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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Peru’s Ex-President Surrendered To U.S. Officials For Extradition In Mega Corruption Scandal — Here’s What To Know
Katherine Hamilton – Forbes: 21 April 2023

Alejandro Toledo surrendered for extradition in a case claiming he accepted bribes from Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction conglomerate.

Corruption Takes Center Stage in Paraguay Presidential Election
Christopher Newton – InSight Crime: 26 April 2023

Paraguay’s long struggle against corruption was a major theme of April 30 elections, with leading candidates proposing starkly different approaches to the issue.

For more on this theme:

China: Xi’s anti corruption drive targeting billionaires and bankers

China’s corruption spreads to Africa

AD632: Liberians cite corruption, lack of professionalism among police failings

Dozens Of Ugandan Officials Face Prosecution Over Corruption Scandal

Bitcoin Miners Trapped In Alleged $20 Billion Corruption Scheme In Venezuela

Mexico's transparency institute has revealed government corruption and wrongdoing. It's now paralyzed

Fighting Chinese Soccer Corruption Takes Better-Paid Athletes
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Cocaine and Marijuana Fuel Ever-Higher Homicides in Costa Rica
Henry Shuldiner – InSight Crime: 27 April 2023

Drugs gangs battling over control of Costa Rica’s cocaine trafficking infrastructure and the domestic marijuana market are fueling an increase in violence in the country, which last year saw its highest homicide rate.


Singapore executes citizen for cannabis trafficking
Chen Lin – Reuters: 26 April 2023

Singapore executed a man convicted of drug trafficking, a representative for his family said, despite pleas from his relatives and activists for clemency.


For more on this theme:

EU sanctions cousins of Syria’s Assad for alleged drug trafficking

South Korean President Calls for ‘War’ on Crypto-powered Drug Trafficking

The terrorist-drug nexus: Why drug trafficking is a serious security issue

Turkey emerges as a cocaine and fentanyl trafficking hub: report
https://www.turkishminute.com/2023/04/14/turkey-emerge-cocaine-fentanyl-trafficking-hub/

‘Clan Farruku’ Arrests Highlight Albanians’ Latin America Cocaine Connections

Ecuador Gang Massacre Highlights Intensified Fight for Drug Routes

Rise of Coke Labs in Europe Signals ‘Death’ of the Smuggled Cocaine Brick

Inside the Firm: How an international drug cartel plotted a ‘line to Australia’

Mexican Cartels Are Turning Once-Peaceful Ecuador Into a Narco War Zone

Seychelles: a tropical paradise with the world’s worst heroin problem
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Peace, Poaching and Pangolins in Central Africa
Alexia Tata – United States Institute of Peace: 25 April 2023
Demand for wildlife products from Southeast Asia is driving trafficking and financing conflicts.

Mexico takes aim against marine animals’ trafficking but criminal networks persist
Albinson Linares and Noticias Telemundo – NBC News: 21 April 2023
Steps to protect the totoaba fish and vaquita porpoise come after the country was sanctioned, but they are being challenged by those intent on selling the fish.

For more on this theme:
‘They have conned us out of our lands’: Conflict brews in Peru as Mennonite settlers clear forest

How AI can help the environment

It’s Time for China to Cut Bait: Countering CCP Illegal Fishing
https://intpolicydigest.org/it-s-time-for-china-to-cut-bait-countering-ccp-illegal-fishing/

New exposé of Australia’s exotic pet trade shows an alarming proliferation of alien, threatened and illegal species

‘Fingerprint’ of wood can help fight illegal trade

A Rare Glimpse into Afghanistan’s Spectacular, Vanishing Forests
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-rare-glimpse-into-afghanistans-spectacular-vanishing-forests/

Illicit annual exports from Africa’s extractive industries estimated at US$98bn — Report reveals

Report warns of rising violence against environmental defenders in Mexico

China’s demand for raw materials drives deforestation by mining, report says
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

How Africans Can Prepare for Internet Shutdowns
‘Gbenga Sesan – Carnegie: 25 April 2023

Activists and citizens must ensure that governments respect their digital rights.
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/04/25/how-africans-can-prepare-for-internet-shutdowns-pub-89595

For more on this theme:
(China, Hong Kong) The normalization of Chinese-style censorship in Hong Kong

(Global) Digital Authoritarianism Poses ‘Critical Threat’ to National Security, Intel Chief Says

(China) Chinese censorship is quietly rewriting the COVID-19 story

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

State Dept wants ‘cyber assistance fund’ to aid allies and partners against hackers
Sydney J. Freedberg Jr. – Breaking Defense: 10 April 2023

The special fund is part of a three-part plan floated by Nate Fick, the State Department’s roving ambassador for cybersecurity, to help bolster allied cyber skills before — and during — crises.

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Can AI Help Solve The Workforce Skills Gap?

(Global) Modern Cyber Ranges: Cloud-Native, Mobile And On The Edge

(Albania) National Cybersecurity Office Funding Stood Up By Albanese Government

(Global) How the Talent Shortage Impacts Cybersecurity Leadership
https://securityintelligence.com/articles/how-talent-shortage-impacts-cybersecurity-leadership/
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Government launches new cyber security measures to tackle ever growing threats
Government of the United Kingdom: 20 April 2023

New and enhanced cybersecurity measures will better protect the U.K. government’s IT systems, which run key services for the public.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Cyber Diplomacy Is in High Demand
https://www.afcea.org/signal-media/cyber-edge/cyber-diplomacy-high-demand

(Ukraine) Ukraine recording hundreds of cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure daily

(Russia, Canada) Russian hacktivist threat on Canada’s pipelines is ‘call to action,’ top cyber official says
https://therecord.media/russia-hacktivist-threat-to-canadian-pipelines-a-call-to-action

(Global) #RSAC: Climate Change is Increasing Cyber-Risks

CYBERATTACKS

Capita admits customer data may have been breached during cyber-attack
Kalyeena Makortoff – The Guardian: 20 April 2023

Hack caused major outages for some clients including local councils and “potentially accessed public sector data.”

https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/apr/20/capita-admits-customer-data-may-have-been-breached-during-cyber-attack

For more on this theme:

(Latvia) Cyber attacks on Latvian public sector quadrupled last year

(Israel) Clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque stir a wave of cyberattacks against Israel

(Israel, Iran) Iranian hackers targeted Israelis using rare cyberattack techniques

(Europe, Russia) European air traffic control agency’s website under cyber attack from pro-Russian hackers: Report
CYBERCRIME

Study of past cyber attacks can improve organizations' defense strategies
Help Net Security: 24 April 2023

Ransomware operators have been increasingly demanding higher ransoms and publicly exposing victims, leading to the emergence of an ecosystem that involves access brokers, ransomware service providers, insurance providers and ransom negotiators, according to Deepwatch.

https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2023/04/24/cybercriminals-attack-surface/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Report finds generative AI is lowering the barrier to entry to cybercrime

(Global) How Blockchain Can Aid in Combating Cybercrime?
https://www.analyticsinsight.net/how-blockchain-can-aid-in-combating-cybercrime/

(Global) Partnership and threat intelligence sharing to disrupt cybercrime

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Quad Countries Prepare For Info Sharing on Critical Infrastructure
Phil Muncaster – InforSecurity: 26 April 2023

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is working on a new information-sharing agreement that would help its four members improve their response to critical infrastructure threats, according to reports.


For more on this theme:

(Australia) Australian manufacturers fear nation-state cyber threats

(U.S.) CISA, US Cyber Command Collaborate on Defending Critical Infrastructure

(Global) UK Warns of Russian Hackers Targeting Critical Infrastructure

(U.K., U.S., Global) Critical Infrastructure Firms Concerned Over Insider Threat
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

EER Podcast: What Should Western Governments Do About Islamic State Foreign Fighters?
European Eye on Radicalization: 21 April 2023
What are the legal and political issues for Western states in bringing home their citizens who joined the Islamic State group?
https://eeradicalization.com/podcast-episode-6-phil-gurski-isis-fighters-west/

For more on this theme:

ISIS beats back Wagner offensive in central Syria

ISIS-K leader behind deadly 2021 suicide bombing at Kabul airport killed by Taliban, White House says

Former Syrian ISIS security chief on trial in the Netherlands

ISIS Goes After Pakistan Army, Taliban Regime In Kabul; Here Is Why Daesh Poses ‘Existential Threat’ To Both

U.S. Special Forces Silently Hunting ISIS in Syria

Islamic State terrorists extend control over northeastern Mali
https://www.africanews.com/2023/04/14/islamic-state-terrorists-extend-control-over-northeastern-mali/

Islamic State Propaganda May Be Paying Off in South India

ISWAP’s use of tech could prolong Lake Chad Basin violence
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/iswaps-use-of-tech-could-prolong-lake-chad-basin-violence

Is Islamic State Facing Defeat, Or Starting A Deadly New Phase? – OpEd
https://www.eurasiareview.com/18042023-is-islamic-state-facing-defeat-or-starting-a-deadly-new-phase-oped/
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Ecological Threats and Terrorism across the Sub-Saharan Africa
Mariam Farida – Australian Institute of International Affairs: 21 April 2023

The links between the growth in regional terrorism and ecological crisis are unmistakable. How terrorist groups use ecological threats to recruit new members is less clear.


Cattle raiding by jihadis soars in Mali, fuels conflict
Sam Mednick and Baba Ahmed – The Associated Press: 20 April 2023

Extremists linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group are stealing millions of dollars’ worth of livestock to fund their insurgency across the war-torn West African country and region known as the Sahel.

https://apnews.com/article/cattle-raiding-mali-jihadi-insurgency-f0ab5344202b07ff36c7bcad-faa88b6e

For more on this theme:

Isreali fears grow of united Hezbollah-Hamas-Iran front

Lebanon: Hezbollah Warns Rivals Rejecting its Presidential Candidate of ‘Major Loss’

Al-Qaeda Group Claims Deadly Mali Attacks

Russia’s Wagner Group Could Fuel Conflict in Sudan, Experts Say

Priority Sustainable Counterterrorism: Supporting CSOs to Mitigate the Spread of Terrorism in the Sahel

Why Europe Should Be More Worried About Illegal Immigration Through Italy
https://eeradicalization.com/why-europe-should-be-more-worried-about-illegal-immigration-through-italy/

Terrorists Using Local Language To Spread Propaganda On Facebook

Taking Stock of the Surge in Militant Islamist Violence in Africa
CRIME AND CONFLICT

Amid War, Ukraine Aims to Protect the Rights of a Brutal Foe
James Rupert – United States Institute of Peace: 27 April 2023
To save the laws of war from Russia’s assault, we should help Ukraine shield POWs.

For more on this theme:

The Fraudsters: Venezuela’s Organized Crime Vultures

In Lara, Venezuela, Criminal ‘Colectivos’ Control Public Services

‘Where are the weapons?’ Life in an Ecuadoran town plagued with drug violence


IntelBrief: Myanmar’s “Forgotten War”
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-april-20/

Multiple murders: a mark of SA’s gun and organised crime crisis

Efforts To Rescue Ukrainian Children Kidnapped By Russia Are Underway

Rights office calls on Russia and Ukraine to observe rules of war, after alleged POW executions

Data company Palantir to help Ukraine prosecute alleged Russian war crimes

The Many Trials of Vladimir Putin?
https://cepa.org/article/the-many-trials-of-vladimir-putin/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine’s Resilience Is About Winning the War
Judy Dempsey – Carnegie: 25 April 2023

Ukrainians from all walks of life have been resisting Russia’s attack. They will not accept any peace deal that denies Ukraine its full independence and territorial integrity.
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/89602

For more on this theme:
- Cyber resilience one year into the Ukraine/Russia conflict
- Heather A. Conley on Coordinating Multinational Support for Ukraine
- What Has North Korea Learned from Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine?
- The Black Sea Grain Deal: Fragile Cooperation Between Ukraine and Russia
- Gagauzia’s Election Could Help Russia Destabilize Moldova
  https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/89627
- Will the Invasion of Ukraine Change Russia-Africa Relations?
  https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/04/26/will-invasion-of-ukraine-change-russia-africa-relations-
  pub-89596
- Surviving the War: Russia-Western Balkan Ties After the Invasion of Ukraine
  https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89600
- Why Russia Won’t Disintegrate Along Its Regional Borders
  https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89581
- India: One of the Biggest Beneficiaries of the War in Ukraine
- Belarus and Its Neighbors in a Time of War: Attitudes, Perceptions and Realities
- Defending Ukraine’s Skies: Mission (Im)possible
  https://jamestown.org/program/defending-ukraines-skies-mission-impossible/
- IntelBrief: Trouble Brewing on Russia’s Periphery
  https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-april-26/
- IntelBrief: Russia Making Inroads in Africa as the Sahel Spirals Out of Control
  https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-april-27/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russian Soldiers and Wagner Mercenaries Start Fighting Each Other: Report

Ukraine War: Are warlords the future of Russia? – analysis
https://www.jpost.com/international/article-741330

Russia runs U.N. Security Council as China runs damage control

How China Could Save Putin’s War in Ukraine
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/how-china-could-save-putins-war-ukraine

Russian ground forces ‘bigger today’ than at start of the war in Ukraine, US general says

Minister: Ukraine will beat Russia in war of technologies
https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-war-drones-technology-fe5dae6a8faba0d46fa829a549592127

When and how will Ukraine start counteroffensive against Russia?

Belarussians wary of being drawn into Russia’s war in Ukraine
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/belarussians-wary-of-being-drawn-into-russias-war-in-ukraine

Ukraine’s Allies Eye Tightening Exports to Russia

Ukraine’s millennial minister leads digital fight against Russia

Exclusive: The Russian military commandant who oversaw reign of fear in Ukraine town

Russians Are Weaponizing Passports in Occupied Ukraine — U.K. Intel

Russia’s War in Ukraine Exposes Risks Posed by Private Military Groups

Putin’s dreams of a new Russian Empire are unraveling in Ukraine

There can be no lasting peace with Russia until Ukraine liberates Crimea
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is also being fought in cyberspace
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russias-invasion-of-ukraine-is-also-being-fought-in-cyberspace/

Guided bombs — new Russian tactics in the Ukraine war?

When Russia is defeated in Ukraine, look to Chechnya

Behind The Lines: Russia Seeks ‘Cannon Fodder’ in Occupied Ukraine

Putin Camouflages His Rust
https://cepa.org/article/putin-camouflages-his-rust/

Russia’s Milestone on the Road to Dictatorship
https://cepa.org/article/russias-milestone-on-the-road-to-dictatorship/

Resolver: Ukraine and Taiwan
https://cepa.org/article/resolver-ukraine-and-taiwan/

Empowering Ukraine Prepares Us For China – Analysis
https://www.eurasiareview.com/22042023-empowering-ukraine-prepares-us-for-china-analysis/

Ukraine’s coming counteroffensive will be the hinge of this war
https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-war-russia-coming-counteroffensive-hinge/

Ukrainian Counteroffensive Assessment – Analysis

Russia Making Big Changes to Domestic Security

War With Chechnya Brutalized Russian Society, and Ukraine Is Paying the Price
https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/20/chechnya-russian-brutality-ukraine-war/

What the conflict in Ukraine can teach us about the future of cyberwarfare