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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Combating the sea of corruption in the maritime sector
Richard Chelin and Denys Reva – Institute for Security Studies: 5 April 2022
Weak oversight and Africa’s seablindness make the maritime industry an ideal target for graft.

Research finds a corruption gender gap in bureaucracies
Bocconi University: 31 March 2022
Research by two Bocconi University professors suggests that women may be significantly less corrupt than men. Women at different levels of government bureaucracy in both China and Italy are much less likely to be suspected of corruption and arrested for it.

For more on this theme:
How Lafarge’s mining, corruption cause untold hardship to Mfamosing community (Part 4)

Corruption Whistleblower Bill Approved By Cabinet
https://www.newzimbabwe.com/corruption-whistleblower-bill-approved-by-cabinet/

Albanian lawmaker resigns amid corruption scandal

Moldova’s Former Intelligence Director Raided in Corruption Probe

Cultivating an anti-corruption culture in the public service takes time and effort

Media plays major role in fighting corruption, says MACC chief

Corruption is the main concern for Palestinians, says local anti-corruption watchdog
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/corruption-leading-concern-palestinians-says-watchdog

How Klong Dan project gushed from pollution solution to corruption torrent to expensive lesson

Ongoing Corruption Trial in the Seychelles Spells Trouble in Paradise
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/ongoing-corruption-trial-seychelles-spells-trouble-paradise-201467
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Law enforcement seizures of pills containing fentanyl increased dramatically between 2018-2021
National Institutes of Health: April 2022

National Institutes of Health-supported research highlights the growing and dangerous fentanyl trend, particularly for people new to drug use.

Afghanistan: Taliban outlaw opium poppy cultivation, drug trade
Deutsche Welle: 4 April 2022

The Taliban are taking steps to halt Afghanistan’s opium trade even as the country’s economy crumbles. It is unclear how the Taliban government plans to replace this illicit source of income for millions of farmers.

For more on this theme:

Drug trafficking via freight containers a major challenge

How TikTok Shows Untold Truths of Communities Linked to Drug Trafficking

David vs. Goliath – The Family Clan Defying CJNG in Michoacán, Mexico

Afghanistan Has Been Haven for Terrorism, Drug Trafficking for Too Long, Says Secretary-General, Stressing Solidarity to Neighbouring Foreign Ministers

Lawmakers Move to ‘Crack Down’ on Dark Web-Based Opioid Trafficking

Crypto-drug trade connect: Govt turns to tech for a leg up
https://indianexpress.com/article/business/crypto-drug-trade-connect-govt-turns-to-tech-for-a-leg-up-7852947/

In Search of a Silver Bullet: Reducing the Supply of Synthetic Drugs to the U.S.

The Captagon Threat: A Profile of Illicit Trade, Consumption, and Regional Realities
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Online Trade in Endangered Wildlife Booming in Myanmar Since Coup
Sebastian Strangio – The Diplomat: 1 April 2022

The World Wildlife Fund claims that illegal online transactions of endangered wildlife products rose 74% in 2021.

For more on this theme:

CITES takes unprecedented steps to stop the illegal African rosewood trade
https://www.forest-trends.org/blog/cites-takes-unprecedented-steps-to-stop-the-illegal-african-rosewood-trade/

Bees fend off illegal loggers
https://www.newsday.co.zw/2022/03/feature-bees-fend-off-illegal-loggers/

Deforestation in Africa
https://earth.org/deforestation-in-africa/

New Campaign in Lower Mekong Basin Aims to Stop Illegal Rosewood Logging

Now, drones to curb illegal mining in Punjab forests

An Ecuadorean Town Is Sinking Because of Illegal Mining
https://america.cgtn.com/2022/03/27/zaruma-lost-world-heritage-site-designation-because-of-illegal-mining

Chinese IUU fishing is destabilizing maritime security

Study links 59 percent of industrial fishing offenses to Chinese vessels

Panama Struggles to Fight Timber Trafficking in Forests and Ports

eDNA used to identify endangered fish in wet markets

Tasmanian government accused of attempting to ‘retrospectively’ change law to ‘legalise’ logging

Countries that sanctioned Myanmar’s junta are still buying their timber: Report
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Stanford-led study reveals extent of labor abuse and illegal fishing risks among fishing fleets

By Katie Jewett – Stanford University: 5 April 2022

A new modeling approach combines machine learning and human insights to map the regions and ports most at risk for illicit practices, like forced labor or illegal catch, and identifies opportunities for mitigating them.

https://news.stanford.edu/2022/04/05/mapping-risks-labor-abuse-illegal-fishing/

For more on this theme:

Love me not: human traffickers earned up to EUR 1 800 per day per victim


ORGANIZED CRIME AND MONEY LAUNDERING

Why Does Latin America Dominate the World’s Most Violent Cities List?

Chris Dalby, Parker Asmann and Gabrielle Gorder – InSight Crime: 24 March 2022

The 2021 ranking of the 50 Most Violent Cities in the World by a Mexican NGO provides a bird’s eye view at Latin America’s regional criminal dynamics. From Mexico’s grim dominance to Colombia’s cocaine hotspots, InSight Crime profiles five countries and what factors are spurring these spikes in homicides.


For more on this theme:

How Extortion Became Fixed Business Cost for Restaurants in Quintana Roo


EU seizes $130m assets linked to money laundering in Lebanon


Bullion groups launch gold bar database to thwart fraud


Britain under pressure to crack down on corrupt Russian money that's infiltrated its economy


https://www.coindesk.com/layer2/2022/03/31/crypto-should-disrupt-current-anti-money-laundering-practices-not-adopt-them/

Colombia, US Strengthen Fight Against Money Laundering

https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/colombia-us-strengthen-fight-against-money-laundering/
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE
It's Time for a Better Vision of Internet Governance: From Multistakeholderism to Citizenship
Klaus Stoll – CircleID: 28 March 2022

We are experiencing a time of global challenges. Is Multistakeholderism, the currently dominant guiding principle of internet governance, still up to the task?
https://circleid.com/posts/20220328-time-for-a-better-vision-of-internet-governance-multistakeholderism-to-citizenship

For more on this theme:
(Russia, Global) How Is Russia Connected to the Wider Internet?
https://circleid.com/posts/20220329-how-is-russia-connected-to-the-wider-internet

(Europe) Tracking tech policy: Europe’s Drive To Regulate the Net

(Global) Jack Dorsey admits regret for helping to decentralise the Internet

(Russia) Russia Inches Toward Its Splinternet Dream
https://www.wired.co.uk/article/russia-splinternet-censorship

INTERNET FREEDOM
Increased social media use puts African leaders on edge
Tobore Ovuorie – Deutsche Welle: 1 April 2022

Social media is enabling Africans to voice their opinions on governance, but their leaders kick back forcefully.
https://www.dw.com/en/increased-social-media-use-puts-african-leaders-on-edge/a-61303854

For more on this theme:
(Russia) Twitter in a Time of War: Russia Sanctions Should Include Social Media
https://cepa.org/twitter-in-a-time-of-war-russia-sanctions-should-include-social-media/

(Sri Lanka) Ban on social media after emergency lockdown

(Russia) How everyday Russians are breaking through Putin’s ‘digital iron curtain’
https://www.protocol.com/russian-internet-crackdown

(Global) Government Internet Shutdowns Are Changing. How Should Citizens and Democracies Respond?
https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/03/31/government-internet-shutdowns-are-changing-how-should-citizens-and-democracies-respond-pub-86687
CYBER STATECRAFT AND STRATEGY

Africa and the future of digital diplomacy
Olubukola S. Adesina – Brookings: 23 March 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic has further revealed the extent to which the modern world depends on technology and digital tools. Like every other aspect of life, diplomacy also had to go digital, with many activities transferred online due to pandemic restrictions. In many ways, the pandemic’s disruptive element has helped unleash new forms of virtual decision-making.


For more on this theme:

(Australia) Budget 2022: $9.9 billion towards cyber security aims to make Australia a key ‘offensive’ cyber player

(Pakistan) Does Pakistan’s Cyber Security Policy Provide Effective Defence Against Cyber-Attacks?
https://www.thefridaytimes.com/2022/03/30/does-pakistans-cyber-security-policy-provide-effective-defence-against-cyber-attacks/

(India) Lesson from Ukraine: Not Just Tanks, Troops, India Needs Cyberwar Doctrine to Fight Enemies

CYBERCRIME

Ransomware Attacks Affected 649 Critical Infrastructure Organizations in 2021, FBI Cyber Crime Report Says
Alicia Hope – CPO: 5 April 2022

The FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center released its 2021 cybercrime report highlighting the threat that ransomware attacks pose to critical infrastructure.


For more on this theme:

(Nigeria) Nigerian Cybercrime Law Ruled Illegal Over Human Rights Concerns

(Europe) 5 Levers Lawmakers Can Use to Tackle Cybercrime
https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/opinions/5-levers-lawmakers-use-cybercrime/

(U.S.) Our private health information may be the target of a cyberattack. Are U.S. hospitals ready?
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

China accused of cyber-attacks on Ukraine before Russian invasion
Dan Milmo – The Guardian: 2 April 2022

China has been accused of launching a flurry of cyberattacks on Ukraine’s military and nuclear infrastructure days before Russia’s invasion — indicating initial support for Putin’s war.
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/apr/01/china-accused-of-launching-cyber-attacks-on-ukraine-before-russian-invasion

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Hackers Claim Responsibility for California Ransomware Attack

(Russia, Ukraine) Russian government hackers linked to cyber attack on first day of Ukraine invasion

(U.K.) The Works forced to close some stores after cyber-attack
https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/apr/05/the-works-close-stores-cyber-attack-uk-security-breach

(Global) Email marketing platform Mailchimp faces major cyber attack

INTERNET PRIVACY

The Price of Privacy
Sarah E. Igo - The Atlantic: 6 April 2022

The vicissitudes of the right to privacy over the past two centuries suggest that we may be overdue for a reckoning. Even in a no-holds-barred social media landscape, we are not without resources — whether in the form of legal precedents or changing social values.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Data Privacy in Banking: Technology trends
https://www.verdict.co.uk/data-privacy-in-banking-technology-trends/

(India, Global) Seven commandments of privacy governance in information capitalist societies

(India) Cybercrimes: Consensus emerging on balance between people’s right to privacy and need for regulation: Union Minister
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ADF renews pledge of allegiance to new Islamic State leader
Caleb Weiss and Ryan O’Farrell – Long War Journal: 6 April 2022

In a recently released video, the Islamic State’s local affiliate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – commonly known as the Allied Democratic Forces – renewed its allegiance to the global terrorist group’s new leader.


For more on this theme:

Iraq building wall to keep out ISIS fighters from Syria

Islamic State provided simple answers to life’s questions, witness tells Lisa Smith trial

Islamic State affiliate in Sinai steps up attacks under new leader
https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/03/islamic-state-affiliate-sinai-steps-attacks-under-new-leader

Germany repatriates women, children from Syrian camp
https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-europe-middle-east-syria-germany-765cd0e-a31379599b43048b3bb8edd69

Accused ISIS ‘Beatle,’ on trial for brutal kidnappings, faces mothers of American victims

Why an ISIS Propagandist Abandoned Islam
https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/03/deprogramming-isis-supporters-jihadi-extremism/629433/

UN experts say 100 children missing since ISIS jail break in Rojava
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/010420221

Islamic State hostages were forced to fight each other, US court hears
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/31/islamic-state-hostages-were-forced-to-fight-each-other-us-court-hears

UN sounds alarm over jihadist terror toll in Sahel region
https://thearabweekly.com/un-sounds-alarm-over-jihadist-terror-toll-sahel-region
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Stolen real estate — like blood diamonds — is funding deadly conflicts
Jon Unruh – The Conversation: 3 April 2022

The use of conflict resources to finance wars is expanding into new commodities — with much more severe consequences.
https://theconversation.com/stolen-real-estate-like-blood-diamonds-is-funding-deadly-conflicts-179874

Al-Qaeda Leader Appears In New Video, Dispels Rumors Of His Death
Gandhara: 6 April 2022

A video featuring Ayman al-Zawahri is being touted as the first proof in months that the reclusive leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization is alive.

For more on this theme:
‘There’s More Than We Think’: Infiltrating the Australian Neo-Nazi Movement

Al-Shabab Surge in Somalia’s Suicide Attacks ‘Change of Tactics,’ Experts Say

Rebuilding local economies can help defeat Boko Haram
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/rebuilding-local-economies-can-help-defeat-boko-haram

Taliban Increases Brutality as World Focus Turns to Ukraine

Afghanistan: Taliban curtail women’s rights

Foreign terrorist fighters: new recommendation on the use of information collected in conflict zones as evidence in criminal proceedings

The Taliban Have Not Moderated
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/central-asia/2022-03-28/taliban-have-not-moderated

Customary Leaders and Terrorism in the Sahel: Co-opted, Coerced, or Killed?
https://icct.nl/publication/customary-leaders-and-terrorism-in-the-sahel-co-opted-coerced-or-killed/

Niger Calls for Regional Force Against Sahel Jihadists
https://www.voanews.com/a/6509872.html

Northern Ivory Coast: Militias Supplement Security as Further Instability Looms
RADICALIZATION

Mind the Gap: What We Do and Don't Know About Gaming and Radicalization
Linda Schlegel – The Geopolitics: 30 March 2022

Gaming and its potential use by extremist actors is the hot topic in radicalization and extremism studies. Despite this increase in attention, how gaming, gaming content and gaming-related spaces are used by extremists remains opaque.


For more on this theme:

TechTank Podcast Episode 41: How to discourage extremism and harmful activities on social media platforms

ISWAP intensifying recruitment of children as soldiers – Report

Mauritania's ideological dialogue with jihadists serving as model for curbing violent extremism

UK terrorism watchdog vows to tackle child terrorists amid rising figures
https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2022/04/01/uk-terrorism-watchdog-vows-to-tackle-child-terrorists-amid-rising-figures/

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

Explained: Why the Russia-Ukraine war threatens to splinter the internet
Pranav Mukul and Anil Sasi – The Indian Express: 2 April 2022

Splintering is the idea of splitting the internet into disparate realms controlled by different dispensations or powers. Recent events pose the first serious challenge to the way the internet has evolved.

https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/russia-ukraine-war-splinternet-7849249/

For more on this theme:

Russians face grim options on social media
https://www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/russia-vkontakte-censorship/

The race to save everything as war threatens the internet in Ukraine and Russia

Russia threatens Wikipedia with fines over “false information”
IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

For more on this theme:

**Viasat network cyberattack linked to newly discovered Russian wiper**

**Did China Help Moscow Hack Ukraine & Share Critical Intelligence Before The Russian Invasion?**

**China-backed hackers waged cyberattacks on Indian power grid system near Ladakh**

**Ukraine war: How Russian propaganda dominates Chinese social media**

**Ukraine Warns of Cyber attack Aiming to Hack Users’ Telegram Messenger Accounts**

**Missing in Action: Russian Cyberattacks**
https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2022/04/missing-action-russian-cyberattacks/363994/

**Cyberattacks have yet to play a significant role in Russia’s battlefield operations in Ukraine – cyberwarfare experts explain the likely reasons**

**Director Christopher Wray Announces Actions to Disrupt and Prosecute Russian Criminal Activity**

**How Ukraine has defended itself against cyberattacks – lessons for the US**
https://theconversation.com/how-ukraine-has-defended-itself-against-cyberattacks-lessons-for-the-us-180085

**Russia's slow cyberwar in Ukraine begins to escalate, experts say**
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/01/russia-ukraine-cyberwar

**Anonymous' next cyber target: Western companies still doing business in Russia**
https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/01/which-companies-are-being-targeted-by-anonymous-see-their-responses.html

**Guns, tanks and Twitter: how Russia and Ukraine are using social media as the war drags on**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Russia Crisis Military Assessment: Russia is forced to make a major shift in strategy
Atlantic Council: 30 March 2022

The Russian Ministry of Defense announced a major shift in its military strategy in Ukraine — moving from the goals of taking Kyiv and winning control of the entire country to the much more limited objective of controlling the Donbas region. We assess that this announcement is driven by circumstances on the ground, specifically Russia’s stalled offensive momentum, its massive losses of personnel and equipment, and a worsening resupply problem.


For more on this theme:

Putin targets enemies at home as his missiles strike Ukraine

South Caucasus Shudder in the Shadow of Russia’s War

How the world’s parliaments can team up against Russian aggression
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/how-the-worlds-parliaments-can-team-up-against-russian-aggression/

NATO and Russia after the Invasion of Ukraine

Russia mulls more media restrictions amid war in Ukraine
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-business-europe-media-6b0c8347beec337a66437e-121fe48c36

Can crypto deliver aid amid war? Ukraine holds the answer.

What Chinese media is saying about Russia’s Ukraine war
https://www.vox.com/23005295/china-russia-ukraine-war-media-censorship

Is Putin committing genocide in Ukraine?

How will Russia’s war in Ukraine reshape the European political scene? Look to France.

Ukraine misinformation is spreading — and not just from Russia
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russian teachers are being punished for making anti-war comments after their own students reported them

Could Russia’s war in Ukraine derail Africa’s global partnerships?
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/could-russias-war-in-ukraine-derail-africas-global-partnerships

What Does Arming an Insurgency in Ukraine Mean?

Crafting a Humanitarian Surge to Respond to the War on Ukraine
https://www.hstoday.us/featured/crafting-a-humanitarian-surge-to-respond-to-the-war-on-ukraine/

Russia’s Floundering False-Flag Narrative
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russias-floundering-false-flag-narrative

Russia after Sanctions: Pirate or Mafia State?
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russia-after-sanctions-pirate-or-mafia-state

In Syria, Russia leads effort to recruit fighters for Ukraine

Analysis: Russia sanctions could spur Chinese arms sales to Nigeria

Why Russia Can’t Rely on IP Theft to Offset Western Sanctions

How difficult would it be for China to invade Taiwan?

What Russia’s invasion of Ukraine means for the world

What Is China Learning from the Ukraine War?

Wargaming a Long War: Ukraine Fights On
https://mwi.usma.edu/wargaming-a-long-war-ukraine-fights-on/

War Termination and Escalation in Ukraine
https://mwi.usma.edu/war-termination-and-escalation-in-ukraine/

Asian nations response to the “war” in Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

U.S. sanctions global network of firms helping the Russian military evade export controls

Putin’s strength now looks like his main weakness, with people too loyal — or scared — to challenge him
https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/31/russias-putin-is-so-powerful-everyone-is-scared-to-tell-him-the-truth.html

Current Russian conflict in Ukraine sets up a global game of Cyber Chicken

Inside Cyber Front Z, the ‘People’s Movement’ Spreading Russian Propaganda

Putin’s War: Ukraine can defeat Russia but urgently needs more weapons
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-war-ukraine-can-defeat-russia-but-urgently-needs-more-weapons/

Russians in the dark about true state of war amid country’s Orwellian media coverage

War-time media reporting is shaping opinions about Russia’s Ukraine invasion

Analysis: Xi risks stumbling with Putin if he plays his cards wrong
https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/China-up-close/Analysis-Xi-risks-stumbling-with-Putin-if-he-plays-his-cards-wrong

Analysis: China’s balancing act over Ukraine offers Washington a subtle ‘win’

Genocide in Ukraine: Putin will not stop until the world stops him

‘No one will ever listen to Russia:’ Why Ukraine is winning the propaganda war
https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-russia-information-war-1.6408380

Analysis: Russia-Ukraine fallout starts felling fragile ‘frontier’ economies
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Analysis: Russia debt investors in limbo as default risk increases

From war crime to conviction — what it will take to bring the Bucha killers to justice

How Russia is using terror tactics from Syria in Ukraine
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/how-russia-using-terror-tactics-syria-ukraine

Ukraine’s dilemma: How to negotiate with someone who could be a war criminal

Ukrainian Experts: Russian Use Of Tactical Nuclear Weapons A Real Possibility

Russia’s economy is beginning to crack as economists forecast sharp contractions

Poll: Will China Attack Taiwan?
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/31/china-taiwan-attack-russia-ukraine-expert-poll/

Weapon of War in Europe? The Escalation of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Ukraine-Russia Conflict

A World Remade? Lessons From The Ukraine War – Analysis

Bucha Increases the Moral Pull for the West to Aid Ukraine
https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/04/05/bucha-increases-moral-pull-for-west-to-aid-ukraine-pub-86815

Head of MI6 says mass executions in Bucha, Ukraine, were part of Putin’s invasion plan

Analysis: As foreign digital firms leave, Russia’s domestic providers pounce

Russia crude oil pipeline capabilities to mainland China—The ESPO crude oil pipeline
https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/espo-crude-oil-pipeline.html

Supping With the Kremlin Devil: the Red Cross Dilemma

Friendly fire blunders, confusion, low morale: why Russia’s army has stalled
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/02/friendly-fire-blunders-confusion-low-morale-why-russias-army-has-stalled
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

How Belarusian Fighters In Ukraine Evolved Into Prominent Force Against Russian Invasion – Analysis

As Evidence Of War Crimes In Bucha Mounts, A Hunt For Russian Military Units – Analysis

The war in Ukraine raises new questions for EU foreign policy

EU economics chief says Russia-Ukraine war will lead to growth slowdown — but not a recession

As reality bites, the Russian leader’s only options are bad ones
https://cepa.org/as-reality-bites-putin-only-left-with-bad-options/