CONTENTS

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)
  Corruption
  Drug Trafficking
  Money Laundering
  Trafficking in Scarce or Protected Resources

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)
  Internet Governance
  Internet Freedom
  Cyber Capacity Building
  Cyberattacks
  Cybercrime
  Critical Infrastructure Protection

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
  ISIS and Foreign Fighters
  Terrorism Around the World
  Crime and Conflict
  Russia/Ukraine

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Guatemala: Türk alarmed by reprisals against anti-corruption officials
United Nations News: 30 March 2023
Retaliation continues against officials who spearheaded the fight against corruption in Guatemala, said the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Volker Türk.

Europol Says Corruption is Enabling Criminal Gangs to Infiltrate Ports
The Maritime Executive: 5 April 2023
Europol issued its first report exploring how organized crime infiltrates the ports of Europe, saying criminals are constantly evolving their techniques as they work toward control over major logistical points.

For more on this theme:
West can help Ukraine crack down on graft, anti-corruption prosecutor says

Does democracy fuel corruption? Most Ghanaians don’t think so

Indonesia’s corruption outrage going viral
https://asiatimes.com/2023/03/indonesias-corruption-outrage-going-viral/

Al Jazeera “Gold Mafia” documentary demonstrates urgent need to combat corruption in Zimbabwe

PM Of Bosnia’s Muslim-Croat Entity Sentenced To Four Years For Corruption
https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-novalic-corruption-prison/32350526.html

China is turning its anti-corruption fire on banks at a risky time for the economy

Combating Systemic Corruption in Haiti
https://www.state.gov/combating-systemic-corruption-in-haiti/

Ukraine Has Decimated Its Oligarchs But Now Fears New Ones

Agents of corruption: The real culprits of Peru’s endless graft
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Get Tougher on Fentanyl and Trying to Bolster US-Mexico Anti-Crime Collaboration
Earl Anthony Wayne – Wilson Center: 3 April 2023

U.S.-Mexico relations face serious challenges ranging from trade and migration to border violence and drug trafficking. The most dangerous threats surround the trafficking of synthetic opioids, particularly fentanyl, to the U.S.


Cryptomarkets increasingly infuse illicit drug trade, says study
Simon Fraser University – Phys.org: 30 March 2023

Cryptomarkets are proving to be attractive alternatives to in-person drug dealing, according to Simon Fraser University researchers, who say machine learning and tracking markets through web crawlers may help curb the growing trend.


For more on this theme:

Colombia’s cocaine market collapsed: farmers
https://colombiareports.com/colombias-cocaine-market-collapsed-farmers/

China’s role in the fentanyl crisis
https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/chinas-role-in-the-fentanyl-crisis/

India’s SCO presidency: Leading global action against drug trafficking
https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-sco-presidency/

Ecuador’s Lasso Authorizes Civilian Use of Guns, Citing Insecurity

The U.S. closes in on the ‘narcojuniors’
https://english.elpais.com/usa/2023-04-05/the-us-closes-in-on-the-narcojuniors.html

Drug trafficking blamed as homicides soar in Costa Rica

The US sanctioned Chinese companies to fight illicit fentanyl. But the drug’s ingredients keep coming

Iraq and Turkey: Two Transit Countries to Watch in the Captagon Drug Trade

Afghanistan: Rounded up from the streets into Taliban drug rehab
MONEY LAUNDERING

New measures to shield the EU against money laundering
Paula Soler – EUObserver: 28 March 2023

The European Union is in the final stages of launching measures to protect the bloc from terrorist financing at home and abroad, which each year can be worth more than a trillion dollars globally.

https://euobserver.com/eu-political/156875

For more on this theme:

Peru prosecutors probe president, ex-president for alleged money laundering

Cybercrime syndicate dismantled after allegedly laundering $1.7 million

Germany Reportedly Forming New Anti-Money Laundering Agency

Are Money Laundering Concerns Preventing Investment in Gulf Countries?
https://www.globaltrademag.com/are-money-laundering-concerns-preventing-investment-in-gulf-countries/

Aussies warned off the world’s biggest cryptocurrency exchange after it was accused of evading money laundering laws

Bankers convicted in Switzerland over Putin money laundering
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Wildlife trafficking gradually returns after pandemic lull, mostly by sea
Liz Kimbrough – Mongabay: 4 April 2023

Officials in Vietnam seized almost 15,400 pounds of elephant tusks at the port of Haiphong. This confirms the gradual return to normalcy in the illicit wildlife trade, which had been slowed by the pandemic.


Brazil’s revenue service launches electronic invoice for gold to curb illegal mining
Roberto Samora – Reuters: 30 March 2023

Brazil’s revenue service mandated electronic invoices for gold trade when bullion is declared as a financial asset or foreign-exchange instrument, a rule aimed at curbing illegal wildcat mining.


For more on this theme:

Illegal mining turns violent in northern Ecuador

Ghana Officials: Crackdown on Illegal Fishing Might Cause Friction With China

Convergence of wildlife crime: and other forms of transnational organized crime in Eastern and Southern Africa
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/wildlife-crime-eastern-southern-africa/

Sandalwood burn ignites high profile awareness of Kenya’s illegal trade

Pandemic prevention agreement must address wildlife trade

Cambodia sells research monkeys to the world. It’s not all legal, US says.

Activists find illegal logging evidence in protected area in northern Cambodia

From foe to friend? The brands seeking to partner with indigenous peoples to end deforestation
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Like-minded nations must cooperate to ensure internet remains open, safe and trusted
Rajeev Chandrasekhar – The Strategist: 6 April 2023

The platforms that dominate internet commerce must be accountable to Indian users. There is a certain legal accountability that is inherent in the relationship between the platforms and consumers.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Civilization of Digital Operations: A Risky Trend
https://www.lawfareblog.com/civilization-digital-operations-risky-trend

(Asia-Pacific) Emerging technologies in spotlight at Regional Internet forum

(Global) Learning from the Past to Shape the Future of Digital Trust and Safety

INTERNET FREEDOM

Exclusive: Leaked Files Show China And Russia Sharing Tactics On Internet Control, Censorship
Danil Belovodyev, Andrei Soshnikov and Reid Standish – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: 5 April 2023

Years before Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin declared a “no-limits” partnership and the Kremlin launched a wide-ranging censorship campaign following its invasion of Ukraine, Beijing and Moscow were sharing methods for monitoring dissent.

https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-china-internet-censorship-collaboration/32350263.html

For more on this theme:

(India) Digital India bill may change the internet as we know it
https://scroll.in/article/1045731/the-proposed-digital-india-bill-may-change-the-internet-as-we-know-it

(Iran) Q&A: Amid growing censorship and malicious VPNs, protestors combat Iran's 'climate of fear'
https://therecord.media/click-here-amid-growing-censorship-iran-protestors

(India) Twitter accused of censorship in India
https://thedesk.net/2023/04/twitter-blocks-journalists-activists-politicians-india/
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

The Role of International Assistance in Cyber Incident Response
Eugenia Lostri and Georgia Wood – Lawfare: 31 March 2023

Developing countries tend to have a comparatively lower capacity than major powers to respond to cyber incidents. So what is such a nation to do? In many cases, these countries turn to partners with more advanced tools for help.

https://www.lawfareblog.com/role-international-assistance-cyber-incident-response

For more on this theme:
(Estonia, Moldova) Estonia to contribute to Moldovan cyber capabilities

(Guyana) Gov't committed to boosting cyber resilience – PM

(Nigeria) Nigeria set to launch additional satellites
https://www.military.africa/2023/04/nigeria-set-to-launch-additional-satellites/

CYBERAttacks

Capita blames cyber-attack for outage as company races to restore IT systems
Kalyeena Makortoff – The Guardian: 3 April 2023

Capita, the outsourcing group that runs crucial operations for the National Health Service and the military, was still restoring online services for customers as it confirmed a cyberattack was to blame for a major IT outage that hit clients.

https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/apr/03/capita-blames-cyber-attack-outage-it-systems

For more on this theme:
(India) Cyberattacks: You could be the next target
https://www.forbesindia.com/article/take-one-big-story-of-the-day/cyberattacks-you-could-be-the-next-target/84223/1

(Israel) Israeli cyber security website briefly taken down in cyberattack
https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-736351

(U.S.) Lewis & Clark College Investigating Impact of Cyber Attack

(U.S.) The Road to Restoration: Baltimore Schools Rise from Cyber Attack

(Global) Your Biggest Cybersecurity Threat Is Something You’ve Never Heard Of
CYBERCRIME

**Genesis Market: Popular cybercrime website shut down by police**

*Daniel Sandford – BBC: 6 April 2023*

One of the world’s biggest criminal marketplaces used by online fraudsters to buy passwords has been closed down in a global crackdown.


For more on this theme:

*(India) Fight against cybercrime gets more teeth*

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fight-against-cybercrime-gets-more-teeth/article-show/98954183.cms

*(Global) Unpacking the Structure of Modern Cybercrime Organizations*


*(Asia) International cybercrimes target Asian citizens*

https://asianews.network/international-cybercrimes-target-asian-citizens/

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

**The FDA will no longer approve digital medical devices that are vulnerable to cyber attacks**

*Annalisa Merelli – Quartz: 30 March 2023*

More than half of the medical devices currently approved in the U.S. are at risk.


For more on this theme:

*(Europe) What cyber attack risks do the railways face?*


*(Global) Manufacturing is the most targeted sector by cyberattacks. Here’s why increased security matters*


*(U.S) IRS Building on ‘Exemplary’ Capabilities to Deflect Surge of Cyber Attack Attempts*


*(Australia) Regulator Tells Australian Banks to Boost Cyber-Attack Defenses*


*(Global) Lawmakers Warn of Cyber Threat Posed by Beijing, Moscow to Energy Sector*

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

US strike kills senior ISIS leader in Syria, US Central Command says
Mary Kay Mallonee and Helen Regan – CNN: 4 April 2023

A U.S. strike in Syria has killed a senior ISIS leader who planned attacks in Europe, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement. The strike was a “unilateral” U.S. operation that killed Khalid ‘Aydd Ahmad al-Jabouri, CENTCOM said in the statement posted to Twitter.


‘Ideologically pure’ foreign recruits were crucial for ISIS, says Syria expert
Sunniva Rose – The Nation: 31 March 2023

Islamic State group leaders did not trust locals in Syria and Iraq – unlike foreign recruits who were “ideologically pure” – said a specialist in Syria’s Islamic ideologies testifying in Belgium’s biggest-ever terrorism trial.

https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/2023/03/31/ideologically-pure-foreign-recruits-were-crucial-for-isis-says-syria-expert/

For more on this theme:

Victims of Islamic State War Crimes take their case to the UN Committee Against Torture
https://www.matrixlaw.co.uk/news/victims-of-islamic-state-war-crimes-take-their-case-to-the-un-committee-on-torture/

Jihadists Target Africa And Afghanistan, But Also Eye China And Russia

Ending the US Presence in Syria Could Cause a Rapid ISIS Reconstitution and Threaten Core US National Security Interests

Trinidad to bring home stranded ISIS fighters, survivors

Two Islamic State suicide bombers killed in Syria amid group’s resurgence

US troops are quietly helping fight ISIS, al-Qaida in West Africa

Afghan Taliban raid kills 6 members of Islamic State group
https://apnews.com/article/afghan-taliban-killed-islamic-state-raid-02ebe30433f1b94b15ba55f80c73979
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al-Qaeda’s Looming Threat: Are We Looking Over the Wrong Horizon?
Sara Harmouch – Lawfare: 4 April 2023

A dozen years after the death of Osama bin Laden, his dream of another strike against the United States — with effects that would far exceed the September 11, 2001, attacks — may be close to coming true, and an “over-the-horizon” counterterrorism strategy might not be the solution.

https://www.lawfareblog.com/al-qaedas-looming-threat-are-we-looking-over-wrong-horizon

Cabo Delgado: two years since the Palma invasion
Borges Nhamirre – Institute for Security Studies: 3 April 2023

The attack prompted nations and security companies to help fight one of Africa’s most rapidly evolving terrorist hotspots.

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/cabo-delgado-two-years-since-the-palma-invasion

For more on this theme:

Report: Russia’s Ukraine invasion aids terrorist recruitment

Explaining the resurgence of terrorist violence in Pakistan

Funding Tomorrow’s Terrorists and Criminals: Cryptocurrency’s Impact on the World Stage

Is Niger’s counter-terrorism approach an exception in the Sahel?
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-nigers-counter-terrorism-approach-an-exception-in-the-sahel

IntelBrief: The Terrorism Landscape Continues to Evolve
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-march-31/

IntelBrief: Jihadist Groups Threaten to Destabilize the Sahel and Coastal West Africa
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-april-4/

Education Indonesia’s youth against radicalization
https://www.fairplanet.org/editors-pick/education-indonesias-youth-against-radicalisation/

Don’t Normalize the Taliban’s Despotic Regime

Al Shabab Infighting Escalates: Attack on Senior Foreign Leader’s House in Jilib City
CRIME AND CONFLICT

The Shadow of Success: How International Criminal Law Has Come to Shape the Battlefield
Gabriella Blum – Lieber Institute: 5 April 2023

The rise of international criminal law and its expansion has been celebrated as a great achievement, advancing justice and the rule of law, deterring atrocities and protecting victims worldwide.

https://lieber.westpoint.edu/shadow-success-how-icl-has-come-shape-battlefield/

For more on this theme:

The Lawfare Podcast: Russia’s Aggression Against Ukraine and the International Legal Order

There’s no place for impunity in cyberspace

Russian charged with war crimes may brief U.N. Security Council

Ukrainian soldier pleads ‘partly guilty’ at Russia’s first war crime trial

South Sudan’s conflicts are not just between communities

Russia’s Ukraine violations ‘shockingly routine’

What of the Rohingya? The ICC, Ukraine, and limits of “international” justice
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukrainian Cyber War Confirms the Lesson: Cyber Power Requires Soft Power
Jason Healey – Council on Foreign Relations: 4 April 2023
Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has benefitted from a strong flow of technical assistance. That assistance was made possible by Ukraine’s reserves of soft power.
https://www.cfr.org/blog/ukrainian-cyber-war-confirms-lesson-cyber-power-requires-soft-power

For more on this theme:
Ukraine’s Total Democratic Resilience in the Shadow of Russia’s War

Many Speakers Voice Concern over Increase in Dangerous Nuclear Weapons Rhetoric amid Ongoing War against Ukraine, as Disarmament Commission Opens Session

Arming Ukraine without crossing Russia’s red lines
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/04/06/arming-ukraine-without-crossing-russias-red-lines/

Can the West stop Russian-Iranian convergence?
https://www.mei.edu/publications/can-west-stop-russian-iranian-convergence

Lukashenka Explains the Russian Tactical Nukes
https://jamestown.org/program/lukashenka-explains-the-russian-tactical-nukes/

Russia Risks Losing Its Dominance Over Arctic Sea Route to China and Turkey

New Decree on Foreign Policy Fails to Hide Russia’s Falsity
https://jamestown.org/program/new-decree-on-foreign-policy-fails-to-hide-russias-falsity/

Empire as Catastrophe: A Philosophical Reevaluation of the Russian State

With Moscow’s Encouragement, Iran Moves More Deeply Into Russia Than Ever Before
https://jamestown.org/program/with-moscows-encouragement-iran-moves-more-deeply-into-russia-than-ever-before/

China’s and India’s Relations with Russia after the War in Ukraine: A Dangerous Deviation?

‘Telegram is King’: Extremist Foreign Fighters in the Russo-Ukrainian War
https://gnet-research.org/2023/04/03/telegram-is-king-extremist-foreign-fighters-in-the-russo-ukrainian-war/

What is Russia’s Theory of Victory in Ukraine?
https://mwi.usma.edu/what-is-russias-theory-of-victory-in-ukraine/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

How to Benchmark Victory in Ukraine
https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/30/ukraine-russia-war-west-nato-victory-support/

Putin’s nuclear saber-rattling is a sign of dangerous Russian desperation

NATO poses a threat to Russian imperialism not Russian security

Anti-war Russians struggle to be heard
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/anti-war-russians-struggle-to-be-heard/

Pressuring Ukraine into a premature peace would only encourage Putin
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/pressuring-ukraine-into-a-premature-peace-would-only-encourage-putin/

Ukraine recap: as spring arrives in Ukraine an offensive against Crimea could be on the cards

Analysis: Western curbs on Russian oil products redraw global shipping map

Ukraine’s Success Risks Splitting Its Friends

Ukraine Has Helped Russia’s Minorities Find Their Voice — and an Audience
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-has-helped-russias-minorities-find-their-voice-and-an-audience/

Russia’s Elite — Hold Onto Nurse for Fear of Something Worse
https://cepa.org/article/russias-elite-hold-onto-nurse-for-fear-of-something-worse/

Russia Using TikTok to Push Pro-Moscow Narrative on Ukraine

Analysis: Russia’s military production, state splurge ease sanctions pain

Russian Air Capabilities in Ukraine: A Geospatial Analysis

Xi-Putin Meeting Amidst China’s Ukraine Dilemma
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Ukraine's Children Are Central to Peace Negotiations with Russia**

**How Russia killed its tech industry**
https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/04/04/1070352/ukraine-war-russia-tech-industry-yandex-skoloko/

**To help end war in Ukraine, the Quad should back India to engage Russia**
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/help-end-war-ukraine-quad-should-back-india-engage-russia/

**Russia's War in Ukraine Creates Ripple Effect in Africa**

**Does Russia Exercise Overall Control over the Wagner Group? Expert Q&A from Stockton Center's Russia-Ukraine Conference**

**The Download: Russia's crumbling tech industry, and an AI security disaster**

**China's Chess Game in Ukraine: Is the West Ready?**

**Finland officially becomes the 31st member of NATO; Russia warns it will take 'countermeasures'**

**How Russia's invasion of Ukraine tested the international legal order**

**Defeating Russia Is the Best Way for the West to Defend Taiwan**
https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2023-03-31/ukraine-war-beating-russia-is-the-best-way-to-defend-taiwan#xj4y7vxkg

**China draws lessons from Russia's losses in Ukraine, and its gains**

**Nearly All Ukrainians Believe They'll Defeat Russia**
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/nearly-all-ukrainians-believe-theyll-defeat-russia

**Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Heralds New Era of Warfare**