU at Crossroads Over Expiring Russian Gas Deal
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-and-eu-at-crossroads-over-expiring-russian-gas-deal/

Russian Rhetoric Toward Central Asia Grows Increasingly Hostile

Russia is Breeding for War Through Youth (Para-)Militarization
https://jamestown.org/program/russia-is-breeding-for-war-through-youth-para-militarization/

Putin’s ‘Active Measures’ and Hidden Discussion Between the Kremlin and Military

Russian Economy Feels Bite of Attrition
https://jamestown.org/program/russian-economy-feels-bite-of-attrition/

DOD Official Restates Why Supporting Ukraine Is in U.S. Interest

Russia and West clash over Ukraine at Security Council meeting ahead of war anniversary
https://apnews.com/article/un-russia-us-ukraine-minsk-invasion-west-5a6b0e4099fdd683c0fd88f1f45c92d5

‘Want to go home’: Nepalis fighting for Russia in Ukraine describe horrors

Putin’s Myths About Ukraine, Debunked

Russian Military Objectives and Capacity in Ukraine Through 2024

EU takes first step to use Russia's frozen assets for Ukraine

Ukraine’s new army chief signals new momentum, but huge problems stand in the way
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-commander-syrski-32b85bdfad4e8ab097c8dc71151ad9b4
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia can sustain war effort ‘for another two or three years,’ say analysts

Detecting Russian ‘carrots’ and ‘tea bags’: Ukraine decodes enemy chatter to save lives
ee2fbf8cee92077

Ukraine says Russia buying Starlink terminals in ‘Arab countries’
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-military-intelligence-says-russia-buying-starlink-
terminals-arab-2024-02-13/

What Tucker Carlson’s Putin Interview Means for the War in Ukraine

With Western military aid increasingly uncertain, Ukraine builds its own weapons
https://www.npr.org/2024/02/13/1229974838/ukraine-weapons-industry-russia-war

Russia must pay for environmental damage in Ukraine, international group says
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-should-pay-wartime-environmental-damage-ukraine-
report-2024-02-09/

Russia used an advanced hypersonic missile for the first time in recent strike, Ukraine claims

Moscow calls Ukraine’s new Russian-born army chief a traitor, says he won’t win
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moscow-calls-ukraines-new-russian-born-army-chief-traitor-says-
he-wont-win-2024-02-09/

Putin’s history lecture reveals his dreams of a new Russian Empire
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-history-lecture-reveals-his-dreams-of-a-new-
russian-empire/

UN experts take Russia to task over deported Ukrainian children and a ‘military
agenda’ in schools
https://apnews.com/article/russia-children-rights-ukraine-united-nations-deportations-9bf8c7c698fbde
be4151caaa865173960

Russia preparing for military confrontation with West, says Estonia
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-preparing-military-confrontation-with-west-says-
estonia-2024-02-13/

Putin’s Perspective on the Russia-Ukraine War
https://geopoliticalfutures.com/putins-perspective-on-the-russia-ukrainian-war/

‘One shot, one kill’: How Ukraine-Russia war is changing warfare

Ukraine war: why propaganda doesn’t work as well in Belarus as it does in Russia
russia-222038
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

China Sides With Russia at UN, Urges End to Weapons for Ukraine
https://www.newsweek.com/china-russia-ukraine-mink-agreement-weapons-1869726

How Russia’s Zircon Hypersonic Missiles Will Impact Ukraine War

Ukraine's cyberattacks on Russia aiding ground operations, top Kyiv cyber official says
https://therecord.media/ukraine-cyberattacks-aiding-ground-war-russia

Russia, Ukraine, And The Future Use Of Strategic Intelligence – Analysis

Ukraine claims Russia uses its cooperation with China to carry out cyberattacks