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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

In Chile and Elsewhere, Crime Is the New Corruption
Brian Winter – America’s Quarterly: 8 May 2023
Chile’s election shows how violent crime, fueled largely by increased cocaine production and trafficking, is dominating the political debate throughout much of Latin America, writes AQ’s editor-in-chief.

The Cost of Crime and Corruption for Pacific Fisheries
Jade Lindley – The Interpreter: 4 May 2023
Despite efforts to raise awareness of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, the recent case involving alleged corruption in the mackerel fishing industry of Vanuatu highlights the need to continue the conversation and limit opportunities for such unsustainable practices.
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/cost-crime-corruption-pacific-fisheries

For more on this theme:
Ukraine’s Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office Detains Mayor Of Odesa
https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-odesa-mayor-trukhanov-corruption-detained/32395093.html

Lebanon legal council dismisses judge investigating corruption

Stamping out corruption can give SDGs $3 trillion boost

Omar Harfouch, the man who shakes the corrupt Lebanese elite

Nigeria: Will Tinubu prioritise war on corruption despite claims against him?
https://www.theafricareport.com/305758/will-nigerias-president-elect-tinubu-pursue-a-war-on-corruption-despite-allegations-against-him/

Corruption Suspicions About Energy Corporation’s Director Cause Turmoil in Kosovo

With little will to fight it, corruption is major risk for Indonesian palm oil
https://news.mongabay.com/2023/05/with-little-will-to-fight-it-corruption-is-major-risk-for-indonesian-palm-oil/

How corruption impedes electricity supply in Nigeria — NSE ex-president
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Europe: Drug trafficking, organized crime increasing by “an order of magnitude”
Interpol: 8 May 2023

Strengthening international police cooperation to counter the rapidly escalating threat posed by organized crime networks was the key focus of Interpol’s 50th European Regional Conference.


Precursors and Mexico’s Synthetic Drug Trade: Summary and Major Findings
Steven Dudley – InSight Crime: 8 May 2023

Synthetic drugs have changed organized crime. As opposed to most legacy drugs that rely on plants, harvests, favorable weather, significant and varied manual labor, and transport of bulk amounts of illicit substances across heavily policed terrain, synthetic drugs can be produced in laboratories year-round.

https://insightcrime.org/investigations/chemical-precursors-mexico-synthetic-drug-trade/

For more on this theme:
El Chapo’s son, Sinaloa members face sanctions over fentanyl
https://apnews.com/article/mexico-biden-el-chapo-treasury-sanctions-fentanyl-1b253e0e95e6f0e0eaf-5e153aca4cb66

New data reveals record amounts of cocaine and ketamine seized

Rising Drug Use in South Korea Forces Government to Respond, Adapt

Bling on the block: France sells off drug dealers’ luxury goods
https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bling-on-the-block-france-sells-off-drug-dealers-luxury-goods-qjh367l8m

DEA on Los Chapitos: ‘The Sinaloa Cartel has never been more powerful or made more money’
https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-05-03/dea-on-los-chapitos-the-sinaloa-cartel-has-never-been-more-powerful-or-made-more-money.html

Drug gangs on Teesside ‘branding’ children to show ownership

‘Port Security Corps’ brought in to boost fight against drug trafficking

Jordan strikes Iran-linked drugs factory in southern Syria – sources
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-strikes-iran-linked-drugs-factory-southern-syria-sources-2023-05-08/
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Corruption threatens timber traceability in Nkok, Gabon
Elodie Toto – Mongabay: 10 May 2023

Timber processed in Gabon’s Nkok Special Investment Zone is required to be harvested in line with European Union certifications for sustainability. However, TraCer, the monitoring system meant to ensure the traceability of wood, was recently suspended by the country’s Ministry of Water and Forests.


Researchers investigate dark web wildlife trade
British Ecological Society: 4 May 2023

A huge amount of wildlife trade takes place on the internet. Online marketplaces, private forums and messaging apps make it easy to buy and sell live animals, plants and fungi.


For more on this theme:

In a Bolivian protected area torn up for gold, focus is on limiting damage
https://news.mongabay.com/2023/05/in-a-bolivian-protected-area-torn-up-for-gold-focus-is-on-limiting-damage/

Illicit Activity in Chile’s Timber Sector

Barclays toughens deforestation rules for beef sector clients

Wild-caught seafood is often untraceable — and some industry players don’t want that to change. Here’s why
https://theconversation.com/wild-caught-seafood-is-often-untraceable-and-some-industry-players-dont-want-that-to-change-heres-why-204195

Detecting Illegal Mines in Senegal

Maduro and Organized Crime Harm Venezuela’s Nature Reserves

Guatemala national park nearing ‘collapse’ amid land grabbing, deforestation

Wildlife Trafficking Gradually Returns After Pandemic Lull, Mostly by Sea

Philippines a global hotspot for giant clams — and their illegal trade
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Pakistan remains among world’s worst performers in terms of internet access, digital governance: report
Dawn: 8 May 2023

The report, “Pakistan’s Internet Landscape 2022,” was released by Bytes For All, a human rights and advocacy organization.

For more on this theme:
(Brazil) In Brazil, Platform Regulation Takes Center Stage
https://techpolicy.press/in-brazil-platform-regulation-takes-center-stage/

(Global) Declaration for the Future of the Internet

(Global) ‘Responsible AI’: ChatGPT bot gets ethical nod from G7 digital ministers
https://interestingengineering.com/culture/chatgpt-gets-ethical-nod-from-g7

INTERNET FREEDOM

Sudan’s Cyber War
Olatunji Olatigbe – Inkstick: 4 May 2023

Beneath the visible physical fighting, another war is raging online.
https://inkstickmedia.com/sudans-cyber-war/

For more on this theme:
(China) China’s Answers to ChatGPT Have a Censorship Problem

(Russia, China) Leaked Document Shows How Russia, China Collaborate on Censorship

(Kazakhstan) Internet Monitor Says Kazakhstan ‘Throttling’ RFE/RL Sites To Limit Access To Information
https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-rferl-internet-throttling-ooni/32383892.html

(Sudan) Sudan: Internet shutdowns fuel human rights abuses
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Internet access reduces poverty — report
The Star: 28 April 2023

The continent’s growing population is projected to become the world’s largest by 2100, with more than 22 million Africans joining the workforce annually. While this growth is often considered a threat to Africa’s socioeconomic well-being, a report shows it could be advantageous for the continent.


For more on this theme:

(Ukraine) Ukraine building critical infrastructure protection system

(U.K.) New GovAssure cyber regime launches across UK government

(Switzerland, EU) Switzerland considers joining EU’s military mobility, cyber defence projects

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

The key to making the US cyber strategy work: boots on the ground
Sarah Powazek and Marc Rogers – CyberScoop: 4 May 2023

Prioritizing work with academic institutions, localities and skilled volunteers is the best way of advancing America’s cybersecurity needs.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Cybercom Commander Says Partnerships Are Key to Success in Challenging Strategic Environment
https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3381509/cybercom-commander-says-partnerships-are-key-to-success-in-challenging-strategi/

(U.S.) Building Cyber Resiliency in the U.S. Government
https://www.nextgov.com/ideas/2023/05/building-cyber-resiliency-us-government/385777/

(Australia) Australia’s National Quantum Strategy

(Europe) Why European Space Cybersecurity Matters
https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/opinions/european-space-cybersecurity/
CYBERATTACKS

NSA and Allies Uncover Russian Snake Malware Network in 50+ Countries
Alessandro Mascellino – InfoSecurity: 10 May 2023

The United States National Security Agency and international partner agencies have discovered infrastructure connected with the sophisticated Russian cyber espionage tool Snake in more than 50 countries.


For more on this theme:

(Iran) Iran is diving into the disinformation wars, Microsoft says
https://www.axios.com/2023/05/02/iran-disinformation-wars-microsoft

(Russia, U.S.) Five Takeaways From the Russian Cyber-Attack on Viasat’s Satellites

(U.S.) Western Digital’s online store still closed six weeks after cyberattack

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

A cancer centre is the latest victim of cyber attacks. Why health data hacks keep happening
Mohiuddin Ahmed and Paul Haskell-Dowland – The Conversation: 7 May 2023

It seems hardly a day goes by without another report of a cybercrime incident. The latest attack is on a cancer treatment facility in Sydney, Australia.


For more on this theme:

(China, Global) China’s undersea cable plan targets US and British intelligence
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/05/09/china-undersea-cable-us-intelligence-nsa-gchq-five-eyes/

(U.S.) Cracks, hacks, attacks: California’s vulnerable water system faces many threats

(U.S.) The Attack on Colonial Pipeline: What We’ve Learned & What We’ve Done Over the Past Two Years
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

How northern Syria became a cage for the Islamic State’s core
Kabir Taneja – Observer Research Foundation: 4 May 2023
Is the terrorist group a mere shadow of what it was, or is it still a potent force?
https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/how-northern-syria-became-a-cage-for-the-islamic-states-core/

Islamic State: Hundreds of women on hunger strike at Iraqi prison
Murad Shishani & Nick Sturdee – BBC: 6 May 2023
At least 400 women are in the second week of a hunger strike in a high-security prison in Iraq’s capital, Baghdad.

For more on this theme:
ISIS claims responsibility for deadly Damascus car blast
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/11052023

Islamic State group extends its predation in the Sahel

Analysis: Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb encourages its Sahelien wing to continue fighting the Islamic State

US Pushing Countries to Repatriate IS Foreign Fighters Held in NE Syria

ISIS recruitment in India sees spike

Brief: ISGS on Verge of Victory in Menaka, Mali

ISIS eyeing techies from India: Intel

Exclusive: Israel seized Binance crypto accounts to ‘thwart’ Islamic State, document shows

Bollywood film on Islamic State recruits sparks debate in India
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Russia’s Wagner mercenaries to be labelled terror group like Islamic State
Nina Lloyd – Telegraph: 10 May 2023
The United Kingdom is preparing to make it a criminal offense to join the Wagner Group, encourage support for it, display its logo in public or attend its meetings.
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/wagner-group-uk-proscribed-terrorist-organisation-b2336006.html

Peru’s Missed Opportunity Against Hezbollah
Joseph Humire – The Heritage Foundation: 5 May 2023
A misguided court ruling may lead to a resurgence of terrorism in Peru.
https://www.heritage.org/americas/commentary/perus-missed-opportunity-against-hezbollah

For more on this theme:

Understanding Boko Haram: Origins, current status and why India should care

Time to re-assess terrorism prevention in Africa?
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/time-to-re-assess-terrorism-prevention-in-africa

UN chief says ‘not the right time’ to engage with Taliban

Can Somalia’s New President Finally Stop al-Shabaab?
https://jamestown.org/program/can-somalias-new-president-finally-stop-al-shabaab/

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham’s Top-Down Disassociation from al-Qaeda in Syria

Brief: Al-Qaeda Affiliates AQIM and AQAP Show Unity with Eid Statement

Western countries pile pressure on Mali over Wagner presence

Why Boko Haram is Losing Ground in Nigeria
https://eeradicalization.com/why-boko-haram-is-losing-ground-in-nigeria/

TTP And ISKP – OpEd
https://www.eurasiareview.com/30042023-ttp-and-iskp-oped/

The Development of Tehreek-E-Taliban Pakistan and Their Plans for the Future
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

The Fallacy of Negotiating With Putin
Boris Bondarev – Jamestown Foundation: 10 May 2023

Repeated reports alleging the growing desire of the West to push Ukraine into peace talks with Russia provide an opportunity to consider how such talks would actually play out.

https://jamestown.org/program/the-fallacy-of-negotiating-with-putin/

For more on this theme:

How the war in Ukraine has been a catalyst in private-public collaborations
https://www.welivesecurity.com/2023/05/09/how-war-ukraine-catalyst-private-public-collaborations/

Drones will not win the Russia-Ukraine war – analysis
https://www.jpost.com/international/article-742179

False flag? Analysts say Russia 'likely staged' Kremlin drone attack it blamed on Ukraine and the West
https://www.cnbc.com/2023/05/04/did-russia-stage-the-kremlin-drone-attack-it-blamed-on-ukraine-.html

Russia's last red line: Will the West help Ukraine liberate Crimea?

Deciphering Vladimir Putin's unspoken Victory Day message
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/deciphering-vladimir-putins-unspoken-victory-day-message/

Putin's embarrassing one-tank parade hints at catastrophic losses in Ukraine

Can the Russian Opposition Foment Regime Change?
https://jamestown.org/program/can-the-russian-opposition-foment-regime-change/

Muted V-Day Celebrations in Russia Amid Disastrous War
https://jamestown.org/program/muted-v-day-celebrations-in-russia-amid-disastrous-war/

Baku's Cooperation With West on Ukraine Leaves Moscow With Few Options
https://jamestown.org/program/bakus-cooperation-with-west-on-ukraine-leaves-moscow-with-few-options/

Putin's Missile War
https://www.csis.org/analysis/putins-missile-war

Red-Team Analysis Of Russia's Defensive Combat Strategy

How Sanctions Have Changed Russian Economic Policy
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89708
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

How Russia Torpedoed Its Own Influence in Moldova
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89731

Unpacking Ukraine's New IMF Program
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/05/05/unpacking-ukraine-s-new-imf-program-pub-89691

For Ambitious Russian Officials, the War Has Failed to Become a Career Elevator
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89696

Americans Hold Positive Feelings Toward NATO and Ukraine, See Russia as an Enemy

India's Russia oil imports jumped tenfold in 2022, bank says

Where Countries Stand on Russia

Central and Eastern Europe Are Playing Catchup on Russian Disinformation

Kremlin Schemes Against Baltics: Lots of Delusion, Some Risk

What Happened to Russian Hybrid War?
https://cepa.org/article/what-happened-to-russian-hybrid-war/

Remembrance of a Stolen Crimea
https://cepa.org/article/remembrance-of-a-stolen-crimea/

The Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Law of Treaties: A Response

Russia's Wagner boss threatens Bakhmut pullout in Ukraine
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-wagner-bakhmut-40eea0f86be16a77830c369acd0a9d9f

Keeping the lights on: The EU's energy relationships since Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Francis Fukuyama: It Would Be Hard For Putin To Survive Losing Crimea
https://www.rferl.org/a/fukuyama-interview-russia-ukraine-crimea-putin/32399499.html

Russia staging protests for anti-Ukraine propaganda — report

Title: Autocephaly, Geopolitics, and Russia's Invasion of Ukraine
https://giia.georgetown.edu/2023/05/08/autocephaly-geopolitics-and-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/