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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

IMF Study Finds Corrupt Countries Use More Crypto, Argues for Crackdown
PYMNTS: 10 April 2022

Countries with more corruption tend to have more people using cryptocurrencies, according to a recent International Monetary Fund study that surveyed thousands of people in 55 countries. When those countries also have strong capital controls that make it harder to transfer money abroad quietly, there are even more crypto users.

https://www.pymnts.com/cryptocurrency/2022/imf-study-finds-corrupt-countries-use-more-crypto-argues-for-crackdown/

For more on this theme:

Zimbabwe: ZRP Admits Rampant Corruption Among Its Officers
https://allafrica.com/stories/202204020081.html

Top EU body launches procedure to strip Hungary of funding over corruption

Controversial Ghana Agyapa Deal Goes to Regional ECOWAS Court

Saudi Arabia joins world body for prosecuting corruption safe havens
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2058141/saudi-arabia

Kadhimi: Corruption Rampant in Iraqi State Institutions

South Africa’s Zuma granted further delay in corruption trial

Odebrecht corruption scandal: disgraced Ecuador and Peru leaders freed

Zambian President’s Anti-Corruption Campaign Arrests Justice Minister

Group identifies areas corruption impact Nigerian women, girls

US accuses Nigerian police, military, SSS of corruption, rights violation

Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Dhami launches anti-corruption mobile app
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Colombia's leader touts peace efforts, says drugs are enemy
*Edith M. Lederer – The Associated Press*: 12 April 2022

The government has made efforts to eradicate and substitute crops, and last year saw the highest number of drug seizures, but drug production continues to increase, Colombian President Ivan Duque said.

https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-united-nations-europe-colombia-db01ab23c285ab-0f547b5378d011032

Africa’s Narco-State: An Attempted Coup and Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau
*Isabelle King – Harvard International Review*: 13 April 2022

In the early 2000s, Guinea-Bissau became known as a transit point in the international drug trade. The U.N. even designated the country as Africa’s first “narco-state.”


For more on this theme:

**All coked up: The global environmental impacts of cocaine**

**The New Geopolitics of the Taliban’s Opium Economy**
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/31/the-geopolitics-of-the-talibans-opium-economy/

**Colombia: Drug cartels found shipping weapons, officials say trade fueling violence**

**How Does The Clerical Regime Influences Addiction In Iran? – OpEd**

**Nigeria, South Africa intensify war on drug**
https://www.cajnewsafrica.com/2022/04/12/nigeria-south-africa-intensify-war-on-drug/

**The war next door: Conflict in Mexico is displacing thousands**
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/11/mexico-displaced-people/

**Has Cali Become an Operational Hub for Mexican Cartels in Colombia?**

**Colombia to extradite drug kingpin Otoniel to US**
https://www.kbc.co.ke/colombia-to-extradite-drug-kingpin-otoniel-to-us/

**DEA warns of ‘nationwide spike’ of fentanyl-related mass overdoses across US**

**Honduran ex-president Hernandez to be extradited to U.S. next week**
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

**Mexico's Cartels Corner the Chinese Market for Illegal Wildlife**
*Scott Mistler-Ferguson – InSight Crime: 14 April 2022*

The full threat posed to Mexico’s biodiversity by Mexican and Chinese organized-crime networks has been revealed in a report that shows how unsustainable quantities of marine and terrestrial wildlife are being poached.


**Wildlife trafficking thrives on Facebook despite pledge to fight illegal trade**
*Nina Lakhani – The Guardian: 13 April 2022*

Facebook remains a thriving marketplace for online wildlife trafficking despite the tech giant’s pledge to help combat the illegal trade, according to an investigation.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/13/wildlife-trafficking-facebook-avaaz-endangered-species

*For more on this theme:*

- **Best-preserved part of Brazil's Amazon, home to isolated tribes, faces ‘decimation’**

- **Malaria surges in the Amazon as wildcat mining devours indigenous land**

- **Fights over illegal fishing lead to armed conflict, deaths**
  https://apnews.com/article/business-environment-middle-east-fish-only-on-ap-88e59a1748ba76f5847cc7a44e3fa6

- **Illegal Fishing Is Pushing Ocean Ecosystems Toward Collapse**
  https://truthout.org/articles/illegal-fishing-is-pushing-ocean-ecosystems-toward-collapse/

- **The EU's Scheme To Tackle Illegal Fishing Bears Fruit**

- **China fails to curb abuses on its fishing fleets: report**
  https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2022/04/07/2003776162

- **Mexico’s Vaquita Marina Struggle to Survive Amidst Intense Illegal Fishing in Mexico**

- **Covid opens new battlefronts in Africa’s illegal wildlife trade**

- **How rehabilitated poachers became champions saving Volcanoes National Park wildlife**
MEPs call on EU countries to protect Ukrainian children from human trafficking

Clara Bauer-Babef – EURACTIV: 8 April 2022

Members of European Parliament have overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution to provide more protection for Ukrainian refugee children who now face risks of human trafficking and abuse.


For more on this theme:

To Mitigate Human Trafficking in Nepal, Increase Financial Inclusion

Human Trafficking Network That Exploited South American Victims is Busted in Europe

Hidden Traffic Podcast — The Role of Digital Platforms in Human Trafficking with Lisa Thee
https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/hidden-traffic-podcast-the-role-of-dig-12701/

Rights coalition: Thailand shows no improvement in fighting human trafficking

UN: Sexual Violence, Trafficking Increasing in Ukraine War

Countering Human Trafficking Act advances through Senate

Frontex Director Raises Concerns About Human Trafficking Due to War in Ukraine

Ukraine: Grave mental toll on women and children as one third of people surveyed by IRC are worried about further family separation and human trafficking

Human smuggling from the forgotten corners of Europe

South Africa: Migrants living ‘in constant fear’ after deadly attacks
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The balancing act that is internet governance
Stuart Corner – InnovationAus: 13 April 2022

Engaging with the online world is a priority for the Australian government and it’s becoming more confident about how to regulate the internet, argues a senior official.

https://www.innovationaus.com/the-balancing-act-that-is-internet-governance/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Four Internets, book review: Possible internet futures, and how to reconcile them

(Russia, Global) We sanction the internet at our peril: Cutting off Russia will damage the global internet

(India) Can India shape the global policy for Web 3.0?
https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/can-india-shape-the-global-policy-for-web-3-0/

INTERNET FREEDOM

Russia’s Censorship Isn’t Just Technical. It’s Physical, Too.
Justin Sherman – Barron’s: 13 April 2022

Amid the Russia’s illegal war on Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin’s government is cracking down on the internet. Yet most of the discussion has focused on the technical measures Russia is using to block access to accurate information, ignoring a more insidious and violent element of the government playbook: going after tech company employees.

https://www.barrons.com/articles/russia-censorship-tech-companies-apple-google-51649786986

For more on this theme:

(Venezuela) How Venezuela’s government uses private internet providers to restrict access to the news

(China) How China will censor the metaverse
https://supchina.com/2022/04/13/how-china-will-censor-the-metaverse/

(Iran) The Internet ‘Protection Bill’ will hurt all Iranians, but the queer community will have the most to lose
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

**India bets on satellite broadband to bridge rural digital divide**
*Rina Chandran – Reuters: 29 March 2022*

Most Indian internet users rely on patchy wireless, and rural villages are often unconnected due to infrastructure costs. Satellite broadband launches could connect millions more to the internet.


*For more on this theme:*

- **(Global) Internet poverty: The next frontier in development**
  https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2022/03/31/internet-poverty-the-next-frontier-in-development/

- **(Vietnam) Vietnam Outlines Plan to Develop Digital Government, Economy**

- **(Global) As members of Women@Web, two women in Rwanda and Tanzania strive to empower women and enhance their participation in the digital sphere**

CYBER STATECRAFT AND STRATEGY

**Cyber threats: A case study of Pakistan**
*Tooba Mansoor – Global Village Space: 8 April 2022*

The digital world is so vulnerable to virtual threats that no country can claim to have achieved foolproof cybersecurity; however, states can maximize IT security. The issue of cyber threats and security is transcending political, social and private boundaries.


*For more on this theme:*

- **(U.S.) US State Department solidifies new cyber bureau with $37B budget request**

- **(NATO) NATO’s Role in Global Cyber Security**

- **(China) China Aims to Upgrade the Country’s Overall Digital Competitiveness via Education**

- **(North Korea) North Korea’s Cyber Trolls Are Battling to Reunify the Korean Peninsula**
**CYBERCRIME**

**Redefining Ransomware — Why Confronting Cybercrime Starts With a War of Words**  
Charl van der Walt – Infosecurity Magazine: 8 April 2022

Ransomware. It’s one of those terms that most people have heard of no matter their level of interest or engagement with cybersecurity. It was arguably the WannaCry attack in 2017 that brought the topic into the light. Yet ransomware has a clear definition and one that, in a world of growing digital complexity, matters.  
https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/opinions/redefining-ransomware-words/

For more on this theme:

(GLOBAL) Morgan Stanley’s Rachel Wilson on the democratization of cybercrime  

(GLOBAL) Does a UN Effort to Develop a Cybercrime Treaty Have a Chance of Success?  

(GLOBAL) AI has opened a new front in the war with cybercrime  
https://www.techradar.com/features/ai-has-opened-a-new-front-in-the-war-with-cybercrime

(U.S.) Assessing Law Enforcement’s Cybercrime Capacity and Capability  
https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/assessing-law-enforcements-cybercrime-capacity-and-capability-

**CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION**

**How Best to Improve Cyber Defenses for Critical Infrastructure**  
Jule Pattison-Gordon – Governing: 5 April 2022

As tensions between the U.S. and Russia mount, Cyberspace Solarium Commission members and critical infrastructure owners discuss the need to collaborate more effectively on cybersecurity.  

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Critical Infrastructure Protection: DHS Actions Urgently Needed to Better Protect the Nation’s Critical Infrastructure  

(Global) These ten hacking groups have been targeting critical infrastructure and energy  
https://www.zdnet.com/article/these-ten-hacking-groups-have-been-targeting-critical-infrastructure-and-energy/

(China, India) China accused of cyberattacks on Indian power grid  
https://www.theregister.com/2022/04/08/china_sponsored_attacks_india_ukraine/
**PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)**

**ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS**

**ISIS Calls for ‘Social Media Warfare’ to Counter ‘Enchanting’ Influencers and Incite**  
*Bridget Johnson – Homeland Security Today: 11 April 2022*

“Jihad is not limited to fighting physically, and fighting with tongues is as important as fighting physically,” ISIS-K said in a new magazine issue.  

**ISIL 2.0: How the group became a franchise**  
*Alex Gatopoulos – Al Jazeera: 12 April 2022*

Since its 2019 defeat, ISIL has morphed into a series of affiliates taking hold in Afghanistan and Africa’s Sahel belt.  

*For more on this theme:*

**U.S. Hunts Central Asian Salafi-Jihadi Groups**  
[https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/03/31/u-s-hunts-central-asian-salafi-jihadi-groups/](https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/03/31/u-s-hunts-central-asian-salafi-jihadi-groups/)

**Taliban claims of restraining Islamic State’s violent activities in Afghanistan**  

**How the Islamic State trial could change the future of US terrorism cases**  
[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/02/islamic-state-el-shafee-elsheikh-trial-virginia](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/02/islamic-state-el-shafee-elsheikh-trial-virginia)

**Iraq says Syria’s Al-Hol camp represents ISIS ‘real threat’**  

**Denmark to bring ISIS children home but not mothers**  

**Islamic State morphs and grows in Pakistan, Afghanistan**  
[https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-afghanistan-taliban-pakistan-religion-9bcf86bdc4b7f3e5aa25531649538b62](https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-afghanistan-taliban-pakistan-religion-9bcf86bdc4b7f3e5aa25531649538b62)

**ISIS morphs into borderless terrorist group in South Asia**  

**Despite NIA’s action against online propaganda, ISIS releases magazine with Indian youth who joined terror outfit**  
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Dynamite to Drones: The Diffusion of Lethal Technology to Terrorists and Insurgents
Kyle Atwell and Benjamin Jebb – Modern War Institute: 8 April 2022
From dynamite in the early 20th century to drones, bioweapons and private-sector satellite constellations today, lethal technologies are increasingly available to nonstate actors and individuals. The decentralization of today’s low-end technologies could equip nonstate actors, private companies and terrorists with unprecedented irregular and asymmetric capabilities.

Countering a Resurgent Terrorist Threat in Afghanistan
Seth Jones – Council on Foreign Relations: 14 April 2022
With al-Qaeda and the self-proclaimed ISIS in Khorasan growing in strength since the U.S. withdrawal, Seth Jones lays out a strategy for the United States to prevent a renewed terrorist threat from emerging in Afghanistan.

For more on this theme:
Al Qaeda’s Algerian Strategy: Attempts to Co-opt the Hirak and Rehabilitate the Salafi-Jihadi Image

What’s Fueling Africa’s New Terror Frontier?
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/what%E2%80%99s-fueling-africa%E2%80%99s-new-terror-frontier-201650

The Taliban’s new lows show they haven’t changed

Somalia’s intelligence agency warns of Al Shabaab threat against top leaders

Why Boko Haram, ISWAP, Bandits Will Terrorise Nigerians Beyond 2023 — Report

Hezbollah’s Turning Point Came in 1992
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/hezbollah%E2%80%99s-turning-point-came-1992-201599

Fractured Taliban leadership intensifies uncertainty in Afghanistan
https://www.npr.org/2022/04/05/1091109460/fractured-taliban-leadership-intensifies-uncertainty-in-afghanistan

Pak Taliban announce Ramadan offensive against forces
https://www.newagebd.net/article/166870/pak-taliban-announce-ramadan-offensive-against-forces

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Cyberspace and War in Ukraine: Prepare for Worse
Lucas Kello and Monica Kaminska – Lawfare: 14 April 2022

Some observers have noted the absence of major cyber incidents during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The situation does not afford complacency, however. Despite the few breakdowns — so far — in cyberspace beyond Ukraine, their risk has increased rather than diminished.
https://www.lawfareblog.com/cyberspace-and-war-ukraine-prepare-worse

For more on this theme:
Anonymous: Who are the shadowy cyber warriors who have declared war on Putin’s Russia?
https://www.romania-insider.com/guest-post-gregoire-vigroux-anonymous

Russia’s War on Google and Apple Maps
https://slate.com/technology/2022/04/russia-apple-google-maps.html

Twitter users are exposing pro-Russian sentiment in China, and Beijing is not happy

SpaceX Starlink Terminals Sent to Ukraine Cost US Taxpayers $3M, Report Says

Ukraine foils Russian cyber attack on electricity grid

Finnish government websites hit by cyberattack during Zelenskyy speech

Russia’s space programme hit by western cyber attack

War in the Digital Age, With Audrey Kurth Cronin
https://www.cfr.org/podcasts/war-digital-age-audrey-kurth-cronin

Why Russia’s Cyber Warriors Haven’t Crippled Ukraine

DOJ disrupts Russia-backed Cyclops Blink botnet

Anonymous vows to continue cyber war against Putin’s Russia until aggression in Ukraine stops
IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

For more on this theme:

**Facebook Battles Russian Cyber Campaigns Targeting Ukraine**

**Ukraine's 'IT Army' is fighting a cyber war in Russia**

**Russian Scientists Say They Have A New System to Monitor Attacks on the Russian Internet**

**Mystery of alleged Chinese hack on eve of Ukraine invasion**

**Water Systems: At Greatest Risk from the Russian Cyber Threat?**

**RUSSIA/UKRAINE**

**Russia ‘using weapons smuggled by Iran from Iraq against Ukraine’**
Bethan McKerrnan and Vera Mironova – The Guardian: 12 April 2022

Iraqi militias and others say undercover networks are being used to supply weapons such as rocket-propelled grenades and anti-tank missiles.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/12/russia-using-weapons-smuggled-by-iran-from-iraq-against-ukraine

For more on this theme:

**What Comes Next in Ukraine: Three Scenarios**
https://mwi.usma.edu/what-comes-next-in-ukraine-three-scenarios/

**Ukraine war: Trauma 'risks destroying a generation', Security Council hears**

**The Best Path for Accountability for the Crime of Aggression Under Ukrainian and International Law**

**Mass Graves in Ukraine Should Be Treated as Crime Scenes – and Urgently Secured**

**Why Russia's Navy in Ukraine War is Doomed (or Irrelevant)**
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/why-russias-navy-ukraine-war-doomed-or-irrelevant
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Why Russia doesn't need its lies about Ukraine to be believable**
https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/bucha-how-putin-winning-propaganda-war-inside-russia-n1294222

**Can Russia Be Held Accountable for War Crimes in Ukraine?**
https://www.cfr.org/article/can-russia-be-held-accountable-war-crimes-ukraine

**The Struggles of the Russian Military in Ukraine**
https://www.cfr.org/event/struggles-russian-military-ukraine

**China's Russia Dilemma**
https://www.cfr.org/event/chinas-russia-dilemma

**Russia's Ties to Southeast Asia and How They Affect the Ukraine War: Part 3, Singapore and Vietnam**
https://www.cfr.org/blog/russias-ties-southeast-asia-and-how-they-affect-ukraine-war-part-3-singapore-and-vietnam

**Perseverance can bring Russian war criminals including Putin to justice**
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/perseverance-can-bring-russian-war-criminals-including-putin-to-justice/

**The world must not allow Putin to bankrupt Ukraine into surrender**
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-world-must-not-allow-putin-to-bankrupt-ukraine-into-surrender/

**Ukraine war: lessons for mediators from the experience of humanitarian organisations**

**Want to know why India has been soft on Russia? Take a look at its military, diplomatic and energy ties**

**Why do peace talks fail? A negotiation expert answers 5 questions about the slim chances for a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine**

**Manifesto published in Russian media reflects Putin regime's ruthless plans in Ukraine**

**Russia isn't likely to use chemical weapons in Ukraine – unless Putin grows desperate**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Finland preparing for Russian ‘consequences’ if it joins NATO: top MoD official**
https://breakingdefense.com/2022/04/finland-preparing-for-russian-consequences-if-it-joins-nato-top-mo-d-official/

**How Europe could help Taiwan in a war with China**

**Analysis: Looming battle in Donbas to shape course of Russia’s war in Ukraine**

**Putin shrugs off setbacks despite Russia’s pariah status and heavy losses in Ukraine**

**Russia Crisis Military Assessment: How Ukraine can take the fight to Russia**

**Analysis: Even with sanctions, Russia can afford to feed its war machine**

**Drones, phones and satellite technology are exposing the truth about Russia’s war in Ukraine in near real-time**

**What Does Putin’s Invasion of Ukraine Mean for China-Russia Relations?**

**How technology, both old and new, has shaped the war in Ukraine so far**
https://taskandpurpose.com/analysis/ukraine-war-military-tech/

**Russia’s Plan A in Ukraine failed. Here’s what Plan B could look like**

‘Everything changed when Russia invaded’: Finland and Sweden inch closer to seeking NATO membership

**The Russia–Ukraine Crisis And Japan’s Energy Dilemma – Analysis**

**Analysis: Russia’s rouble rebound not quite what it seems**

**Why Russian TV propaganda is crucial to understanding the war in Ukraine**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

How open source intelligence is shaping the Russia-Ukraine war

Analysis: Russia lost the battle for Kyiv with its hasty assault on a Ukrainian airport

Why a push to exclude Russian state media would be problematic for free speech and democracy

Disinformation Aims to Skew Young People’s View of War in Ukraine

What strategic options do Ukrainians have as they go head-to-head with Russia in the east?

Georgia’s Separatist Region Of South Ossetia Plans To Join Russia – Analysis

Kremlin’s War Against Ukraine Divides Russians in the Baltics

Why the Russian Military Committed Atrocities in Bucha

Russia readies for major assault on eastern Ukraine, beginning ‘second chapter’ of war
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/russia-readies-for-major-assault-on-eastern-ukraine-beginning-second-chapter-of-war

Ukraine: Justice for War Crimes Must Begin with Evidence
https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/04/ukraine-justice-war-crimes-must-begin-evidence

Why African nations’ support for UN action on Russia/Ukraine is so mixed
https://www.tbsnews.net/analysis/why-african-nations-support-un-action-russiaukraine-so-mixed-402938

Putin’s Aggression Against Ukraine Has Changed the World
https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/opinion/5206-putin-s-aggression-against-ukraine-has-changed-the-world
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia may be winning the Ukraine information war outside the West

Here's why Russian tanks keep getting decapitated in Ukraine
https://taskandpurpose.com/analysis/russian-tanks-ukraine-turrets-blown-off/

Peace in Europe 'will not exist' as long as Putin is in power, says Mikhail Khodorkovsky

South Caucasus Shudder In The Shadow Of Russia's War – Analysis

Prosecution of Russian war crimes is ultimate test for Ukraine's state

Tech is Crucial to Saving Ukraine – and a Free Russia
https://cepa.org/tech-is-crucial-to-saving-ukraine-and-a-free-russia/

Putin's People – or Are They?
https://cepa.org/vladimir-putins-people-or-are-they/

Notorious Russian General Appointed to Revive Flagging War Effort
https://cepa.org/notorious-russian-general-appointed-to-revive-flagging-war-effort/

How Russia spread its fabricated pretexts for invading Ukraine

Movement to action: How Russia's war on Ukraine could reshape EU migration policy

The Wagner Group: Who are the shadowy Russian mercenaries in Ukraine?

Russia's military logistical problems in Ukraine