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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

An online protest movement exposes corruption in Uganda. Officials and others are rattled
Abuse of public funds. Failing hospitals. Potholes in the streets. These and other issues feature in an online campaign where street protests are practically outlawed.
https://apnews.com/article/uganda-corruption-online-protest-campaign-93c139562805c3ffa77b0bf92d14e6c5

‘We want to eradicate corruption’: Guatemala’s new president makes promises that stir hope — and impatience
Michael Fox – The World: 1 March 2024
Bernardo Arévalo introduced his anti-corruption team that’s going to lead the charge, but the road ahead is not easy.

For more on this theme:

What the Corruption Perceptions Index Actually Says About Corruption In Latin America

Evolving anti-corruption practice in rebuilding Ukraine: The Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development

Gender and corruption in the access to natural resources: Preliminary findings
https://www.osce.org/secretariat/563466

Corruption study: one in three Swiss companies pays bribes abroad

Japan prime minister apologizes over governing party's corruption scandal

The former chairman of the state-owned Bank of Beijing is being investigated for alleged corruption

Vietnam real estate tycoon faces death penalty in $12.5 billion corruption trial

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DRUG TRAFFICKING

US-China relations and fentanyl and precursor cooperation in 2024
Vanda Felbab-Brown – Brookings: 29 February 2024
China agreed to restart cooperation with the United States in November 2023 to counter the flow of synthetic opioids into the U.S.

Drugs online: UN-backed body offers solutions to counter narcotics surge
United Nations News: 5 March 2024
Drug dealers have continued to use digital technology, social media and disinformation to sell their illegal produce, fueling narcotics consumption globally, a report showed.
Full report:
Annual Report 2023 — International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

For more on this theme:
Ex-Honduran president ‘paved a cocaine superhighway’ to US, feds claim in bribery trial closing

The sinister glamorization of narco

Instability, Drug Trafficking, and Human Rights in Guinea-Bissau

I Trafficked $5 Million Worth of Cocaine Internationally

EU, CELAC agree to improve cooperation on narcotic drugs
https://www.eaes.europa.eu/eias/eu-cesac-agree-to-improve-cooperation-narcotic-drugs_en

Dutch crime boss goes down, but cocaine trade here to stay

Inside Ecuador’s rising gang violence fueled by booming cocaine trade

AMLO’s Blind Eye Won’t Cure Mexico’s Narco Problem

Los Zetas: A Look at Mexico’s Most Violent Cartel
https://greydynamics.com/los-zetas-a-look-at-mexicos-most-violent-cartel/

What Netflix’s ‘Griselda’ Gets Wrong About Women in Organized Crime
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Environmental Crime Directive Given More Teeth to Protect Wildlife
Humane Society International / Europe – Impakter: 29 February 2024

The European Parliament has approved the revised directive, strengthening the European Union’s approach to addressing environmental crime.

For more on this theme:

In Pictures: Indigenous women guard against illegal mining in Ecuador

How illegal miners wreak havoc on Nigeria – Investigation
https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/02/how-illegal-miners-wreak-havoc-on-nigeria-investigation/

With drop in illegal fishing comes rise in piracy, study in Indonesia finds
https://news.mongabay.com/2024/02/indonesia-illegal-fishing-maritime-piracy-study/

Environmental Justice Foundation seeks a solution with the Dase app to battle illegal fishing

Netting a Better Future
https://brownpoliticalreview.org/2024/02/netting-a-better-future/

To fight illegal wildlife trafficking through hot spots like Miami, follow the money | Opinion
https://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/op-ed/article285730231.html

Rhino poaching on the rise in South Africa, new figures show

Sea Shepherd’s Use of Connectivity in Fighting Illegal Fishing

Out-of-Control Wildlife Trade Is Shackling a Key Climate Solution
https://therevelator.org/wildlife-trade-climate-solution/

How Facebook Contributes to the Demise of Endangered Species
https://undark.org/2024/03/05/social-media-wildlife-trafficking/

This World Wildlife Day Whistleblowing Bridges Digital Innovation with Animal Conservation

Wildlife forensics: how science is helping to combat a billion-dollar organized crime industry
ORGANIZED CRIME

**European Prosecutor: Organized Crime Groups Target EU Funds**
Zdravko Ljubas – Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: March 2024

The European Public Prosecutor’s Office warned in its 2023 annual report that organized crime continues to inflict substantial harm on the European Union’s budget, estimating the damage at U.S. $20.84 billion in 2023.


**Organized crime attacks on local candidates raise fears Mexico may face its bloodiest elections ever**
Fabiola Sánchez – The Associated Press: 3 March 2024

As the country prepares for the largest elections in its history, organized crime is once again preying on candidates across swaths of the country where cartels dominate.

https://apnews.com/article/mexico-election-violence-candidates-cartels-91f01634fe32781f708f16064bc87179

*For more on this theme:*

**Argentina Inaugurates Terrorism and Organized Crime Center**

**Unmasking the Foreign Players on Ecuador’s Criminal Chessboard**

**How Criminal Groups Help Expand Mexico’s Multibillion-Dollar Avocado Industry**

**Kenya Agrees to Police Haiti’s Criminal Hurricane**

**Organised criminals make Douala their gateway to global markets**
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/organised-criminals-make-douala-their-gateway-to-global-markets

**Uzbekistan is Developing Its First National Strategy Against Organized Crime**

**How criminals prey on South Asian business owners**

**How Cybercriminals are Exploiting India’s UPI for Money Laundering Operations**
https://thehackernews.com/2024/03/how-cybercriminals-are-exploiting.html

**What are US financial advisers’ AML expectations under recent FinCEN proposal?**

**Vietnam may ban virtual assets to fix its bad rep for money laundering**
https://www.theregister.com/2024/03/01/vietnam_crypto_regs/
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

**Why We Need a Global AI Compact**  
Amlan Mohanty – Carnegie: 1 March 2024

The rapid acceleration of artificial intelligence has raised important geopolitical issues around digital sovereignty, economic competitiveness and sustainable development.

[https://carnegieindia.org/2024/03/01/why-we-need-global-ai-compact-pub-91850](https://carnegieindia.org/2024/03/01/why-we-need-global-ai-compact-pub-91850)

For more on this theme:

(China) **Tracing the Roots of China’s AI Regulations**  

(EU) **Charting the Geopolitics and European Governance of Artificial Intelligence**  

(Global) **How Open Networks May Change Market Access and Internet Governance**  

INTERNET FREEDOM

**Hong Kong is seeing growing internet censorship, and some American companies are using burner phones when visiting, says a top US diplomat**  
Alan Wong, Sarah Zheng and Bloomberg – Fortune: 2 March 2024

The top United States diplomat in Hong Kong sounded the alarm over China’s crackdown on freedoms that are diminishing the city’s appeal as a global finance hub.


For more on this theme:

(Malaysia) **Malaysia: The Madani Government Censorship And Propaganda Regime – OpEd**  

(Russia) **Russia’s Proposed Wikipedia Ban Over VPN Guide**  
[https://www.vpncompare.co.uk/russia-wikipedia-ban/](https://www.vpncompare.co.uk/russia-wikipedia-ban/)

(Turkey) **Tech companies asked to resist internet censorship ahead of Turkish elections**  

(Global) **Government Internet Shutdowns Have Cost $52.8 Billion Since 2019**  
[https://www.top10vpn.com/research/cost-of-internet-shutdowns/](https://www.top10vpn.com/research/cost-of-internet-shutdowns/)
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

US Official Warns Of China’s Growing Offensive Cyber Power – Analysis
Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan – EurAsia Review: 1 March 2024

Even though Beijing does not have a formal strategy, the capability mix and the changing approach that it has developed in the offensive realm remain quite consequential.

For more on this theme:
(African Union) The AU took important action on cybersecurity at its 2024 summit — but more is needed
https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/02/au-took-important-action-cybersecurity-its-2024-summit-more-needed

(North Korea) Korea’s Path to Digital Leadership: How Seoul Can Lead on Standards and Standardization

(Global) To combat Chinese cyber threats, the US must spearhead a new Indo-Pacific intelligence coalition

(Australia) Breaking down the cybersecurity strategy 2023-2030: Phase three (2029-2030)

CYBERATTACKS

Canada’s anti-money laundering agency offline after cyberattack
Bill Toulas – Beleeping Computer: 6 March 2024

The Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre said a cyber incident forced it to take its corporate systems offline as a precaution.

For more on this theme:
(Global) First BofA, Now Fidelity: Same Vendor Behind Third-Party Breaches

(U.S.) ‘Significant Cyber Attack’ Impacts Health-Care System Nationwide

(Global) ‘Cyber-physical attacks’ fueled by AI are a growing threat, experts say
https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/03/cyber-physical-attacks-fueled-by-ai-are-a-growing-threat-experts-say.html
CYBERCRIME

U.N. report: North Korea financing weapons program with cybercrime
*United States Strategic Command – Indo-Pacific Defense Forum: 3 March 2024*

Investigators say that Pyongyang has stolen billions of dollars in cyberattacks to fund weapons of mass destruction.

https://ipdefenseforum.com/2024/03/u-n-report-north-korea-financing-weapons-program-with-cybercrime/

*For more on this theme:*

*(Global) Ransomware gangs are paying attention to infostealers, so why aren’t you?*
https://www.theregister.com/2024/02/29/infostealers_increased_use/

*(Global) Cyber workers turning to crime, warns study*

*(Germany, Global) German Authorities Take Down ‘Crimemarket’ Cybercrime Website*
https://www.oodaloop.com/briefs/2024/03/05/german-authorities-take-down-crimemarket-cybercrime-website/

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical Infrastructure Systems Are Vulnerable to a New Kind of Cyberattack
*Joshua Stewart – Georgia Tech: 29 February 2024*

Engineers and computer scientists show how bad actors can exploit browser-based control systems in industrial facilities with difficult-to-detect malware.

https://coe.gatech.edu/news/2024/02/critical-infrastructure-systems-are-vulnerable-new-kind-cyberattack

*For more on this theme:*

*(China) China Launches New Cyber-Defense Plan for Industrial Networks*
https://www.darkreading.com/cybersecurity-operations/china-rolls-out-strategy-to-prevent-hacking-from-foreign-entities

*(China) Chinese Hackers Infiltrating America’s Critical Infrastructure*
https://www.heritage.org/cybersecurity/commentary/chinese-hackers-infiltrating-americas-critical-infrastructure

*(France) France concerned by potential cyber attack on electricity grid — minister*
https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-789771

*(U.S.) FBI: Critical infrastructure suffers spike in ransomware attacks*
https://www.theregister.com/2024/03/06/fbi_ransomware_cybercrime_costs/

*(U.S., Global) Dragos CEO: Digitization in critical infrastructure will spur attacks*
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Iran’s Narco-Terrorist Network: How Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas and Other Proxies Use Narcotics to Fund Their War Against the West.


When Jordan launched airstrikes against farms and rural buildings across its border with Syria, the targets were Iranian drug smugglers.


Global Terrorism Index 2024

Institute for Economics & Peace: 6 March 2024

The 11th edition provides a comprehensive summary of the key trends and patterns since 2012.

https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2024

For more on this theme:

Security Council holds first open briefing on counter-terrorism efforts in South-East Europe

https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/fr/node/54221

Why Time Matters When Proscribing Terrorist Groups

https://www.e-ir.info/2024/02/17/why-time-matters-when-proscribing-terrorist-groups/

UN Study Warns Recognizing Taliban Will Intensify Women’s Rights Crisis


Christchurch terrorist discussed attacks online a year before carrying them out, new research reveals

https://theconversation.com/christchurch-terrorist-discussed-attacks-online-a-year-before-carrying-them-out-new-research-reveals-223955

Somalia’s Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles


Going the Distance: The Emergence of Long-Range Stand-Off Terrorism

https://ctc.westpoint.edu/going-the-distance-the-emergence-of-long-range-stand-off-terrorism/

Pentagon report says ISIS taps Turkey for cash transfers to support global ops


Terrorism a Continuing Threat, Particularly in Africa


The Clash Between the Islamic State and Al-Shabaab in Somalia: Geopolitical Instability And Terrorist Threat

https://www.specialeurasia.com/2024/02/22/somalia-islamic-state-al-shabaab/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

The Gaza Dilemma: Israel’s Complex Road to Victory Amidst Calls for Ceasefire
Seth J. Frantzman – The National Interest: 4 March 2024

Refugees in Gaza, Hezbollah’s looming presence in the north and Hamas’s reckless defense pose difficult questions for Israel.


For more on this theme:

Avoiding a West Bank Explosion During Ramadan
https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/avoiding-west-bank-explosion-during-ramadan

Brief: Hamas’s Release of Thailand’s Hostages Accomplished Through Thai Professor in Iran

Will the Israel-Hamas War Spark New Waves of Extremism in Central Asia?

IntelBrief: Leaders in Latin America Speak Loudly on Gaza
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2024-march-1/

Israeli defence minister says Hezbollah aggression bringing critical point nearer

As fighting along the Lebanon-Israel border escalates, diplomats scramble to head off a war
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/lebanon-israel-gaza-war-ceasefire-hezbollah/

Foreign fighters are operating in Lebanon against Israel
https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2024/03/foreign-fighters-are-operating-in-lebanon-against-israel.php

Has Lebanon’s Hezbollah been strengthened or weakened by the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza?
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2472346/middle-east

Tunnel Wars: Israel’s Gaza Assault Lays Ground for Lebanon Clash

Gaza cease-fire talks fail to achieve a breakthrough with Ramadan just days away, Egypt says
https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-03-05-2024-a13c5fa6e23fedbda42e3028a96ca14e

Hostage crisis poses dilemma for Israel and offers a path to victory for Hamas
https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-hostages-endgame-0b4720545d294b4eb25eb97055c238eb

Revealed: Israel’s plan to hunt down Hamas killers
https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-war-plan-hunt-down-hamas-killers/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

U.N. rights chief: war crimes committed by all parties in Israel-Hamas conflict

A UN envoy says there are 'reasonable grounds' to believe Hamas committed sexual violence on Oct. 7
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Destruction from the war with Israel has cut Gaza off from the outside world
https://www.npr.org/2024/03/03/1229402063/gaza-communications-cell-phone-internet-service-blackouts-paltel

Understanding the Israel-Hamas War
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Why Ramadan Matters in the Israel-Hamas War
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Rafah invasion — a red line for EU on Israel?

How Did the Israel-Hamas War Affect the Ties Between Russia and Israel?

Palestinian factions seek unity at Moscow meeting as Russia vies for greater role in Gaza war

‘Russia posturing’: Palestinian rival leaders agreeing to Moscow talks ‘borne out of desperation’

Conflict in Gaza: The Law of War and Irregular Warfare in Urban Terrain
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine’s strategic goal in 2024 is to make Russia’s war felt in Moscow
John Psaropoulos – Al Jazeera: 1 March 2024

Ukraine is doubling down on remote warfare to smash Russian President Vladimir Putin’s power base and ability to fight.


For more on this theme:

Why is Putin again threatening a nuclear war?
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-putin-again-threatening-nuclear-war

How will Russia’s war on Ukraine end?
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IntelBrief: Entering Third Year of the War, Ukraine Fighting to Prevent Russian Advances
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Iran has supplied Russia with ballistic missiles, UK defense chief suggests

Ukraine’s top prosecutor slams UN inaction over Russia’s child deportations

Undermining Ukraine: How Russia widened its global information war in 2023

Vladimir Putin is losing Russia’s long war against Ukrainian identity
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/vladimir-putin-is-losing-russias-long-war-against-ukrainian-identity/

Putin is on an historic mission and will not stop until he is finally defeated

“Ukraine is Russia”: Medvedev reveals imperial ambitions fueling invasion

Russia/Ukraine: ICC issues arrest warrants for top Russian commanders for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity

Soldiers and civilians fear what comes next as Russia gains momentum in eastern Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Parliament calls on the EU to give Ukraine whatever it needs to defeat Russia

Inside Europe’s drive to get ammunition to Ukraine as Russia advances

Ukraine’s losses on the battlefield could make the war more dangerous for Russia
https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/01/ukraines-losses-on-the-battlefield-raise-more-war-risks-for-russia.html

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How the Putin Regime’s War on Culture Differs From Soviet Times
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The Anti-War Faction in the Russian Orthodox Church Has Yet to Find Its Voice
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Turkey and the Ukraine war: Whose side is Ankara on?
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Putin’s Six-Year Manifesto Sets Sights Beyond Ukraine
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Another Ukraine: a disinformation platform run by an exiled Ukrainian oligarch in Russia

Germany and Russia spar over a leaked audio on missiles for Ukraine. Berlin promises to investigate
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How War Worsened the Opioid Crisis in Ukraine

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Drones are Transforming the Battlefield in Ukraine But in an Evolutionary Fashion
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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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China's Shuttle Diplomacy With Ukraine and Russia: All Symbol, No Substance

Russia-China 5G, Satellite Cooperation Poses Risk For Ukraine, Report Warns
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-china-5g-satellite-cooperation-war-ukraine/32843873.html

Putin threatens again: An updated timeline on potential nuclear escalation of the Russia-Ukraine war

Nine Things Western Analysts Got Wrong About Russia and Its Invasion of Ukraine

Russian Unity and Western Discord Converge in Putin's Imagination

Has Russia Already Won the War in Ukraine?
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