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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Russian military's corruption quagmire
Polina Beliakova – Politico: 8 March 2022
Bogged down in Ukraine, Russian forces battle the consequences of systemic graft.
https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-military-corruption-quagmire/

Artificial intelligence and corporate social responsibility can strengthen anti-corruption efforts
Oludolapo Makinde – The Conversation: 8 March 2022
How can companies conduct business responsibly? In addition to legislative instruments such as the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act and the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, integrated social responsibility and artificial intelligence can help mitigate corruption risks.

For more on this theme:
‘Graft probes and power games’: Xi’s corruption drive turns to cash trail
U.S. bars Ecuador’s ex-president over alleged corruption - statement
Putin’s war in Ukraine boosts anti-corruption crusaders
Network of corruption exposed in Lottery probe
Biden Wants to Crack Down on Foreign Corruption. Here's How I Opinion
https://www.newsweek.com/biden-wants-crack-down-foreign-corruption-heres-how-opinion-1684753
More S African corruption exposed in ‘state capture’ report
Croatia Should Seize This Floating Symbol of Oligarchs’ Corruption
https://balkaninsight.com/2022/03/10/croatia-should-seize-this-floating-symbol-of-oligarchs-corruption/
Despite government efforts, corruption still threatens Iraqis
Countering Russian kleptocrats: What the West's response to assault on Ukraine should look like
DRUG TRAFFICKING

UN: Myanmar’s Militias, Rebel Armies Ramping Up Drug Trade
Zsombor Peter – Voice of America: 5 March 2022

Armed groups in Myanmar’s far east, aligned both with and against the country’s military, are ramping up drug production to cash in amid the turmoil that has gripped the nation since its February 2021 coup, a United Nations official told VOA.


For more on this theme:

Southern Cone Ports Emerge as Cocaine Re-exports Routes

Bill would hike penalties for dark web drug-trafficking

‘Frustrated aspiration’ leading young people into drug trafficking

Narcotics trafficking has intensified since Afghanistan ‘developments’: NSA Doval
https://www.wionews.com/india-news/narcotics-trafficking-has-intensified-since-afghanistan-developments-nsa-doval-460704

Honduran ex-police boss arrested after U.S. extradition request — spokesman

Trans-Atlantic Teams to Fight Drugs, Smuggling, Other Crimes

US Department of State: Albania Home Base for Organised Crime in Narcotics Trafficking

Mexican cartels created generation of drug addicts in border cities like Tijuana, expert says

The drug war unfolding on the Jordanian-Syrian border
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/drug-war-unfolding-jordanian-syrian-border

The cocaine trade is booming, and smugglers have their eyes on a new market

New Brunswick - A New Gateway for Cocaine Routes into Canada?
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

In Nigeria, a decade of payoffs boosted global wildlife trafficking hub

Ini Ekott – Mongabay: 4 March 2022

An investigation by Nigeria’s Premium Times and Mongabay has found evidence of systematic failure by Nigerian law enforcement and the judicial system to hold wildlife poachers and traffickers accountable.


For more on this theme:

Will Exporting Farmed Totoaba Fix the Big Mess Pushing the World’s Most Endangered Porpoise to Extinction?
https://hakaimagazine.com/features/will-exporting-farmed-totoaba-fix-the-big-mess Pushing-the-worlds-most-endangered-porpoise-to-extinction/

Ecuador Expands Protected Marine Area in Galapagos

Tree-clearing criminals fuel Colombia’s wildfire surge
https://news.trust.org/item/20220218104124-unwmr

A community in Mexico reforests its land against the advance of illegal logging

Implications Intensify: Illegal Gold Mining in Brazil’s Amazon Region

Illegal mining fuels social conflict in Indonesian tin hub of Bangka-Belitung

Study Confirms SARS-CoV-2 Related Coronaviruses in Trade-Confiscated Pangolins in Viet Nam
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/03/220309090720.htm

Financial Flows Toolkit to tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade

Malawi Moves to Reduce Rise in Pangolin Trafficking
https://www.voanews.com/a/6472436.html

Palm oil and pulpwood the usual suspects as Papua deforestation persists

Revealed: Timber giant quietly converts Congo logging sites to carbon schemes
MONEY LAUNDERING AND ORGANIZED CRIME

Treasury Publishes National Risk Assessments for Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, and Proliferation Financing

Homeland Security Today: 2 March 2022

The U.S. Department of the Treasury issued the 2022 National Risk Assessments on Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Proliferation Financing. These documents highlight the most significant illicit finance threats, vulnerabilities and risks facing the United States. The U.S. is vulnerable to all three forms of illicit finance because of the size and sophistication of its financial system and centrality of the dollar in the payment infrastructure of global trade.


For more on this theme:

Strengthening Partnerships to Counter Non-Traditional Security Threats in the Indo-Pacific


The Lawfare Podcast: China’s Illicit Economies

https://www.lawfareblog.com/lawfare-podcast-chinas-illicit-economies

Organized crime has infiltrated online dating with sophisticated ‘pig-butchering’ scams

https://theconversation.com/organized-crime-has-infiltrated-online-dating-with-sophisticated-pig-butchering-scams-177445

Anti-money-laundering body puts UAE on global ‘gray’ list

https://apnews.com/article/business-middle-east-dubai-united-arab-emirates-money-laundering-16a901f84f7b00dfe3bef5402b652ef6

Australia lawsuit accuses Crown Resorts of ‘innumerable’ money laundering breaches


EU Wants New Anti-Money Laundering Authority to Have Crypto Oversight: Report

https://www.coindesk.com/policy/2022/02/24/eu-wants-new-anti-money-laundering-authority-to-have-crypto-oversight-report/

UK cracks down on dirty money laundered through property market

https://theprint.in/world/uk-cracks-down-on-dirty-money-laundered-through-property-market/852629/

Report: Counterfeit Goods Still Flowing to EU During Pandemic


Why Financial Institutions Should Prioritize AML

https://www.techfunnel.com/fintech/financial-institutions-should-prioritize-aml/
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Russia’s War in Ukraine Is a Watershed Moment for Internet Platforms
Steven Feldstein – Carnegie: 3 March 2022

Social media has shaped previous conflicts, but this one is unique, especially for U.S. tech companies.

https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/03/03/russia-s-war-in-ukraine-is-watershed-moment-for-internet-platforms-pub-86569

For more on this theme:

(China, Russia) China, Russia prepare new push for state-controlled internet

(Global) Ukraine invasion brings Internet governance neutrality question into focus

(Global) Ukraine’s request to cut off Russia from the global internet has been rejected

(Global) Russia-Ukraine: Is internet on verge of break-up?

INTERNET FREEDOM

Russia says it will block Facebook, its latest effort to control the narrative on Ukraine
Taylor Hatmaker – TechCrunch: 4 March 2022

A week after introducing partial restrictions on Facebook, the Russian government announced it would outright block the social network.

https://techcrunch.com/2022/03/04/russia-blocks-facebook/

For more on this theme:

(Iran) UN experts urge Iran to abandon mass internet censorship plan
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2034071/middle-east

(Pakistan) Pakistan: New cybercrime law threatens to stifle social media dissent

(Iran) ‘I Can’t Stand It Anymore’: Prominent Iranian Filmmaker Blasts State Censorship
https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-director-mehrjui-film-censorship/31741759.html
CYBER STATECRAFT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

New York rolls out statewide cyber command center
Cailin Crowe – Cybersecurity Dive: 28 February 2022

State and city leaders in New York have created the Joint Security Operations Center to coordinate cybersecurity across the state.


For more on this theme:
(U.S.) The Urgency To Cyber-Secure Space Assets
https://www.forbes.com/sites/chuckbrooks/2022/02/27/the-urgency-to-cyber-secure-space-assets/?sh=10ec045451b1

(U.K.) #HowTo: Solve the UK’s Shortage of Cybersecurity Experts
https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/opinions/solve-shortage-cybersecurity/

(Iran, Global) Iran’s Cyber Influence Strategy Poses Formidable Challenges for the West

(Europe) Council of Europe and European Commission organise regional cyber training for East and South-East European countries

CYBERCRIME

UN begins three-year effort to create cybercrime treaty
Howard Solomon – IT World Canada: 7 March 2022

As the United Nations General Assembly debated a resolution demanding Russia withdraw from Ukraine, countries began another attempt to put some teeth into fighting criminal use of the internet.


For more on this theme:
(Global) The Rise of Cybercrime – An Overview
https://securityboulevard.com/2022/03/the-rise-of-cybercrime-an-overview/

(Tanzania) Govt Touts Cooperation in Cybercrime Fight
https://dailynews.co.tz/news/2022-02-26621a2b3758180.aspx

(Global) Cybersecurity report identifies top 5 cybercrime rings

(India) First of its kind State Cyber Crime Investigation Centre set up in Tamil Nadu
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Ukrainian websites under 'nonstop' attack - cyber watchdog agency
*Reuters: 5 March 2022*

Ukrainian websites have been under nonstop attack from Russian hackers since the Kremlin launched an invasion of the country last month, Kyiv’s cyber watchdog agency said.


*For more on this theme:*

- *(Global) Cyber breaches costing the global economy billions*
- *(Europe) Cyberattack Knocks Thousands Offline in Europe*
  https://www.securityweek.com/cyberattack-knocks-thousands-offline-europe
- *(U.S.) Cyber-Attack on New York Ethics Watchdog*
- *(Global) Cyber attack disrupts thousands of publications, including Gazette*
  https://gazette.com/news/local/cyber-attack-disrupts-thousands-of-publications-including-gazette/article_bdb8bdc4-9d80-11ec-9119-6300b0f08c7e.html

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

*Why Europe’s energy industry is vulnerable to cyber-attacks*
*Alejandro Romero and Jonathan Nelson – European Council on Foreign Relations: 7 March 2022*

Global energy infrastructure is highly vulnerable to cyberattacks. The European Union should address this vulnerability as part of its defense against Russian aggression.


*For more on this theme:*

- *(Ukraine, Russia) Starlink disruption in Ukraine and the persistent threat to critical infrastructure*
- *(Global) Ransomware Attack Trends: Critical Infrastructure In The Crosshairs*
- *(U.S.) Cybersecurity: Internet Architecture is Considered Resilient, but Federal Agencies Continue to Address Risks*
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ISIS Resurrection a Cause for Alarm
Hany Ghoraba – The Investigative Project on Terrorism: 24 February 2022
As Iraqis begin to heal from the scourge of ISIS and rebuild, news of the increase in the terrorist group’s attacks in Iraq and neighboring Syria is alarming. The dangers of a possible ISIS resurgence remain high, and the group’s ability to coordinate terrorist strikes can inspire its followers in the West and around the world.
https://www.investigativeproject.org/9146/isis-resurrection-a-cause-for-alarm

The growing threat of ‘ISIS-K’
Alex Szokalski – Asia & The Pacific Policy Society: 7 March 2022
The terror group ISIS may no longer appear in breaking news reports, but its existence and operations are unfortunately still lingering in the region.
https://www.policyforum.net/the-growing-threat-of-isis-k/

For more on this theme:
The Growth and Internationalization of Islamic State Khurasan Province's Media Operations

The Challenges of Repatriating Malaysian IS Fighters from Syria
https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/the-challenges-of-repatriating-malaysian-is-fighters-from-syria/

Designation of ISIS Organizers and Financial Facilitators based in South Africa

How the Islamic State used bullying and bribes to rebuild in Syria
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/24/islamic-state-syria-attacks/

Family ties fuel Islamic State to rebel pipeline in northern Syria

The State of the Islamic State

Philippine Military Identifies IS Extremist Group’s New Regional Leader

The Death of Islamic State’s Leader Abu Ibrahim Al-Qurashi: What’s Next for Indonesian IS Supporters
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Covid-19 and its impact on extremist groups’ use of IEDs
Julie Flint – Action on Armed Violence: 3 March 2022

The pandemic has allowed terrorist recruiters to exploit people’s financial, health and personal concerns to advance their ideology and fuel division to further a loss of trust in state authority. Terrorists have continued to utilize low-tech, low-cost tactics such as improvised explosive devices, shooting attacks and vehicle rammings that often defy disruption.

Expansion of the Allied Democratic Forces should worry East Africa
Mohamed Daghar, Richard Chelin and Mohamed Haji – Institute for Security Studies: 3 March 2022

The Allied Democratic Forces terror group is broadening its recruitment base from its traditional pool of Congolese and Ugandan fighters to Kenya and Tanzania. Countries in the region were made aware of this risk several years ago. As the Democratic Republic of the Congo prepares to join the East African Community, there is new reason to worry.
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/expansion-of-the-allied-democratic-forces-should-worry-east-africa

For more on this theme:

The Pakistani Taliban’s radical rebranding: Is there more than meets the eye?
https://www.mei.edu/publications/pakistani-talibans-radical-rebranding-there-more-meets-eye

Hezbollah Supporters Intensify Threats against Opponents ahead of Lebanon’s Elections

Taliban begin house searches, sparking fear, diplomatic criticism

Nearly 400 civilians killed in Afghanistan since Taliban takeover, UN says

Boko Haram, ISWAP Training Suicide Bombers To Attack Security Operatives – Secret Police, DSS Warns

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham fights opponents on social media

West African coastal terror attacks: just the tip of the iceberg
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/west-african-coastal-terror-attacks-just-the-tip-of-the-iceberg

Somali and severe drought amid an Islamist insurgency
RADICALIZATION

Integrating Gender into Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons From the ASEAN Region
Dr. Alexandra Phelan and Irine Hiraswari Gayatri – Australian Institute of International Affairs: 8 March 2022
Terrorist and violent extremist groups often leverage misogyny as a tool of recruitment and intimidation. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ increasing recognition of gender perspectives in its policy responses is a good first step in combating this trend.

For more on this theme:
‘Polarised’ Montenegro Urged to Address Online Extremism in New Strategy
https://balkaninsight.com/2022/02/17/polarised-montenegro-urged-to-address-online-extremism-in-new-strategy/
Deeper solutions to Africa’s Islamist violence
Offline Versus Online Radicalization: Which is the Bigger Threat?
https://gnet-research.org/2022/02/21/offline-versus-online-radicalisation-which-is-the-bigger-threat/
Germany: Telegram app is becoming a ‘medium for Radicalisation’
https://www.wionews.com/videos/germany-telegram-app-is-becoming-a-medium-for-radicalisation-454270

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

What Russia’s Ongoing Cyberattacks in Ukraine Suggest About the Future of Cyber Warfare
Stuart Madnick – Harvard Business Review: 7 March 2022
For years, Ukraine has been a proving ground for Russian cyber weapons. As companies and countries watch the Russian war in Ukraine unfold, they should take heed of the conflict’s online front – and think about how to prepare if it spills over Ukraine’s borders.

For more on this theme:
Could Russia shut down the internet in Ukraine?
Hackers linked to Chinese government invaded US state networks, security firm says
China-aligned APT renews cyberattack on European diplomats, as war rages
IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND MALIGN INFLUENCE – CHINA

Ecuador is a test case for how the US can counter Beijing’s influence in Latin America
Gabriel Alvarado – Atlantic Council; 3 March 2022

While all eyes were on the athletes competing in the Winter Olympics in Beijing last month, China was busy staging high-level international meetings behind the scenes. Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomed the leaders of Argentina and Ecuador, underscoring China’s growing influence in Latin America.

https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/ecuador-is-a-test-case-for-how-the-us-can-counter-chinese-influence-in-latin-america/

For more on this theme:

Countering China’s Growing Influence at the International Telecommunication Union

Correlates of Politics and Economics: How Chinese Investment in Africa Changes Political Influence

China’s Latest Disinformation Campaign Against Taiwan Backfires Amid the Russia-Ukraine War

China vows legislation focus on tackling foreign interference
https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1254350.shtml

China Goes Local: How Chinese Players Engage Outside National Capitals
https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/03/10/china-goes-local-how-chinese-players-engage-outside-national-capitals-event-7834

Loopholes And Lawfulness: De-Escalating Tensions In The South China Sea – Analysis

Covert group engaged in moulding public opinion in Tibet, other countries in favour of communist regime: Report

Why China Won’t Rescue Russia’s Flailing Economy
https://www.rferl.org/a/china-rescue-russia-economy/31737915.html

China’s ‘COVID-19 diplomacy’ merely facade to sell vaccines: Report
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

How Does the Ukraine-Russia Conflict End?
Thomas Spoehr – The Heritage Foundation: 3 March 2022

Even though the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been underway for a few weeks, in terms of warfare, it is just beginning.


For more on this theme:

Russia, China in 'strategic convergence' — Australian intelligence

Targeting Russian Elites, Disinformation Outlets, and Defense Enterprises
https://www.state.gov/targeting-russian-elites-disinformation-outlets-and-defense-enterprises/

Will War in Ukraine Further Destabilize Syria?
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/will-war-ukraine-further-destabilize-syria-200996

Balkan Fighters Risk Criminal Charges for Joining Ukraine’s Defence

Making the Most of Foreign Volunteers in Ukraine
https://warontherocks.com/2022/03/making-the-most-of-foreign-volunteers-in-ukraine/

Ukraine war highlights internal divides in Mideast nations
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-iran-lebanon-middle-east-c98c06fe6fc6fbd237d9edd824d37541

Breach of Sovereignty in Ukraine Damages Russia's Standing in Southeast Asia

Latin America: A New Sphere of Russian Influence?
https://politicstoday.org/latin-america-a-new-sphere-of-russian-influence/

The Hunt: Wave of terrorism expected in Ukraine

The Kadyrovtsy: Putin’s Force Multiplier or Propaganda Tool?
https://newlinesinstitute.org/russia/the-kadyrovtsy-putins-force-multiplier-or-propaganda-tool/

China’s Russia problem
https://mondediplo.com/outsidein/china-ukraine

China’s difficult balancing act in Russia–Ukraine crisis

Will China’s support for Russia hold as condemnation over Ukraine grows?
https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/03/will-chinas-support-for-russia-hold-as-condemnation-over-ukraine-grows/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine war: fresh warning that Africa needs to be vigilant against Russia’s destabilising influence
Joseph Siegle – The Conversation: 9 March 2022

It’s commonly held that Russian President Vladimir Putin’s objective for invading Ukraine is to install a puppet regime. If so, this would be consistent with the approach Russia has taken with its recent forays into Africa.

https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-fresh-warning-that-africa-needs-to-be-vigilant-against-russias-destabilising-influence-178785

For more on this theme:
China’s Strategic Assessment of Russia: More Complicated Than You Think

The impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on trade

A Russian debt default could spill over into emerging markets including China, according to Yale economist Stephen Roach

Asian response to Ukraine crisis
https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2022/03/09/2003774440

China calls Russia its chief ‘strategic partner’ despite war
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-business-europe-global-trade-wang-yi-26278c4e0a19ab6264593edba66c

Russia is turning to its old disinformation playbook in Ukraine. Is the world able to stop it?
https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnist/2022/03/07/russia-disinformation-ukraine-cyber-warfare/9402421002/

Russia-Ukraine war: Can Moscow break its international isolation?
https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/russia-ukraine-war-moscow-break-international-isolation-how

What Sanctions Has the World Put on Russia?
https://www.lawfareblog.com/what-sanctions-has-world-put-russia

Russia’s war with Ukraine: Asking the right questions
https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2022/03/04/russias-war-with-ukraine-asking-the-right-questions/

Time for Serbia to Scale Back Military Ties with Russia

While the Russian army invades Ukraine, Putin has already quietly taken over another European country
https://fortune.com/2022/03/05/ukraine-invasion-russia-belarus/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Did China Know Russia Would Invade Ukraine? Answer Will Affect Beijing’s Reputation
Ralph Jennings – Voice of America: 4 March 2022

China has rejected a report that said it told Russia to delay an invasion of Ukraine until after the Beijing Winter Olympics. Experts say the flap indicates Chinese leaders could have known an attack was coming and that such a discovery would taint China’s reputation in the West.


For more on this theme:
Russia’s Invasion Has Become a Watershed Moment for Germany
https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/03/03/russia-s-invasion-has-become-watershed-moment-for-germany-pub-86553

The SWIFT sanctions against Russia: How they work, and what’s the impact going to be

Putin’s always wanted to weaken the West. He’s done the exact opposite

Putin’s Ukraine War: Russian oligarchs must face tougher sanctions
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-ukraine-war-russian-oligarchs-must-face-tougher-sanctions/

Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine Could Overturn the Strategic Balance in Central Asia, Too

How Will the Russia-Ukraine War Affect the Balkans?
https://politicstoday.org/how-will-the-russia-ukraine-war-affect-the-balkans/

Latin America Reacts to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine
https://theglobalamericans.org/2022/03/latin-america-reacts-to-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/

Russia’s Vaunted Influence Operations Bogged Down with Ukraine

The Russia-Ukraine Crisis And The Global Energy Transition – Analysis

Russia Headed For Afghanistan 2.0 In Ukraine Invasion – Analysis

Analysis: Taiwan studies Ukraine war for own battle strategy with China
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia's Ukraine Invasion Devolving Into ‘Strategic Catastrophe’ for Putin: U.S. Envoy
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/06/putin-invasion-russia-war-crimes-investigation-ukraine-osce/

Russia's Propaganda Machine Is Faltering Over Ukraine
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/08/russia-propaganda-ukraine-failure/

The Ukraine War: A Global Crisis?

China Is Not Russia. Taiwan Is Not Ukraine.
https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/03/china-not-russia-taiwan-not-ukraine

Analysis: Is Russia repeating mistakes of past wars in Ukraine?

As the world shuns Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, Iran strengthens its ties with Moscow

War in Ukraine puts pressure on East European banks to prop up sinking currencies

Understanding the war in Ukraine
https://news.mit.edu/2022/understanding-war-ukraine-russia-0308

Analysis: How the Biden White House is fighting Russian disinformation

Russia-Ukraine War: Insights and Analysis
https://www.hks.harvard.edu/russia-ukraine-war-insights-analysis

Georgia: Balanced on a Knife-Edge
https://cepa.org/georgia-balanced-on-a-knife-edge/

Russia Crisis Military Assessment: How will Russia stage the battle of Kyiv?

The Baltics Should Be Worried
https://cepa.org/the-baltics-should-be-worried/

Hungary has become the EU home of Kremlin talking points
https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-war-narrative-hungary-disinformation/

Five Latin American States Abstained at UN's Ukraine Resolution and Here is Why
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/03/10/five-latin-american-states-abstained-at-uns-ukraine-resolution-and-here-is-why/