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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Romania’s PSD puts corruption fighter Laura Kovesi on trial
Robert Schwarz – Deutsche Welle: 15 February 2019

The former chief prosecutor for Romania’s National Anti-Corruption Directorate is facing charges of malfeasance, bribery and perjury. Laura Codruța Kövesi, who successfully prosecuted several high-profile Romanian politicians, most from the ruling Social Democratic Party, was fired by the government last year. The charges are thought by many to be false and an attempt to sabotage her career because she is the leading candidate for the European Union’s chief prosecutor job, where she could take her anti-corruption campaign to a larger arena.


From concentrated power to state capture: Georgia’s backsliding anti-corruption reforms
Transparency International: 14 February 2019

Despite having the best score on the Corruption Perception Index of any nation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Georgia’s progress against corruption is backsliding. After considerable reform following the 2004 Rose Revolution, progress stalled under the former government and is deteriorating under the current ruling party.

https://voices.transparency.org/from-concentrated-power-to-state-capture-georgias-backsliding-anti-corruption-reforms-c94d76bb2b21

For more on this theme:

R. Jezic: the businessman behind the Croatian trial that could give Russia the keys to Europe

Africa’s Rich Oil - From Blessing to a Curse of Rampant Corruption and Bad Governance On the Continent?
https://allafrica.com/stories/201902190523.html

Montenegrins march demanding government resignation
https://www.foxnews.com/world/montenegrins-march-demanding-government-resignation

Nepali singer pulls corruption song from YouTube after threats

SERBIA: PROTESTS DRAW ATTENTION TO LACK OF MEDIA FREEDOM, CORRUPTION, AND OTHER ISSUES
https://www.thenewfederalist.eu/serbia-protests-draw-attention-to-lack-of-media-freedom-corruption-and

Corruption complaints up 50% in Saudi Arabia
https://gulfbusiness.com/corruption-complaints-50-saudi-arabia/
El Chapo Highlighted Mexican Corruption, but Drug Money Also Lubricates U.S. Border

DRUG TRAFFICKING
The Fentanyl Trade Through Mexico, Explained in 8 Graphs
Chris Dalby – InSight Crime: 19 February 2019
Fentanyl use in the United States is soaring because it is cheap and easily manufactured. Its production and distribution chain can be tracked from China through Mexico and into the U.S. But the drug is increasingly being shipped directly from China to the U.S. through the mail.
https://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/fentanyl-trade-mexico-explained-8-graphs/

US-Mexico border wall won't stop drug trafficking, says investigative journalist
Louise Miner – euronews: 18 February 2019
An enhanced wall on the U.S.-Mexico border will do little to hinder drug trafficking because most of the drugs are smuggled through ports and airports, facilitated and protected by corrupt officials in Mexico and destination countries.

For more on this theme:
Cops, cons, politicos and the drug trade

Tale of two drug lords: from Cosa Nostra to Guzmán – it’s strictly business

Drug trafficking: Financial lifeline of PKK terrorism

Police hit smuggling gang on high seas, seize 3.3 tonnes of cocaine

Aggressive Coca Eradication Threatens Voluntary Substitution Efforts in Colombia

2 French pilots who fled Dominican Republic go on trial
https://www.apnews.com/555376d2fc474e19b1125cd93f8c823a

Mexico's Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel Risks Burning Too Bright, Too Fast
https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/mexicos-santa-rosa-de-lima-cartel-el-marro/
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Report: Turkish carrier is ‘poacher's airline of choice' for parrot trade
Shreya Dasgupta – Mongabay: 18 February 2019

Turkish Airlines has stopped transporting African grey parrots after the charity World Animal Protection said the airline was enabling trafficking of the bird. Commercial airlines are commonly used to smuggle endangered species, and the group is calling for airlines to forestall the practice.


From Stalin’s camps to Putin’s laws: How ‘the Russian mafia’ came to be
Tatiana Zverintseva – Meduza: 19 February 2019

The author provides a compelling background of the history and inner workings of organized crime in the post-Soviet space and the spread of the Russian mafia worldwide.


For more on this theme:
Deforestation in Borneo is slowing, but regulation remains key

The hunt for the fish pirates who exploit the sea

Everything you need to know about protecting the precious pangolin

Tanzania finds Chinese ‘Ivory Queen' guilty of poaching
https://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/tanzania-finds-chinese-ivory-queen-guilty-of-poaching-1.827625

Illegal fishing during closed season detected in Visayan Sea — NGO

10 reasons U.S. must hold Peru to trade deal and protect Amazon

IN PICS: Criminals arrested for trafficking endangered animals found at illegal taxidermy workshop in Spain
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In Bosnia, a Migrant Way Station Is Becoming a Winter Prison
Dariusz Kalan – Foreign Policy: 20 February 2019

Bosnia, torn by civil war 25 years ago, was once the source of tens of thousands of refugees to Western Europe and surrounding countries. It has now become a way station for refugees from countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia — many also war-torn — trying to reach Western Europe. But the refugees are blamed for increases in crime and disorder, straining the relationship with their hosts.


Rethinking refugee support: Responding to the crisis in South Eastern Europe
Amanda Russell Beattie, Gemma Bird, Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik and Patrycja Rozbicka – The London School of Economics and Political Science: 20 February 2019

The results of a major academic project on the refugee crisis show that changes in the European Union’s border management policies have resulted in restricted movement for refugees through Europe and large numbers being stuck in transit countries such as Greece and Serbia, resulting in a crisis of refugee support.


For more on this theme:

Not enough resettlement solutions for refugees worldwide, says UN

OHCHR Committee to hear of Anglican efforts to combat human trafficking around the world

What Common Misconceptions Do People Have About Refugees?
https://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2019/02/18/what-common-misconceptions-do-people-have-about-refugees/#6cd7641786c3

Bosnia Detains Six Afghans Linked To Terrorism, Human Trafficking
https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-afghanistan-terrorism/29780121.html

Italian police bust migrant trafficking ring, arrest 11 people

Illegal migration top priority at Arab-European Summit

A Battle Plan for the World Bank
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

A Conversation with Marietje Schaake (Part I)
Fleming Rose – Cato Institute: 19 February 2019

Marietje Schaake, a Dutch member of the European Parliament and founder of the European Parliament Intergroup on the Digital Agenda for Europe, discusses regulation and accountability of digital platforms. Big American tech companies have long opposed regulation, claiming it will stifle innovation, but Schaake believes there needs to be more legal liability for the platforms.

https://www.cato.org/blog/conversation-marietje-schaake-part-i

For more on this theme:
(South Korea, Global) Hedera Hashgraph Blockchain Assembles Global Governance Council Featuring Fortune 500 Members

(U.K.) 4 ways the UK might tame ‘wild west’ Facebook and force it to fix its fake news flaws

(U.S.) INTERNET PRIVACY: Additional Federal Authority Could Enhance Consumer Protection and Provide Flexibility

INTERNET FREEDOM

How Alphabet’s Jigsaw think tank is fighting radicalization online
Georgina Ustik – TNW: 19 February 2019

The Alphabet unit Jigsaw has produced a security app called Intra, which protects users from government censorship by passing all browsing queries through an encrypted connection to a trusted domain name server. The app has been a success in Venezuela, where the government is censoring news sites.

https://thenextweb.com/world/2019/02/19/how-googles-jigsaw-think-tank-is-fighting-radicalization-online/

For more on this theme:
(Russia) Internet Under Attack in Russia

(Russia) Is Russia building its own version of China’s Great Firewall?

(India) WhatsApp is at risk in India. So are free speech and encryption.
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

A MOVEMENT FOR PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION FROM TECH GIANTS RISES IN CHINA
Samm Sacks – Pacific Standard: 19 February 2019

Despite China’s perceived status as a surveillance state, the country is moving to create a
data-protection regulatory agency to police Chinese social media companies. Chinese internet
users are increasingly demanding online privacy, but the new law would likely provide data-privacy protections only against tech companies, not government censors.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Data Without Accountability
https://codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/surveillance-current/

(Europe, Russia) Microsoft says Russian hackers targeted European researchers

(Global) Google says the built-in microphone it never told Nest users about was
‘never supposed to be a secret’

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

How Ukraine became a test bed for cyberweaponry
Laurens Cerulus – Politico: 14 February 2019

Ukraine has become a testing ground for new cyber weapons, tactics and tools. Russian hackers
and cyber warriors try new malware and hacking techniques in Ukraine that are later deployed
against European or American targets. But because Ukraine is under a constant barrage of cyber
attacks, it has also become an attractive place for Western cyber defense agencies and private
companies to develop and test their own capabilities.


For more on this theme:

(Singapore) How Singapore is future-proofing itself for information warfare, cyberse-
curity and digital conflict
https://www.thedrum.com/news/2019/02/20/how-singapore-future-proofing-itself-information-war-
fare-cybersecurity-and-digital

(China, Global) An Era Of Cyber-Sovereignty
https://codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/legal-tools-current/

(EU) EU internet copyright reform survives key hurdle
https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/europe/2019-02-20-eu-internet-copyright-reform-survives-key-
hurdle/
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Banks praised for their internal cyber defence capabilities
Asha McLean – ZDNet: 18 February 2019

Australian banks were praised for their internal cyber defense capabilities at an international cyber conference in Canberra, where the necessity of government and the private sector working together to protect the nation was emphasized. The banks may soon be capable of an active offensive response to cyber intrusions.

https://www.zdnet.com/article/banks-praised-for-their-internal-cyber-defence-capabilities/

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Health Sector Council Released Cybersecurity Recommendations for Medical Devices and Health IT
https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=e047a286-d65a-41a4-a280-dfd0c4a29c30
(U.S.) Bipartisan bill would create public-private cyber workforce exchange

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

UK naïve to think China won’t try to exploit Huawei
Alex Scroxton – Computer Weekly: 20 February 2019

A report from Royal United Services Institute, a United Kingdom defense think tank, warns the U.K. government not to use Chinese company Huawei in developing or building critical infrastructure. The expectation is that Chinese intelligence will leverage Huawei’s participation. Previous Chinese cyber attacks have used access to sensitive industrial, commercial, technological, defense, personal and political data.


For more on this theme:
(Ireland) Employees are major risk to employers’ cyber security, study finds
(U.S., China, Global) How Huawei Targets Apple Trade Secrets
https://www.theinformation.com/articles/how-huawei-targets-apple-trade-secrets
(China, Global) China’s intellectual property approach continues to mature
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

**Germany Could Let Huawei Build Internet Infrastructure Despite U.S. Concerns**  
*Don Reisinger – Fortune: 19 February 2019*

Germany is considering allowing Chinese company Huawei to participate in building German internet infrastructure. The United States government has forbidden Huawei, a world leader in advanced 5G technology, from participation in any U.S. critical infrastructure projects over fears of vulnerability to Chinese cyber intrusions.

http://fortune.com/2019/02/19/germany-huawei-5g-infrastructure/

*For more on this theme:*  
(China, Global) **CHINA WILL LIKELY CORNER THE 5G MARKET—AND THE US HAS NO PLAN**  
https://www.wired.com/story/china-will-likely-corner-5g-market-us-no-plan/  
(Australia) **Responding to cyber attacks: resilience and transparency is key**  
(Global) **Trade Talks Episode 72: Richard Baldwin on Disruption, Technology and Trade**  

COMBATING TERRORISM AND CYBER CRIME

**CrowdStrike Annual Threat Report Details Attacker Insights and Reveals Industry’s First Adversary Rankings**  
*Business Wire: 19 February 2019*

CrowdStrike, a leading cyber security firm, released a new report detailing increasing activity by nonstate actors and criminal organizations against industry targets. The report also analyzes an important new metric, “breakout speed,” which is the time it takes for an intruder to move laterally into a network after first breaching a component of the network. Russian hackers have the fastest breakout speeds by a large margin.


*For more on this theme:*  
(Global) **ATM HACKING HAS GOTTEN SO EASY, THE MALWARE’S A GAME**  
https://www.wired.com/story/atm-hacking-winpot-jackpotting-game/  
(Global) **Fighting cybercrime – what happens to the law when the law cannot be enforced?**  
(India) **Rajnath inaugurates cybercrime detection centre in Capital**  
INFORMATION SHARING

Israeli cyber-hotline offers help for the hacked
Dan Williams – Reuters: 18 February 2019

A new hotline to Israel’s Computer Emergency Response Center allows businesses and individuals to rapidly report cyber incidents and receive immediate help from military-trained technicians. The center also runs chatroom links with major firms, enabling discreet information sharing about cyber incidents.


For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Cybersecurity Communities: Defending IT Collaboratively
http://www.govtech.com/opinion/Cybersecurity-Communities-Defending-IT-Collaboratively-Contributed.html

(Global) Global Cyber Alliance, Mastercard launch new cybersecurity toolkit for small and medium businesses

(Singapore) Singapore arms up on cyberdefence experts, opens cyberdefence school
https://www.zdnet.com/article/singapore-arms-up-on-cyberdefence-experts-opens-cyberdefence-school/

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

How to Regulate the Internet Without Becoming a Dictator
Justin Sherman – Foreign Policy: 19 February 2019

The new Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is tasked with preventing physical and digital threats to the nation’s critical infrastructure. The agency’s challenge is how to accomplish this while maintaining a free and open internet.


For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Election security dominates agenda as reconstituted DHS agency gets static funding in budget deal
https://insidecybersecurity.com/share/9595

(Australia, U.S., Global) Cyber blitzkrieg replaces cyber Pearl Harbor

(NATO) Researchers used fake social media accounts to influence NATO troops during military exercise
ISIS

Iraq’s brutal crackdown on suspected Islamic State supporters could trigger civil war
The Conversation: 20 February 2019

Thousands of Sunni Muslims in Iraq suspected of collaborating with ISIS have been detained and tortured into giving confessions, according to Human Rights Watch. The crackdown on Sunnis — particularly those detained without evidence of terrorist connections — dampens Iraq’s prospects for peace. Research shows that postwar governments run a greater risk of reigniting conflicts when they use violence against citizens.

https://theconversation.com/iraqs-brutal-crackdown-on-suspected-islamic-state-supporters-could-trigger-civil-war-109399

Erdogan: NATO gives arms to ‘terrorists’ but not to Turkey
Al Jazeera: 18 February 2019

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey is accusing NATO allies of providing weapons to “terrorists” while ignoring his requests for arms. “What kind of NATO alliance is this?” Erdogan asked during a campaign rally. “You give terrorists around 23,000 truckloads of weapons and tools through Iraq, but when we asked, you won’t even sell them to us.” He did not single out any nations for alleged arms sales through Iraq.


For more on this theme:

ISIS fighters have been fleeing from Syria into Iraq, perhaps with millions of dollars in tow

ISIS fighters had thousands of children. So what happens to them now?

Can the Astana process survive the US withdrawal from Syria?

The English Voice of ISIS Comes Out of the Shadows

Islamic State fighters face surrender or death: Syrian Kurdish-led force
https://ekurd.net/islamic-state-fighters-face-2019-02-19

Civilians, including many children, leave IS-held enclave
https://www.apnews.com/47483409e84b4540bb3c9a1b9a0fce84

Trump threatens to release ISIS fighters if EU doesn’t take them
**TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD**

**Breakdown Of The Long Peace And Taliban's Bloody Nose Strategy – OpEd**
*Tamin Asey – eurasiareview: 20 February 2019*

A former Afghan deputy minister of defense argues that the chances for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan are slipping away because of a divided political elite in Kabul, a deceptive Pakistan, an emboldened Taliban and an impatient America eager to bring U.S. service members home.


**Combo Against Terror: India and Morocco elevate their partnership to fight the common menace**
*Rudroneel Ghosh – Times of India: 20 February 2019*

India and Morocco have agreed to develop a comprehensive approach to combating terrorism that targets cross-border terrorism, the misuse of social media, terrorist financing and the recruitment of members by terrorist organizations. Coming against the backdrop of the recent Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, the cooperation is particularly important.


*For more on this theme:*

**Rebel Incursion Exposes Chad’s Weaknesses**

**Pulwama: Hizbul Mujahideen Threatens More Fidayeen Attacks**
https://thewire.in/security/pulwama-hizbul-mujahideen-fidayeen-attacks

**Nirmala Sitharaman slams Imran Khan’s response on Pulwama encounter, says Pakistan took no action on Mumbai terror attack**

**Beijing Asks New Delhi, Islamabad To Exercise Restraint**

**Senior al-Shabaab commander killed in southwestern Somalia**
https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Senior-al-Shabaab-commander-killed-southwestern-Somalia/688334-4986488-4cjs1fz/index.html

**She’s a Force of Nature, and She Just Declared War on Peace With the Taliban**

**Women in Afghanistan fear a return to oppression as they are left out of peace talks with Taliban**
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/women-afghanistan-fear-return-oppression-left-peace-talks-taliban/

**Saudi supported Israel against Hezbollah during 2006 war**
Mapping the American War on Terror
https://www.lewrockwell.com/2019/02/no_author/mapping-the-american-war-on-terror/

Life sought for 2016 Istanbul terror attacks suspects

JNIM takes credit for dubious suicide bombing in Timbuktu

Saudi official fires back after Iran blames attack on Riyadh
https://www.apnews.com/eb24e3a72b794f41b72ae0aac63cd0d1

RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others?

Terrorist groups use news coverage of their attacks to promote their violent agenda and attract new recruits. A recently published analysis questions why some attacks receive more media coverage than others. It argues that the perpetrators’ religion is the largest predictor of news coverage, while target type, arrests and fatalities also impact coverage. Attacks by Muslim perpetrators received, on average, 357 percent more coverage than other attacks.

Is ISIS Still Alive and Well on the Internet?

Despite the Islamic State’s collapse in Iraq and much of Syria, its “virtual caliphate” remains very much alive. ISIS continues to create new content, recycle old material and recruit new members. Europol research indicates that more than 150 social media platforms, in multiple languages, continue to be exploited by violent extremist groups like ISIS and al-Qaida worldwide.
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/is-isis-still-alive-and-well-on-the-internet/

For more on this theme:

Moscow Doesn’t Know How to Cope with New and More Islamic Wave of Radicalization in North Caucasus, Experts Say
http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2019/02/moscow-doesnt-know-how-to-cope-with-new.html

Chilling image posted online by ISIS shows LA skyscraper exploding into flames with the caption ‘Our promise will soon be fulfilled’ as soldier stands with the terror group’s flag

Catherine Deneuve’s New Film Explores Islamist Radicalization
Mitigating Risks for Syrian Refugee Youth in Turkey’s Şanlıurfa

Canadian Commander warns of ISIS re-emergence in Iraq unless causes addressed

Hamas’ Terror Recruiters Rely on a Mix of Old and New Media

The Case Against the Hamas Children’s Army Mastermind

FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Goverments are struggling to deal with returning jihadists
The Economist: 20 February 2019
More than 41,000 foreigners are estimated to have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State. Now, thousands of them want to return. Western countries are trying to figure out how to hold criminal trials for returning jihadists when the evidence is limited and what to do with those who cannot be prosecuted. Leaving them in camps in Syria seems not to be an option.

Shamima Begum: What powers exist to deal with returning foreign fighters?
Joanna Dawson – House of Commons Library: 20 February 2019
Under which circumstances can Britain’s government deprive someone of citizenship? This question is explored by the House of Commons Library after the government moved to strip the citizenship of Shamima Burgum, who left London in 2015 at age 15 to join ISIS in Syria. She now wants to return with her newborn son, but the government says she presents a potential danger to society.

For more on this theme:

Isil brides cannot be prosecuted for simply going to Syria, Met chief admits

Should Europe uphold the right to return — even for Daesh families?
https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/should-europe-uphold-the-right-to-return-even-for-daesh-families-24301

Iraq to Germany: If you take IS members back, you’ll need new laws

German ISIS members in YPG custody in limbo

Danish parties want to strip foreign fighters of citizenship
Shamima Begum: how Europe toughened its stance on women returning from Islamic State

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES

Securing Our Borders Against Traveling Terrorists: Challenges, Best Practices, and Recommendations
Eric Ager – The George C. Marshall Center: January 2019
Cross-border cooperation and investments in new technology can help countries identify terrorists as they attempt to cross international borders, according to the findings of a George C. Marshall Center symposium that brought together participants from 43 countries. The group produced nine recommendations for establishing effective border management practices.

Cameroon Yet to Build Planned Rehab Centers for ex-Boko Haram Fighters
Moki Edwin Kindzeka – Voice of America: 18 February 2019
A governor in Cameroon says a lack of funding by the country’s central government is delaying the construction of a promised rehab center for Boko Haram fighters who agree to surrender their weapons in return for a pardon. More than 80 former terrorists who agreed to the deal are being held as prisoners on a military base because the rehab facility has yet to be built. Other terrorists may be reluctant to surrender because they don’t trust the government to build the facility.

For more on this theme:
Powerful political leader warns against squandering peace
https://www.apnews.com/c912692b84c5413e8a845ac383a75042
Is the Taliban Making a Pledge It Cannot Keep?
Intel: How Trump’s choice as envoy to Turkey could complicate US Syria policy
EU tightens rules to prevent bomb-making as radicals return home
India, Saudi Arabia call for dismantling terror infrastructure; to set up JWG on counter-terror
Muslim group seeks congressional probe on terror watchlist
https://www.apnews.com/5675d80b6be644519390a4f986cc6342

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Citing deep distrust, Portland pulls from FBI anti-terror panel

CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

WATER SECURITY

The next big thing: Solving global water scarcity
Eric Burg – PitchBook: 31 January 2019
Water is the world’s most essential resource, making solving water scarcity perhaps humanity’s most important environmental issue. A burgeoning world population, increased urbanization and the consumption demands of the rapidly growing middle class in developing nations only sharpen the need for answers. Industrial designer Mehrdad Mahdjoubi has developed a new system that almost instantaneously purifies and recycles water.

For more on this theme:
Water security a global issue as 2 billion worldwide lack access to clean water
http://www.arabnews.com/node/1450246/business-economy

Water is scarce. So why is it underpriced?

Chennai’s water scarcity is self-inflicted
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/chennais-water-scarcity-is-self-inflicted/article26305385.ece

Climate change means your city could run out of water soon too — here are Cape Town’s three lessons