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CORRUPTION

Why Communist Anti-Corruption Campaigns Never Work
David Hutt – The Diplomat: 23 February 2021

Communist countries such as China, Laos and Vietnam have made grand claims about tackling corruption in recent years. But ongoing anti-graft campaigns focus on officials’ moral conduct without addressing the political structures that incentivize corruption, which is why they will ultimately fail.

For more on this theme:
Corruption Watch launches Veza tool to improve transparency in the police service

Death in Paradise: Ex-Prime Minister of Turks and Caicos Islands is on brink of walking free as six-year £75million corruption trial is halted after judge, 84, dies

Eradicating corruption, money laundering top priority: NAB chief

Corporate Corruption in Global Fishing Gets New Attention

Alexei Navalny: The women fighting against Russian corruption

New project to investigate who benefits from corruption in extractive industries

Nigeria: President Buhari names new anti-corruption chief

Cronies, corruption: How Algeria’s auto sector hit the wall

Luxembourg Companies Add Evidence for Brazilian Investigations Into Corruption, Crime

Internal Wrangling, Allegations of Corruption Mar Liberia’s Premier Anti-graft Institution

Thousands rally in Mauritius against corruption, call for general election
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Wife of ‘El Chapo’ to remain behind bars on drug trafficking charges, federal judge orders
Christina Carrega and Kay Jones – CNN: 23 February 2021

The wife of Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman Loera, leader of a Mexican drug trafficking organization known as the Sinaloa Cartel, was arrested in Virginia on charges related to her alleged involvement in international drug trafficking. Emma Coronel Aispuro is charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana, as well as aiding prison escapes.

For more on this theme:
Honduran president says U.S. probe of his alleged drug ties could scuttle cooperation with Washington

Hide and Seek: How Drug Traffickers Get Creative at Sea

Minor Players Take Center Stage in Guatemala Drug Trade
https://insightcrime.org/uncategorized/minor-players-center-stage-guatemala-drug-trade/

ORGANIZED CRIME

Report: Italy’s mobsters well-poised to exploit pandemic aid
Frances D’Emilio – The Associated Press: 24 February 2021

Italy’s organized crime investigators raised alarm that the nation’s mobsters are well-positioned to exploit pandemic recovery projects worth billions of euros and, awash in drug trafficking revenues, to gobble up struggling businesses.

For more on this theme:
Authorities Warn Syndicates Turning to Cybercrime Amid Covid-19 Pandemic

Factors Of Organized Crime Presence In Western Balkans – OpEd

Italian Mafias Operate as One Syndicate

How Italian mafia bosses are cashing in on the pandemic
https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/italy-covid-mafia-crime-pandemic-b1802139.html
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

**Military coup, economic sanctions hike threats to Myanmar’s forests**
*Michael Taylor – Reuters: 22 February 2021*

Experts fear that the military coup in Myanmar, also known as Burma, could fuel deforestation. Green groups warn that the military leadership will probably seek timber investors that lack environmental standards.


*For more on this theme:*

- **‘Drastic’ Declines in Cambodia’s Endangered Wildlife**

- **Satellites flag deforestation from illegal gold mines in Amazon rainforest**

- **Indonesia to push for mine rehab, reforestation after deadly floods**

- **Scientists eye electronic nose as potential ‘game changer’ to combat wildlife trafficking**

- **An Illicit Trade in Brazil Is Sending Tiny Songbirds to Their Deaths**
  [https://e360.yale.edu/features/an-illicit-trade-in-brazil-is-sending-tiny-songbirds-to-their-deaths](https://e360.yale.edu/features/an-illicit-trade-in-brazil-is-sending-tiny-songbirds-to-their-deaths)

- **Illegal wildlife trade: Experts fear stockpiling of wildlife by criminal gangs may increase during pandemic**

- **In the fight to save the vaquita, conservationists take on cartels**

- **Online campaign urges people not to buy, eat, wear or own protected wildlife species and their products**

- **Seahorse trade dynamics: from Africa to Asia**

- **Sea cucumber trade from: Africa to Asia**

- **NASA Spots ‘Gold Rivers’ in Amazon, Reveals Illegal Gold Mining Pits**
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Venezuela's Other Plight: Sex Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago
InSight Crime: 11 February 2021

Sex trafficking rings operating between Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago revealed the extent to which Venezuelan women and minors are being smuggled to the island nation — along with the grave conditions they face.

For more on this theme:

Fiji launches National Human Trafficking Strategy

Brazil's anti-slavery wins bring new test: how to compensate victims
https://news.trust.org/item/20210217075845-2jkhg/

Cashing in on misery: Despite Covid-19, North Africa's human traffickers are thriving

A gateway re-opens: the growing popularity of the Atlantic route
https://reliefweb.int/report/canary-islands-spain/gateway-re-opens-growing-popularity-atlantic-route

MONEY LAUNDERING

Rearrested Kyrgyz Powerbroker Matraimov Sent To Pretrial Detention
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: 20 February 2021

Raimbek Matraimov, the controversial former deputy chief of the Kyrgyz Customs Service, will remain in pretrial detention, a court in Bishkek has ruled. Matraimov, who pleaded guilty to corruption earlier this month and got off with a $3,000 fine, may face new charges of money laundering.
https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-matraimov-pretrial-detention-/31113295.html

For more on this theme:

Gamblers diverted to B.C. by money laundering crackdowns in China/U.S., inquiry hears

Will money laundering laws end art world’s culture of secrecy?
https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2067623/will-money-laundering-laws-end-art-worlds-culture-of-secrecy-

Amnesty International India's Assets Attached In Money Laundering Case

‘Dirty money’ from West Africa ‘used to pay UK tuition fees’
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

‘Developing global framework can help build trust in tech’
Yuthika Bhargava – The Hindu: 19 February 2021

Ajit Mohan, Facebook India’s vice president and managing director, wants to develop a global framework, with India taking the lead, to help build and sustain people’s trust in technology. However, he thinks the move toward rules and regulations should not stifle innovation.
https://www.thehindu.com/business/developing-global-framework-can-help-build-trust-in-tech/article33883387.ece

For more on this theme:

(Global) The Internet Isn't Privatized Until .com Is Put Out for Bid

(Global) The Internet Is Splintering

(U.S., Europe) The U.S. and Europe Can’t Each Go It Alone Against Big Tech
https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29437/the-u-s-and-europe-can-t-each-go-it-alone-regulating-big-tech

INTERNET FREEDOM

Why Cambodia’s China-style internet gateway is problematic
Michael Caster – Reuters: 18 February 2021

Cambodia’s government has issued a decree establishing a China-style internet gateway that will allow online traffic to be controlled and monitored, prompting local concern that democratic freedoms could be under threat.
https://news.trust.org/item/20210218114422-gh5k7/

For more on this theme:

(China) China to Force Independent Bloggers to Get Government Approval Before Publishing

(Myanmar) Internet blackouts in Myanmar allow the military to retain control

(Russia) The Putin Regime Will Never Tire of Imposing Internet Control: Developments in Digital Legislation in Russia
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

China Wants Your Data — And May Already Have It
Greg Myre – National Public Radio: 24 February 2021

“Most Americans have probably had their data compromised by the cyber intelligence units of the Chinese government and Chinese military intelligence,” said April Falcon Doss, who worked at the U.S. National Security Agency and wrote the book, Cyber Privacy: Who Has Your Data And Why You Should Care.

https://www.npr.org/2021/02/24/969532277/china-wants-your-data-and-may-already-have-it

For more on this theme:
(Europe) European Startups Receive EU Funding to Challenge Leading Internet Search Engines, Offering a New Privacy-Preserving, Ad-Free, Bias-Free Option

(U.S.) These states are on track to pass data privacy laws this year

(India, Global) Need for uniform global norms on data privacy: Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella

CYBER STATECRAFT

Suspected Russian hack fuels new US action on cybersecurity
Ben Fox and Alan Suderman– The Associated Press: 19 February 2021

The United States will take action to modernize its defenses in the wake of the suspected Russian SolarWinds attack, according to Anne Neuberger, the U.S. deputy national security advisor for cyber and emerging technology.

https://apnews.com/article/us-cybersecurity-hacks-solarwinds-4ae46954c9fd6cb881207d5384c2b250

For more on this theme:
(Russia) Russian Cyber Strategy
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russian-cyber-strategy

(Global) Nuclear warfare or cyber warfare: which is the bigger threat?
https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/nuclear-warfare-or-cyber-warfare-which-is-the-bigger-threat/

(U.S., Global) CISA Chief Says the Agency's Global Initiative Is to Support the State Department
https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2021/02/cisa-chief-says-agencys-global-initiative-support-state-department/172184/
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

UK’s Cybersecurity Sector Experiences Record Growth
James Coker – Infosecurity Magazine: 18 February 2021

The United Kingdom’s cyber security sector attracted record levels of investment last year, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a government study.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Starlink explained: What to know about Elon Musk’s satellite internet venture

(France) France to Boost Cyber Security Defenses After Attacks
https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2021/02/18/601658.htm

(EU) EU must deter cyber attacks against ‘essential services,’ internal documents say

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Ukraine reports cyber-attack on government document management system
Catalin Cimpanu – ZDNet: 24 February 2021

The Ukrainian government said that Russian hackers compromised a government file-sharing system as part of an attempt to disseminate malicious documents to other government agencies.


For more on this theme:

(France) French minister: Mafia-type gangs likely behind cyber attacks on hospitals
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-cyber-idUSKBN2AP005

(Global) Cyber security firm saw attacks rise by 20% during 2020

(Global) Kia Motors allegedly suffers ransomware attack; cybercriminals demand $20 million to recover sensitive data
CYBER CRIME

Cyber fraudsters target individuals in ‘silent stealing’ approach
Engineering & Technology: 22 February 2021

Cyber fraud in the United Kingdom “is rampant, costing millions of pounds and leaving victims in its wake.” Cyber criminals have ditched big money scams in favor of “silent stealing” during the pandemic, according to a report from the Royal United Services Institute think tank.

https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2021/02/cyber-fraudsters-target-individuals-in-silent-stealing-approach/

Full report:

The UK’s Response to Cyber Fraud: A Strategic Vision

For more on this theme:

(Pakistan) Efforts afoot to curb cyber crimes against children: Viqar un Nisa

(Europe) Most Europeans Don’t Know How to Report Cybercrime

(Global) Cybercrime Groups More Prolific, Focus on Healthcare in 2020
https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/cybercrime-groups-more-prolific-focus-on-healthcare-in-2020/d/d-id/1340228
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Officials, Experts Say Islamic State’s Economic Spigot Not Dry Yet
Sirvan Kajjo and Namo Abdulla – Voice of America: 23 February 2021

Though it no longer controls physical territory, ISIS is having no problem financing its terror attacks. Between what was left and what was generated from criminal activity, ISIS is continuing to fund its extremism.


Killings surge in Syria camp housing Islamic State families
Bassem Mroue – The Associated Press: 18 February 2021

There was a deadly uptick in violence in the notorious al-Hol camp in northeast Syria in January. Killings have surged inside the camp with at least 20 men and women killed. They are believed to be the victims of ISIS militants trying to enforce their power inside the camp housing 62,000 people, mostly women and children.

https://apnews.com/article/killings-surge-syria-camp-isis-families-1aef71d9c11cc4b9f77ac-22fa205601b

For more on this theme:

Russian, Chinese, Uzbek, Tajik, Algerian ISIS jihadists pretend to be tourists, job seekers on Turkey trip

Biden Administration Seeks Stable Iraq, Free of Islamic State

Islamic State escalates attacks in Syrian desert
https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/syria-is-terrorism-war.html

Germany charges five Tajiks with setting up Islamic State cell for attacks
https://news.trust.org/item/20210215104144-cmzcs

Middle East – The resurgence of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq

SOHR: ISIS Attacks Iranian Militias in Syria’s Badia

Nato increases troop numbers in Iraq to combat threat from Islamic State

Pressuring France to Bring Them Home, Women Who Joined ISIS Stage Hunger Strike
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al-Qaeda Is Being Hollowed to Its Core
Barak Mendelsohn and Colin Clarke – War on the Rocks: 24 February 2021

Al-Qaida is here to stay, but it looks and acts differently than the organization it once was under Osama bin Laden. This means that Washington should begin to reassess how it treats the threat of the terror organization.

https://warontherocks.com/2021/02/al-qaeda-is-being-hollowed-to-its-core/

Why we did it: the Kenyan women and girls who joined Al-Shabaab
Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen – The Conversation: 21 February 2021

Women and girls have been identified as recruiters for al-Shabaab, logistics planners, financial conduits, spies for terrorist activities and in some cases, masterminds behind terrorist attacks or conveners of terror cells. A recent study revealed that the gender dynamics of submission and subordination within families and the community contributes to Al-Shabaab recruitment. However, there were political and ideological motivations, too.


For more on this theme:

Implications of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s New Leadership

Rising insecurity in northwest Nigeria: Terrorism thinly disguised as banditry

Al Qaeda’s Growing Threat to Senegal
https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/al-qaedas-growing-threat-to-senegal

Is Hamas exploiting Libya chaos to smuggle arms into Gaza?

As Right-Wing Extremism Rises, Jihadism Still Persists

Analysis: Hezbollah renews threats in publication, fails to make an impression

Afghan Taliban Ask Fighters Not to Harbor ‘Foreign’ Militants as US Reviews Peace Deal
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Psychological ‘signature’ for the extremist mind uncovered
*University of Cambridge: 21 February 2021*

The extremist mind is cognitively cautious, slower at perceptual processing and has a weaker working memory. The mental signature for extremism across the board is a blend of conservative and dogmatic psychologies.

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/02/210221195720.htm

*For more on this theme:*

Morocco adopted comprehensive strategy becoming pioneer in counterterrorism, violent extremism – Conference

Once a Jihadist, Always a Jihadist? A Deradicalization Program Seen from the Inside
https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/etudes-de-lifri/focus-strategique/once-jihadist-always-jihadist-de-radicalization

Cross-border launch of HELP Radicalisation Prevention course for CEP Probation Officers

Outreach in schools, institutes to tackle youth radicalisation: Desmond Tan

Commentary: Redpilling, rabbit holes and how far-right ideology spreads in online spaces

Nigerian Army to deploy ICT in countering propaganda — Attahiru

Mother of terrorism victim works to ‘turn the page’ on violent extremism

New website/web-platform on addressing radicalisation and violent extremism in prisons, launched

Battle for young hearts and minds as extremists grow savvy online