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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Desperate for Aid, Ukraine First Has to Fight Corruption

A crucial $5.5 billion aid package from the International Monetary Fund is being held up because of concerns about corruption in Ukraine. This aid could turn the tide against the coronavirus in the country.


Corruption could cost lives in Latin America’s response to the coronavirus
Transparency International: 31 March 2020

Latin America has long suffered from graft among the elite, and as the COVID-19 crisis worsens, there is much concern about aid to those countries being used for its intended purposes.


For more on this theme:

Croatia: Council of Europe anti-corruption group calls for more integrity in government and law enforcement

Ukraine lagging in reform efforts to prevent corruption of MPs, judges and prosecutors

TI: Stimulus Packages Must Include Anti-Corruption Measures


Defeating Systemic Corruption? Anti-Corruption Measures in Post-Revolution Ukraine and Armenia

Bosnians Blame Corruption for Allowing Coronavirus to Spread

Companies risk security breaches, corruption and bribery due to COVID-19
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Pentagon deploys ships, aircraft and troops to Caribbean, eastern Pacific to help stop drug traffickers
Caitlin M. Kenney – Stars and Stripes: 1 April 2020

United States Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced Wednesday that Navy ships and aircraft are being moved toward Venezuela as the Pentagon beefs up counternarcotics operations in the Caribbean following a U.S. drug indictment against Nicolás Maduro.


UK coronavirus lockdown raises fears of rise in child drug mules
Amber Milne – Reuters: 1 April 2020

With the current COVID-19 lockdowns across the United Kingdom, concerns are being raised about the vulnerability of children being left in abusive homes. Such trauma could see the children turn toward a life of crime, particularly in the drug trade.


For more on this theme:

Impact of Covid-19 on drugs trade likely to hit recreational cocaine users most

Sinaloa Cartel Drug Traffickers Explain Why Coronavirus Is Very Bad for Their Business

From Cocalero to Kingpin: New Book Tracks Cocaine Supply Chain

A New Breed of Drug Dealer Has Turned Buying Drugs into a Treasure Hunt
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/g5x3zj/hydra-russia-drug-cartel-dark-web

The coronavirus pandemic is an opportunity for organized crime in Asia

As gangs ravage Mexico town, mayor seeks answers to husband’s killing

Duterte presses on with ‘drug war’ despite coronavirus lockdown

I Followed a Kilo of Cocaine From Field to Street
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Why China’s wildlife ban is not enough to stop another virus outbreak
Alice Su – Los Angeles Times: 2 April 2020
For years, conservation groups have urged China to change its rules about wildlife protection. Historically, those rules only last for the duration of the crisis, and there is little evidence to believe this time will be any different.

Coronavirus comes to rescue of Sierra Leone’s plundered rosewood
Cooper Inveen – Reuters: 31 March 2020
The coronavirus pandemic has led to one unexpected positive outcome: The rosewood of Sierra Leone that had been devastated by illegal logging is at a standstill, thanks to a crash in demand in China and a global lockdown.

For more on this theme:
Case Closed? Why We Should Review Historic Wildlife Trafficking Cases from a Financial Perspective

As pangolin trade heats up, Nigeria urged to do more to crack down

#COVID-19 is teaching us a harsh lesson: We need to change our relationship with animals
https://www.eureporter.co/economy/eu-economy/2020/04/03/covid-19-is-teaching-us-a-harsh-lesson-we-need-to-change-our-relationship-with-animals/

Coronavirus: Why are wet markets still open in China amid coronavirus crisis?

In an African forest, a fight to save the endangered pangolin

‘Easy to blame China; but India’s wildlife trade is thriving too’

Indonesia scraps timber legality rule, stoking fears of illegal logging boom
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Saudi Arabia launches new anti-human trafficking steps
Trade Arabia: 1 April 2020

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Saudi government is working to ensure that training for handling human trafficking cases continues through the use of teleconferencing.

Victims of modern British slavery soars more than 50 per cent to a record number of more than 10,000 in a year
James Gant – Daily Mail: 2 April 2020

The number of potential modern slavery victims identified in the United Kingdom has risen by 52% in a year to a record high. In 2019, 10,627 potential victims were referred to the National Referral Mechanism, the official system through which victims are identified and provided with support. This was up from 6,986 in 2018.

For more on this theme:
Canada To Turn Back Asylum Seekers In Effort To Stop Coronavirus Spread

Migration and migrant integration: Enabling knowledge-based approaches to migration policy

U.S. to rapidly turn away migrants, including those seeking asylum, over coronavirus

Iraq: Smugglers Profiting from Lockdown of Kurdistan Region

The Security Implications of Human Trafficking
https://www.cfr.org/event/security-implications-human-trafficking

Millions of refugees terrified of COVID19 invasion in West Asia

COVID-19 Checkpoints Aid In Combating Human Trafficking

Anti-trafficking experts note 44% rise in identified victims since 2015
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

New York Attorney General Looks Into Zoom’s Privacy Practices
The coronavirus pandemic made Zoom the most popular app, and that came with consequences.

For more on this theme:

(Global) Testing, Testing, Testing for a More Secure (Internet) World
http://www.circleid.com/posts/20200401-testing-testing-testing-for-a-more-secure-internet-world/

(Global) Tech’s Shadow Workforce Sidelined, Leaving Social Media to the Machines

(Global) BEST PRACTICES: Why pursuing sound ‘data governance’ can be a cybersecurity multiplier

(U.S., Global) Cybersecurity in the Time of COVID-19
https://www.cfr.org/blog/cybersecurity-time-covid-19

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

The Sinicization of Russia’s Cyber Sovereignty Model
Valentin Weber – Council on Foreign Relations: 1 April 2020
In recent years, Russia has mimicked China’s model of cyber sovereignty. This will likely harm Russian domestic security and influence in its near-abroad.
https://www.cfr.org/blog/sinicization-russias-cyber-sovereignty-model

For more on this theme:

(China, U.S) China’s Huawei warns more US pressure may spur retaliation

(Taiwan) Taiwan’s Digital Minister says blockchain is a top priority
https://decrypt.co/23521/why-blockchain-is-a-top-priority-for-taiwans-digital-minister

(Global) Managing Escalation Under Layered Cyber Deterrence

https://www.lawfareblog.com/cost-imposition-point-understanding-us-cyber-operations-and-strategy-behind-achieving-effects
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

**India to Get a New Cybersecurity Policy**
Brian Pereira – CISO MAG: 2 April 2020

India is one of the most cyber-attacked countries in the world. To combat this, India is revising its laws and is expected to release a new cyber security policy this year.

https://www.cisomag.com/india-cybersecurity-policy/

*For more on this theme:*

(Africa) Digital rights in Africa: advocates must team up to consolidate gains – Report


(Global) Here is how to use the Internet of Things to combat global pandemics like Novel Coronavirus outbreak


(U.S.) A broad strategy for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic


CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

**International Cybersecurity Experts Come Together to Fight COVID-19**

*Related Cyberthreats*

CISO MAG: 31 March 2020

The COVID-19 outbreak has led to a rise in hacking attempts as malign actors take advantage of the crisis. To address the situation globally, an international group of 400 cyber security professionals has come together to combat these cyber attacks. The group, named “COVID-19 CTI League” (for cyber threat intelligence), consists of members from more than 40 countries and includes security leaders from major organizations such as Microsoft and Amazon.


*For more on this theme:*

(U.S.) Microsoft is Alerting Hospitals Vulnerable to Ransomware Attacks


(U.S., Global) FBI Warns of Ongoing Zoom-Bombing Attacks on Video Meetings


(Hong Kong) Hong Kong targeted in new sweeping mobile malware campaign

CYBER CRIME AND TERRORISM

Hackers ‘Without Conscience’ Target Health-Care Providers
Ryan Gallagher – Bloomberg: 1 April 2020

Criminals are taking advantage of the pandemic to launch cyber attacks, particularly against health care providers. One solution would be to encrypt the data, but encrypting records could keep doctors from vital patient information.


For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Europol: Criminals exploit virus crisis as fresh opportunity
https://apnews.com/41e2591aef5807e0256a15341a1b6128

(Global) Hackers Hijack Routers to Spread Malware Via Coronavirus Apps

(Global) Cyber criminals are trying to wreak havoc during global pandemic

NOTEWORTHY PODCASTS

The Lawfare Podcast: Nate Persily Asks Whether Democracy Can Survive the Internet
Jen Patja Howell – Lawfare: 2 April 2020

On this episode of the Arbiters of Truth series on disinformation, Evelyn Douek and Quinta Jurecic speak with Nate Persily, the James B. McClatchy professor of law at Stanford Law School.


For more on this theme:
(Global) Cyber Security Today

(Global) Shedding light on the human element.
https://thecyberwire.com/podcasts/hacking-humans/92/notes

(Global) Hidden dangers inside Windows and LINUX computers
https://thecyberwire.com/podcasts/research-saturday
MASS SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

COVID19 will test the limits of the privacy debate
Shashidhar K.J. – Observer Research Foundation: 2 April 2020

What happens to the extensive surveillance apparatus once the crisis passes? How will it be dismantled?

For more on this theme:

(Israel) Shin Bet says it found 500 coronavirus carriers with its mass surveillance

(Global) Beware the Implications of Coronavirus Surveillance

(Europe) Could the coronavirus pandemic lead to mass surveillance in Europe?

(Global) Data-Driven Responses to the Coronavirus Pandemic and the Privacy Implications
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

U.S. military fears pandemic could lead to ISIS resurgence in Syria
Lara Seligman – Politico: 2 April 2020

The U.S. military is concerned that ISIS could rebound in northeastern Syria due to the lack of resources available to deal with the coronavirus. “Any conditions that are adverse, be it the pandemic or access to essential services, are always going to be things that Daesh could use for recruitment to try to bring people into their ideology,” said one officer.


Trials of IS Fighters in Syria Suspended Indefinitely
Heather Murdock – Voice of America: 2 April 2020

After a riot and fears of the coronavirus spreading, ISIS trials have been suspended with no renewal date in sight.


For more on this theme:
Islamic State prisoners escape from Syrian jail after militants riot

New Indonesia Terrorism Raid Nets Islamic State-Linked Suspects
https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/new-indonesia-terrorism-raid-nets-islamic-state-linked-suspects/

Islamic State children still waiting for Tunisia to bring them home

Broken, but Not Defeated: An Examination of State-led Operations against Islamic State Khorasan in Afghanistan and Pakistan (2018-2015)

What Is Happening With the Foreign Women and Children in SDF Custody in Syria?

5,000 Terrorists Detained In One of The Toughest Prisons Worldwide

ISIS, Muslim Brotherhood Fatwas Call for Discrimination against Christians, Women
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Extremists see global chaos from virus as an opportunity
Cara Anna – The Associated Press: 2 April 2020

Messages from Islamic terrorist groups show concern about the virus mixed with bravado, asserting that it is punishment for non-Muslims while also urging followers to repent and take care of themselves. But in a sharp commentary in its al-Naba newsletter in mid-March, Islamic State urged followers to show no mercy and launch attacks in this time of crisis.
https://apnews.com/003e493d970a08202ab36565324aab64

Don't Lose Sight of the Enduring Global Terrorist Threat
Raffaello Pantucci – Royal United Services Institute: 30 March 2020

As the world’s attention remains understandably concentrated on the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to remember that other threats have not gone away.
https://rusi.org/commentary/dont-lose-sight-enduring-global-terrorist-threat

For more on this theme:
Al Qaeda Branch in Somalia Threatens Americans in East Africa — and Even the U.S.

Al-Qaeda’s India affiliate hints at shifting focus to Kashmir

Taliban attacks against Afghan security forces continue unabated

Crisis in the Sahel Becoming France’s Forever War

Coronavirus: Fighting al-Shabab propaganda in Somalia

Generation Jihad: Ep. 3 – AQAP Names A New Emir

As the World Is Distracted, Boko Haram Terrorists Strike a Key Western Ally

Taliban touts training camps ‘still going on’ that prepare fighters for ‘war’
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING
Southeast Asia’s Teenage Extremists
Amalina Abdul Nasir and Kenneth Yeo – The Diplomat: 1 April 2020
ISIS continues to radicalize youth in Asia.
https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/southeast-asias-teenage-extremists/

For more on this theme:
Conflicting Identities: The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia

Websites hosting terrorist content to be blocked under new powers

The Fate Of Foreign ISIS Affiliates: Part 2
https://theowp.org/reports/the-fate-of-foreign-isis-affiliates-part-2/

A Fertile Future For Repatriated, Reformed Terrorists In Uzbekistan?
https://theowp.org/reports/a-fertile-future-for-repatriated-reformed-terrorists-in-uzbekistan/

WHITE NATIONALIST TERRORISM
Right-wing extremism needs to be confronted, says researcher
Doug Dingwall – The Canberra Times: 30 March 2020
In Australia, a university researcher says that efforts to stop right-wing terrorism must go beyond removing websites; the government must proactively engage with the groups and confront the ideology in public.

For more on this theme:
White Supremacist Online Radio Outlets Call For Race War, Espouse Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories, Recruit For Violent Neo-Nazi Groups
https://www.memri.org/reports/white-supremacist-online-radio-outlets-call-race-war-espouse-antisemitic-conspiracy-theories

In the news: Boko Haram proves it’s still a threat

Shabaab leaders split over funds control

PERSPECTIVE: Did Germany Drop the Ball on Right-Wing Extremism?
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/perspective-did-germany-drop-the-ball-on-right-wing-extremism/
IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES

Iran Guards Warn Washington Against Any Attack On Proxies In Iraq
Radio Farda: 31 March 2020

As the U.S. reportedly is contemplating moving against Iran’s proxy forces in Iraq, top Iranian figures are warning Washington against such an action.

For more on this theme:

To Defeat Iran’s Militias, Prove They Aren’t Iraq Nationalists

China Chases Indonesia’s Fishing Fleets, Staking Claims to Sea’s Riches

Iran Military Chief Warns That Any U.S. Provocation Will Be Met With ‘Fiercest’ Response

Latest Iranian Plotting Worrisome, Not Surprising, US Officials Say

Japanese Naval Ship Involved in Collision With Chinese Fishing Vessel in East China Sea

Iran Watchfully Observes U.S. Moves In Iraq As Its Proxies Might Come Under Fire
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

CORONAVIRUS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Chinese COVID-19 disinformation campaigns commenced as early as January:
Stanford
Campbell Kwan – ZDNet: 1 April 2020

Stanford University examined social media posts to understand why and how the Chinese started a rumor that accused the U.S. military of purposefully starting the coronavirus outbreak.


Full report:
Coronavirus Conspiracy Claims: What's Behind a Chinese Diplomat’s COVID-19 Misdirection

For more on this theme:
Amid COVID-19 outbreak, China shifts to use “Russian-style” disinformation tactics

How COVID19 will affect sustainability and the UNSDGs

DoD isolating critical troops and commanders to be ready in a crisis amid pandemic

Crisis communication and the Coronavirus contagion

COVID-19 pandemic as a threat to the rule of law in the Western Balkans

China Created a Fail-Safe System to Track Contagions. It Failed.

Coronavirus misinformation is the latest test for social media platforms

COVID19: An African perspective
https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/covid19-an-african-perspective-63879/

Chinese military scientists hope to test coronavirus vaccine abroad
CORONAVIRUS AND NATIONAL SECURITY - CONTINUED

The economic toll of the coronavirus will be unprecedented, analysts say
Cissy Zhou and Mark Magnier – Inkstone: 2 April 2020

Unlike other financial crises in the past, the current economic downturn has nothing to do with the fundamentals of the economy. Rather, the economy is plummeting because people are no longer participating in business.


For more on this theme:

The Economic Fallout of the Coronavirus in Southeast Asia

After the Pandemic: America and National Security in a Changed World

National Intelligence and the Coronavirus Pandemic

Latest Guard update: More than 14,600 troops mobilized for COVID-19 response

The coronavirus is a gift to Russia and other disinformation attackers

China must not politicize international agencies

The Military Health System is uniquely suited to handle the COVID-19 crisis

Army asks 10,000 recently separated soldiers to come back for COVID-19 fight

Russia aids Italy in fight against COVID-19: Why we should be aware

How China is Exploiting the Pandemic to Export Authoritarianism
https://warontherocks.com/2020/03/how-china-is-exploiting-the-pandemic-to-export-authoritarianism/

The military, policing, and COVID-19
https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-military-policing-and-covid-19/

Coronavirus should make leaders reconsider the risks of conflict
CORONAVIRUS AND NATIONAL SECURITY CONTINUED

*For more on this theme:*

**Using the Indian Armed Forces During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**The Coronavirus Is a Boon for Global Propagandists**
https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/02/coronavirus-is-boon-for-global-propagandists-pub-81455

**Crisis Upon Crisis: The Geopolitical & Economic Implications of the Pandemic**

**Coronavirus and the Future of Democracy in Europe**

**Can a world already in despair save Africa?**
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/can-a-world-already-in-despair-save-africa

**Separating fact from fiction and fate: Assessing Iran’s response to COVID-19**

**Getting ahead of the crisis: Global food security during COVID-19**

**As coronavirus hits Latin America, expect serious and enduring effects**
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/03/26/as-coronavirus-hits-latin-america-expect-serious-and-enduring-effects/

**Prosecuting Purposeful Coronavirus Exposure as Terrorism**

**Coronavirus Disinformation and the Need for States to Shore Up International Law**

**Who are the key players in China’s coronavirus propaganda war with US?**
https://www.foxnews.com/world/china-coronavirus-propaganda-war-key-players