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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Brazil justice annuls Lula’s sentences, enabling 2022 run
Mauricio Savarese and David Biller – The Associated Press: 8 March 2021
A justice on Brazil’s Supreme Court has annulled corruption convictions against former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva – a move that could be the first step toward clearing him to run next year against President Jair Bolsonaro.
https://apnews.com/article/brazil-sao-paulo-caribbean-money-laundering-e31b88553d65e71a21d2b95aeb-fe498c

How China’s Massive Corruption Crackdown Snares Entrepreneurs Across The Country
Emily Feng – National Public Radio: 4 March 2021
The Chinese fight against corruption has served another function: enabling officials across China to lock away entrepreneurs and other citizens whom they perceive to have gained too much wealth or influence independent of the party.
https://www.npr.org/2021/03/04/947943087/how-chinas-massive-corruption-crackdown-snares-entrepreneurs-across-the-country

For more on this theme:
Former IMF chief Rato to stand trial in Spain on corruption charges

Offices of senior German politician searched over corruption allegations

Austria fails to weed out corruption in judiciary and parliament

Why Europe needs to up its game in fighting corruption
https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/europe-corruption-politics-montenegro-b1808718.html

Procurement corruption darkens Africa’s COVID-19 fight

South Africa to Target Nepotism, Corruption in Civil Service

France convicts ex-defence minister, acquits ex-PM Balladur in Karachi corruption trial

Corruption claims threaten to damage Germany’s CDU party
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

The legal trade in wildlife poses pandemic risks too
Daniel T Cross – Sustainability Times: 8 March 2021

With three out of four newly emerging infectious human diseases originating in animals, there is an urgent need to monitor the legal trade in wildlife, according to new research by Vincent Nijman, anthropology professor at Oxford Brookes University.


For more on this theme:

Cambodia: Widespread illegal logging in Prey Lang rainforest amid ban on community patrols

Fake it till you save it? Synthetic animal parts pose a conservation conundrum

Banning wild meat could add to global food problems

We need a green recovery after COVID-19, but banning wildlife trade could do more harm than good

Parrots, Toucans and Monkeys Delivered Across Mexico

FROM THE FIELD: Taming the illegal wildlife trafficking trade

China Doubles the Number of its Protected Animals
https://www.rfa.org/english/commentaries/animals-03032021145918.html

Could Africa’s taste for bushmeat trigger the next pandemic?

‘A ticking time bomb’: Commercial wildlife trade in southeast Asia risking future pandemic

Banning the Sale of Wild Meat Might Actually Make Pandemics More Likely

Chinese triads target Bolivia’s jaguars in search of ‘American tiger’ parts
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Human Trafficking: The UK Needs to Improve Its Response
Keith Ditcham and Iisa Kosonen – Royal United Services Institute: 10 March 2021

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the United Kingdom violated its international obligations to protect the victims of slavery and forced labor.

Ethiopia’s migrants turn to sex work as pandemic sends them home
Emeline Wuilbercq – Reuters: 3 March 2021

The economic repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis have forced many irregular migrants from Ethiopia to return home, where they are faced with destitution daily. Some turn to sex work as their only option to rise out of poverty. Others resort to prostitution to finance their next migration.
https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-migrants-sexwork-idAFL8N2KV6QW

For more on this theme:

How contactless technology can prevent human trafficking
https://www.hotelmanagement.net/operate/how-contactless-technology-can-prevent-human-trafficking

Color-coded passage: Why smugglers are tagging U.S.-bound migrants with wristbands

Foreign gangs making ‘easy profits’ by turning to Channel people smuggling
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/09/foreign-gangs-making-easy-profits-turning-channel-peo-

ORGANIZED CRIME

Kyoto Crime Congress opens with declaration to tackle growing crime threats, promote inclusive COVID-19 recovery
United Nations: 7 March 2021

The United Nations kicked off its 14th Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Kyoto, Japan, with experts expressing concern about the COVID-19 pandemic and the new opportunities it has created for organized crime.

For more on this theme:

Ecuador links deadly prison riots to transnational crime groups
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ecuador-prisons-idUSKCN2AT3SJ

COVID-19 is reconfiguring organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean

A Former Made Man Opens Up About Life in the Mafia
MONEY LAUNDERING

Money mule recruiters use fake online job adverts to target ‘generation COVID’
Lucy Harley-McKeown – Yahoo: 9 March 2021

Money mule recruiters are targeting people looking for work during the pandemic by posting fake advertisements on employment websites and social media.

For more on this theme:

John McAfee Indicted On Fraud, Money Laundering Charges In Pump-And-Dump Crypto Scheme

The Anti-Money Laundering Act is a tough act for banks
https://www.paymentssource.com/opinion/the-anti-money-laundering-act-is-a-tough-act-for-banks

U.S. Anti-Money Laundering Reforms Spell Bad for Crypto Crime

Kenya ranked among major money laundering hotbeds across the world

SEC sets up transparency rules to combat money laundering

‘I Might Buy it All’: Albania Fights Losing Battle against Money Laundering
https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/10/i-might-buy-it-all-albania-fights-losing-battle-against-money-laundering/

European Banking Authority Publishes Document Addressing Crowdfunding and Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing Risk

Anti-money laundering: Cayman is held to a higher standard
https://www.caymancompass.com/2021/03/04/anti-money-laundering-cayman-is-held-to-a-higher-standard/

FID: Covid pandemic has opened new paths for money launderers in Latvia

Taking the Profit Out of Intellectual Property Crime: Piracy and Organised Crime
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The Rise And Impact Of The Splinternet
David B. Shrestha – Analytics India Magazine: 7 March 2021

The global internet as we know it is on the verge of splintering into smaller bubbles of national networks due to aggressive national policies, trade disputes, censorship and dissatisfaction with big tech companies.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Framing the Internet Governance Debate: The Long Road to WSIS+20 (2025)

(U.K., Global) A Fight in the U.K. Reveals the Problems With Internet Governance

(India) India is trying to build its own internet

INTERNET FREEDOM

How Kashmir’s Internet Censorship is Hurting Public Health
Borgen Magazine: 9 March 2021

Lack of access to reliable internet service prevents Kashmir’s citizens from accessing important COVID-19 information. In essence, Kashmir’s internet censorship is actively harming public health.

https://www.borgenmagazine.com/kashmirs-internet-censorship/

For more on this theme:

(China) China Persecutes Those Who Question ‘Heroes.’ A Sleuth Keeps Track.
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/business/china-online-censorship.html

(China, Global) Copying China’s Online Blockade
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/01/technology/copying-chinas-online-blockade.html

(Russia) Russia Slows Down Twitter Access
https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/10/russia-slows-down-twitter-access

(Global) More Governments Disrupt Internet for Political Control
https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/more-governments-disrupt-internet-political-control
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

**Will the End of Internet ‘Cookies’ Bring More User Privacy?**
*Voice of America: 10 March 2021*

Google has announced plans to stop supporting tools designed to follow internet users across the web in order to target them with specific advertising. How will that change privacy concerns?  
https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/will-the-end-of-internet-cookies-bring-more-user-privacy-/5809138.html

*For more on this theme:*

(Global) Can WhatsApp stop spreading misinformation without compromising encryption?  
https://qz.com/1978077/can-whatsapp-stop-misinformation-without-compromising-encryption/

(U.S.) NSA and CISA release cybersecurity guidance on strengthening cyber defense through protective DNS  

(Balkans) Cyber-Attacks a Growing Threat to Unprepared Balkan States  
https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/10/cyber-attacks-a-growing-threat-to-unprepared-balkan-states/

CYBER STATECRAFT

**China launches cyber warfare against India**
*Deepak Vohra – The Sunday Guardian: 6 March 2021*

A more comprehensive and objective assessment of China’s cyber power is in urgent need. As Joseph Nye argued, exaggerated fears about growing Chinese power can either paralyze or become a cause of conflict.  

*For more on this theme:*

(Nigeria) Buhari seeks overhaul of national strategy on cyber security  

(U.K.) The UK’s Next Steps on Cybersecurity  
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/the-uks-next-steps-on-cybersecurity

(Sierra Leone) Collaboration key to Sierra Leone's first national cyber security strategy  
**CYBER CRIME**

Criminals and Hostile States Attack Healthcare with Impunity; the CyberPeace Institute Calls for Accountability

*CyberPeace Institute: 9 March 2021*

Cyber attacks against health care entities are putting patients at risk and having a psychological impact on medical staffs. Governments must do more to help fight attacks, warns a report by the CyberPeace Institute.


*For more on this theme:*

**(India) Over 1,000 Delhi Police personnel trained to tackle cyber-crime amid pandemic**


**(U.S., Global) How to Protect Vulnerable Seniors From Cybercrime**


**(Russia, Global) Hackers Target Russian Cybercrime Forums**


**(Australia) Australia's answer to thwarting ransomware is good cyber hygiene**

https://www.zdnet.com/article/australias-answer-to-thwarting-ransomware-is-good-cyber-hygiene/

**INFORMATION SHARING**

Most Threat Analysts Banned from Sharing Intel with Peers

*Phil Muncaster – Infosecurity Magazine: 10 March 2021*

According to a new report from Russian malware vendor Kaspersky, most threat intelligence analysts aren’t allowed to share artifacts with their peers in professional networks, hindering the global fight against cyber attacks.


*For more on this theme:*

**(U.S., Global) To combat cyber warfare the security industry needs to work together**

https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2021/02/01/combat-cyber-warfare/

**(U.S.) Hacking Campaign Fuels Calls for Information Sharing Mandate**

https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2021/02/hacking-campaign-fuels-calls-information-sharing-man- date/172254/

**(U.K.) Cyber-threat intelligence information sharing guide**

There's No Margin for Error in Port Cyber Security
Joel Snape – The Maritime Executive: 9 March 2021

With the global shipping industry already under pressure, Joel Snape, a security researcher at Nettitude, explains why addressing the risk to port infrastructure from cyber attack has never been more critical.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Why world's power grids are increasingly vulnerable to cyber attacks

(South Africa) Critical infrastructure attacks: why South Africa should worry
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/critical-infrastructure-attacks-why-south-africa-should-worry

(Global) Global Power Grids Are Becoming Increasingly Vulnerable to Cyber Attacks
https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2021/03/04/603758.htm
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

UK foreign minister reports ‘worrying’ rise in Islamic State recruitment among teens
_Agence France-Presse_: 4 March 2021

Children and teenagers are being recruited to ISIS during lockdown in “worrying” numbers, warns United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab. Speaking in the House of Commons about the continued threat, Raab said it is “still able to carry out lethal attacks” and it remains the U.K.’s most significant terrorist threat at home and abroad.


How the Pentagon Got Inside ISIS’ Chemical Weapons Operation — and Ended It
_Joby Warrick – Politico_: 27 February 2021

How shady reports of ISIS-made poison gas led the U.S. to a valuable ISIS weapons-maker who helped bring the whole operation down.


For more on this theme:

As part of the battle for hearts and minds, ISIS uses TikTok to spread propaganda messages mainly to a younger audience


Jihadist Women’s Demands Come at Crucial Time for France


Islamic State Khorasan Province Attack on Hazaras Endangers Pakistan’s Baluchistan Province


Isis women languish in dire conditions with nowhere else to go


Islamic State Exploiting Security Gaps to Step Up Violence, US Partners Warn


State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Shabaab mounts prison break in northern Somalia
Caleb Weiss – The Long War Journal: 5 March 2021

At least seven soldiers were killed when fighters of the Somali Islamist group al-Shabaab stormed a jail in the semiautonomous state of Puntland, police and the group said. Al-Shabaab said it had freed at least 400 prisoners, many of them its members, in its assault on the main prison in Bosaso.


For more on this theme:
Morocco sees Sahel jihadists as magnet for local cells

UN Security Council: Taliban continues to patronize Central Asian Jihadists
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/03/06/un-security-council-taliban-continues-to-patronize-central-asian-jihadists/

The Pakistani Taliban is Back
https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/the-pakistani-taliban-is-back/

Heroin and War Crimes: Conflict Rages On in Mozambique

RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Terrorism is evolving: Isolation is a route to radicalisation we cannot ignore
Matt Dryden – The Independent: 10 March 2021

A year of Covid restrictions could lead to an increase in vulnerable children adopting extremist ideologies — a proportion of whom may go on to commit terrorist offences such as school shootings.

https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/terrorism-isolation-radicalisation-school-shootings-b1815261.html

For more on this theme:
COVID-19 and Terrorism in the West: Has Radicalization Really Gone Viral?

Rethinking Terrorism: Social Media And Its Role In Fake Warfare — OpEd

How Indonesia Failed in Countering Religious Extremism
https://intpolicydigest.org/how-indonesia-failed-in-countering-religious-extremism/

Terrifying rise of far-right groups in Aus

Lessons for Reintegrating Islamic State Detainees
IRREGULAR WARFARE: SOFT POWER

Chinese-style soft power
Juris Paiders – Modern Diplomacy: 6 March 2021
Upon closer inspection, China’s soft power is nothing more than lazily hidden strong power, i.e., attempts to achieve economic, political and military dominance through the use of force.
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/03/06/chinese-style-soft-power/

For more on this theme:
With Its Sputnik Vaccine Going Global, Russian Soft Power Is on Display

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES

Iranian Proxy Militia Claims to Have Cells In Washington DC
Steve Balestrieri – SOFREP: 7 March 2021
Iranian proxy militia groups claim to have active cells stationed in Washington, D.C., as well as other U.S. cities, according to messages in online forums used by these groups.

For more on this theme:
Hand of Iran, Iraqi proxies seen in Ras Tanura attack
https://thearabweekly.com/hand-iran-iraqi-proxies-seen-ras-tanura-attack
Pawn And Proxy: Cold Truths Behind The Iran-Russia Alliance

IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

China Accelerates Plans to Overtake US on World Stage, Top Commander Says
Jeff Seldin – Voice of America: 9 March 2021
Concerns about China’s aggressive behavior are not new. U.S. military and intelligence officials have repeatedly warned of the danger. A top U.S. Navy admiral told lawmakers: China is actively involved in disinformation, espionage and cyber operations.
https://www.voanews.com/usa/china-accelerates-plans-overtake-us-world-stage-top-commander-says

For more on this theme:
Uniting against authoritarianism: a blueprint for the Quad
U.S. Condemns Russia For Vaccine ‘Disinformation,’ Vows To Fight Back
https://www.rferl.org/a/us-condemns-russia-vaccine-disinformation-pfizer-sputnik/31140742.html
Germany is main target of Russian disinformation, EU says