

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Salih proposes law to combat corruption, recover \$150 billion smuggled abroad

Rudlaw: 23 May 2021

Iraqi President Barham Salih has drafted a bill to combat corruption and recover billions of dollars taken out of the country since 2003. “Of the nearly trillion dollars made from oil since 2003, an estimated \$150 billion of stolen money has been smuggled out of Iraq,” he said.

<https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/230520211>

How Corruption Derails Development in Malawi

Madalitso Wills Kateta – Foreign Policy: 21 May 2021

Promises of good governance haven’t stopped officials from raiding the public purse in one of the world’s poorest countries.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/21/how-corruption-derails-development-in-malawi/>

For more on this theme:

US Government Returns More Recovered 1MDB Funds to Malaysia

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/us-government-returns-more-recovered-1mdb-funds-to-malaysia/>

Honduras achieved important milestones in security and the fight against drug trafficking in the last 7 years

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/honduras-achieved-important-milestones-security-211100606.html>

Corruption Plagues Argentina’s Justice System

<https://insightcrime.org/news/corruption-plagues-argentinass-justice-system/>

US sanctions former Albania leader Berisha over corruption

<https://apnews.com/article/sali-berisha-europe-albania-business-government-and-politics-b0323b88c-823ce9e38468dd59a4a91f7>

Five of Salvadoran president’s allies accused of corruption: US

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/18/five-of-salvadoran-presidents-allies-accused-of-corruption-us>

Ukraine: Anti-corruption fight ‘moving in the right direction’

<https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-anti-corruption-fight-moving-in-the-right-direction/a-57525129>

Spain Turns to Corruption Rehab for Officials Who Can’t Stop Stealing

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/17/world/europe/spain-corruption-rehab.html>

US Accuses Officials in Northern Triangle of Corruption

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/14447-us-accuses-officials-in-northern-triangle-of-corruption>

Ukraine backs bill to boost independence of anti-corruption bureau

<https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-parliament-corruption-idUSL2N2N80M0>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

In the Honduran Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, an illegal road for cattle and drugs

Ashoka Mukpo – Mongabay: 13 May 2021

Multiple sources, backed by satellite data, say an illegal road is being cut through the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve in Honduras, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sources say the road will facilitate land invasions into the biosphere and is likely to be used as a drug-trafficking route.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/05/in-the-honduran-rio-platano-biosphere-reserve-an-illegal-road-for-cattle-and-drugs/>

Happy Mother's Day from Your Friendly Neighborhood Cartel Boss

Ashley Pechinski – InSight Crime: 14 May 2021

In some regions of Mexico, family members who came up empty-handed this Mother's Day were bailed out by the Jalisco cartel. When powerful crime groups hand out gifts, even to moms, it's never for the sake of giving.

<https://insightcrime.org/news/happy-mothers-day-your-friendly-neighborhood-cartel-boss/>

For more on this theme:

Once a stop on the smuggling route, Kenya becomes heroin hub

<https://www.africanews.com/2021/05/07/once-a-stop-on-the-smuggling-route-kenya-becomes-heroin-hub/>

In Lebanon, fruit withers on the vine; drug smuggling has closed markets

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/05/14/in-lebanon-fruit-withers-on-the-vine-drug-smuggling-has-closed-markets/>

Bolivia Family Clans Key Cocaine Suppliers to Brazil, Colombia

<https://insightcrime.org/news/bolivia-family-clan-cocaine/>

Lebanon eager to combat drug trafficking

<https://menafn.com/1102118563/Lebanon-eager-to-combat-drug-trafficking&source=30>

Illegal Drug Trade Fuels \$1.37B in Crypto Transactions at Russian Dark Site

<https://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/87146.html>

Myanmar coup unleashes crystal meth bonus for cartels

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/myanmar-coup-unleashes-crystal-meth-bonus-for-cartels-wk8zhk9v6>

Drug cartels attack enemies and spread terror with weaponized drones in US, Mexico

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/crime/2021/05/24/el-mencho-cjng-mexican-drug-lords-use-drones-spread-terror/5131708001/>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

New bill seeks to end Hong Kong's days as an illegal wildlife trade hub

Elizabeth Claire Alberts – Mongabay: 26 May 2021

Hong Kong is a leading hub for the illegal wildlife trade. While many seizures lead to prosecution, those punished tend to be “mules” rather than leaders of organized crime syndicates. Additionally, some of the largest wildlife seizures in Hong Kong have not led to prosecutions. A new bill may change the status quo.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/05/new-bill-seeks-to-end-hong-kongs-days-as-an-illegal-wildlife-trade-hub/>

For more on this theme:

Indonesian law enforcers call for financial approach to fight illegal logging

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/05/indonesian-law-enforcers-call-for-financial-approach-to-fight-illegal-logging/>

Eco-friendly Eid - the Indonesian women on a mission to plant trees

<https://news.trust.org/item/20210512225342-On188/>

Jailed, in hiding, expelled: Cambodia's Mother Nature crackdown

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/13/jailed-in-hiding-expelled-cambodias-mother-nature-crackdown>

Illegal miners will get licences and help under a new govt plan – if they're South African

<https://www.businessinsider.co.za/illegal-mining-formalisation-is-part-of-the-artisanal-and-small-scale-mining-draft-government-plan-2021-5>

Pictures from outer space reveal the extent of illegal gold mining in Peru

<https://theconversation.com/pictures-from-outer-space-reveal-the-extent-of-illegal-gold-mining-in-peru-159416>

Illegal rare-earth mining surges in Myanmar

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2112407/illegal-rare-earth-mining-surges-in-myanmar>

Sharks attract illegal fishing in protected areas

<https://www.earth.com/news/sharks-attract-illegal-fishing-in-protected-areas/>

How the UK aims to halt illegal fishing and human trafficking with bargain shoe-box-sized spy satellites

<https://inews.co.uk/news/long-reads/how-uk-aims-halt-illegal-fishing-human-traffic-killing-bargain-shoe-box-sized-spy-satellites-horizon-technologies-989189>

Rhino Poachers Return After South Africa Eases Pandemic Restrictions

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/rhino-poachers-return-after-south-africa-eases-pandemic-restrictions/5876608.html>

Dirty Business – The Smuggling Pipeline Carrying Mercury Across the Amazon

<https://insightcrime.org/news/dirty-business-smuggling-pipeline-carrying-mercury-amazon/>

Taking Off – wildlife trafficking in the Latin America and Caribbean region

<https://www.traffic.org/publications/reports/taking-off/>

ORGANIZED CRIME

Online is the New Frontline in the Fight Against Organized Crime

Homeland Security Today: 25 May 2021

Criminals are exploiting advances in technology to drive organized crime, the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency said in its 2021 National Strategic Assessment.

<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/online-is-the-new-frontline-in-the-fight-against-organized-crime/>

For more on this theme:

Greece's organized crime under scrutiny

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1161410/greece-s-organized-crime-under-scrutiny/>

Organized crime a threat to elections in at least 200 municipalities

<https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/organized-crime-threatens-at-least-200-local-elections/>

EU Sets 10 Priorities To Tackle Organized Crime In Next Four Years

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/eu-sets-10-priorities-to-tackle-organized-cri-1260637.html>

MONEY LAUNDERING

How to Combat Money Laundering in Europe

Jesper Berg – Bloomberg: 24 May 2021

Denmark's financial regulator sees six ways to help banks identify high-risk activity.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-05-24/how-denmark-proposes-to-combat-money-laundering-in-europe>

For more on this theme:

US charges ex-Bolivian minister with bribery, money laundering

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/26/us-arrests-former-bolivian-minister-for-bribery-money-laundering>

Anti-money laundering regulation for all crypto exchanges on Austrac's wish list

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/anti-money-laundering-regulation-for-all-crypto-exchanges-on-austracs-wish-list/>

EU must step up the fight against dirty money

<https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/stepping-up-the-fight-against-dirty-money>

Bahrain's money laundering countermeasures in full swing after court action against 13 banks

<https://www.ameinfo.com/industry/business/bahains-money-laundering-countermeasures-in-full-swing-after-court-action-against-13-banks>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Russia raises heat on Twitter, Google and Facebook in online crackdown

Adam Satariano and Oleg Matsnev – The New York Times: 26 May 2021

Russia's campaign is part of a global wave of actions by governments that are testing how far they can go to control online speech.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/technology/russia-twitter-google-facebook-censorship.html>

For more on this theme:

(United Kingdom) UK online safety bill raises censorship concerns and questions on future of encryption

<https://cpj.org/2021/05/uk-online-safety-bill-raises-censorship-concerns-and-questions-on-future-of-encryption/>

(Global) Facebook says government internet shutdowns are on the rise

<https://www.axios.com/facebook-government-internet-shutdowns-censorship-a1c1c181-dc01-4450-9945-e1465f5139e8.html>

(Myanmar/[Burma]) Myanmar bars Facebook, Twitter in censorship regime

<https://californianewstimes.com/myanmar-bars-facebook-twitter-in-censorship-regime/360181/>

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Pandemic tech use heightens consumer privacy fears

Alex Scroton – Computer Weekly: 20 May 2021

A report on consumer attitudes about privacy finds evidence of a “heightened sense of fear” as digital footprints expand inexorably.

<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252501137/Pandemic-tech-use-heightens-consumer-privacy-fears>

For more on this theme:

(China) Tesla ‘Bows to Pressure,’ Announces User Data to be Stored in China

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/tesla-data-05262021150059.html>

(Indonesia) Privacy in doubt in Jakarta’s social media crackdown

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/world/privacy-in-doubt-in-jakartas-social-media-crackdown/news-story/4daf87300c5fd3af2424cdcf11169b21>

(India) WhatsApp sues Indian government over unconstitutional internet laws, privacy encroachment

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2021-05-26/whatsapp-sues-indian-government-over-unconstitutional-internet-laws-privacy>

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Data fairness: A new social contract for the 21st century economy

MIT Technology Review: 26 May 2021

Key data inequality trends, their root causes, and the ideas and tools available to solve them.

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2021/05/26/1025387/data-fairness-a-new-social-contract-for-the-21st-century-economy/>

For more on this theme:

(Africa) Joe Biden Must Prioritize Digital Transformation in Africa

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/joe-biden-must-prioritize-digital-transformation-africa-186079>

(Ukraine) PM: Ukraine's goal is to introduce comprehensive state service in smart-phone for citizens

<https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-economy/3252802-pm-ukraines-goal-is-to-introduce-comprehensive-state-service-in-smartphone-for-citizens.html>

(Global) Smarter and safer cities with effective cybersecurity measures

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/opinion/smarter-and-safer-cities-with-effective-cybersecurity-measures>

CYBERCRIME

It's Time to Surge Resources Into Prosecuting Ransomware Gangs

Kellen Dwyer – Lawfare: 20 May 2021

To fight ransomware attacks, the U.S. Justice Department should follow the playbook that it used against organized crime in the 1960s and terrorists after 9/11. The department needs a “troop surge” of cyber prosecutors and agents to conduct long-term investigations into ransomware gangs and the organizations that enable them.

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/its-time-surge-resources-prosecuting-ransomware-gangs>

For more on this theme:

(U.S., Global) Learning from cyberattacks could be the key to stopping them

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/learning-from-cyber-attacks-could-be-the-key-to-stopping-them/>

(Russia) Russia Profiting from Massive Hydra Cybercrime Marketplace

<https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/russia-profiting-from-massive-hydra-cybercrime-marketplace/d/d-id/1341132>

(Global) Verizon Report: Cybercrime Rampant in COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.msspalert.com/cybersecurity-research/verizon-report-cybercrime-rampant-in-covid-19-pandemic/>

CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Air India discloses data of 4.5m passengers were stolen in SITA cyber attack

Campbell Kwan – ZDNet: 24 May 2021

Air India has said a cyberattack on its data servers affected about 4.5 million customers worldwide. The breach, first reported to the company in February 2021, compromised passport and ticket information as well as credit card data. It wasn't immediately clear who was behind the attack.

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/air-india-discloses-data-of-4-5m-passengers-were-stolen-in-sita-cyber-attack/>

For more on this theme:

(Ireland) Cyber-attack on Irish health service 'catastrophic'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57184977>

(U.S.) Cyber-criminal Gang Targets Texas Unemployment System

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/scattered-canary-targets-texas/>

(New Zealand) New Zealand hospital faces second week of disruption after major cyber attack

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/24/new-zealand-hospital-cyber-attack-waikato-disruption>

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

DHS to issue new pipeline security regulations after Colonial attack

Justin Katz – FCW: 25 May 2021

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is expected soon to issue a security directive that would require pipeline companies to report cyberattacks to the federal government, a shift from the current system of voluntary reporting.

<https://fcw.com/articles/2021/05/25/tsa-cyber-pipeline-regs-colonial.aspx>

For more on this theme:

(U.S., Global) Civilian Critical Infrastructure Is No Longer a Taboo Target

<https://www.oodaloop.com/archive/2021/05/13/civilian-critical-infrastructure-is-no-longer-a-taboo-target/>

(Germany, Global) German cyber security chief fears hackers could target hospitals

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-cyber-security-chief-fears-hackers-could-target-hospitals-2021-05-22/>

(India) Cyber attacks on critical infrastructure: Is India ready?

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/cyber-attacks-on-critical-infrastructure-is-india-ready-101621514744151.html>

(Australia) Threat of major cyber attack on critical infrastructure real, national security boss warns

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-24/cyber-attack-threat-critical-infrastructure-mike-pezzullo/100160894>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Repatriating refugees at Syrian camp could stem ISIS resurgence: US general

Luis Martinez – ABC News: 22 May 2021

The Iraqi government for the first time is expected to bring home about 100 Iraqi families from a sprawling refugee camp in Syria. United States officials see the repatriation as a hopeful step in a long-frustrated effort to return thousands of Iraqis from the camp, known as a breeding ground for young ISIS fighters.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/repatriating-refugees-syrian-camp-stem-isis-resurgence-us/story?id=77811334>

Rise of Isis means Boko Haram's decline is no cause for celebration

Jason Burke – The Guardian: 22 May 2021

The reported death of Boko Haram's leader will increase the influence of ISIS affiliates.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/22/rise-isis-means-boko-haram-decline-no-cause-celebration>

For more on this theme:

Issue Two Of Magazine Published By ISIS Affiliate In Myanmar Focuses On Prisoners, Provides Monero Account For Donating Cryptocurrency

<https://www.memri.org/cjlab/issue-two-magazine-published-isis-affiliate-myanmar-focuses-prisoners-provides-monero-account>

Islamic State remains 'potent' force in Afghanistan, says US envoy

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210519-islamic-state-remains-potent-force-in-afghanistan-says-us-envoy>

US, UN Officials Hail Uzbekistan's Repatriation of IS Families

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/us-un-officials-hail-uzbekistans-repatriation-families>

Pandemic Adds to Fear for Bosnians Awaiting Repatriation of Families in Syria

<https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/pandemic-adds-fear-bosnians-awaiting-repatriation-families-syria>

Peshmerga-Iraq cooperation will 'close that gap,' cut off ISIS: Coalition

<https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/230520212>

Afghanistan: Resurgent Threat Of Islamic State – Analysis

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/25052021-afghanistan-resurgent-threat-of-islamic-state-analysis/>

Islamic State documents implementation of Sharia law in northern Mali

<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/05/islamic-state-documents-implementation-of-sharia-law-in-northern-mali.php>

Kenya and DRC Sign Defense Pact to Cooperate Against Islamic State

<https://jamestown.org/program/kenya-and-drc-sign-defense-pact-to-cooperate-against-islamic-state/>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Hezbollah leader: Breach of Jerusalem means regional war

The Associated Press: 25 May 2021

Lebanon's Hezbollah chief, Hassan Nasrallah, said any aggression against Jerusalem or its holy sites would mean regional war.

<https://apnews.com/article/hezbollah-jerusalem-lebanon-middle-east-israel-palestinian-conflict-90ab-3843f0ed04cb18472099606d3a22>

For more on this theme:

Al-Qaeda, Supporters Advocate for Lone Actor Attacks in the West

<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/al-qaeda-supporters-advocate-for-lone-actor-attacks-in-the-west/>

Abubakar Shekau: battle for supremacy among Islamist groups bodes ill for the Sahel

<https://theconversation.com/abubakar-shekau-battle-for-supremacy-among-islamist-groups-bodes-ill-for-the-sahel-161456>

Nigerian Terrorist Abubakar Shekau: Dead or Alive—and Does it Matter?

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/nigerian-terrorist-abubakar-shekau-dead-or-alive-and-does-it-matter>

VOA Exclusive: Taliban Attach Conditions to Istanbul Conference Participation

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/voa-exclusive-taliban-attach-conditions-istanbul-conference-participation>

Taliban warns departing US against new bases in region

<https://apnews.com/article/taliban-58cda57b77199ab914e15620558e57d0>

RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Family Martyrdom: Examining Suicide Terrorism Trends in Southeast Asia

Kenneth Yeo Yaoren – The Diplomat: 24 May 2021

The recent bombing of a church in Makassar, Indonesia, by a newlywed couple highlights the trend of family suicide bombings in the region.

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/family-martyrdom-examining-suicide-terrorism-trends-in-south-east-asia/>

For more on this theme:

Attack on Nasheed and the Rising Tide of Radicalisation in the Maldives

<https://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/attack-on-nasheed-and-radicalisation-maldives-200521>

US joins global push against violent extremism online

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-technology-government-and-politics-edb4e1cd037984509c3dc04178637f5c>

Extremists Exploit Anger over Delays in Marawi's Rebuilding, Philippine Experts Say

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/city-anniversary-05212021161156.html>

Growth of Extremist Groups Follows Mathematical Pattern: Study

<https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2021/05/extremist-group-growth-follows-mathematical-pattern-new-study-shows/174304/>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

Iran grows new, loyal elite from among Iraqi militias in tactical shift

Reuters: 21 May 2021

The new covert groups have been trained in drone warfare, surveillance and online propaganda and answer directly to officers in Iran's Revolutionary Guard Quds Force.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/iran-grows-new-loyal-elite-from-among-iraqi-militias-in-tactical-shift-668760>

For more on this theme:

Iran's missile diplomacy comes to Gaza

<https://asiatimes.com/2021/05/irans-missile-diplomacy-comes-to-gaza/>

Redefining Iran's Role in its Latest 'Shadow War' Against Israel

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/redefining-iran%E2%80%99s-role-its-latest-%E2%80%98shadow-war%E2%80%99-against-israel-185947>

Iran's Deadly Grip Reaches Into Africa | Opinion

<https://www.newsweek.com/irans-deadly-grip-reaches-africa-opinion-1593395>

Libya has a mercenaries problem. It's time for the international community to step up.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/libya-has-a-mercenaries-problem-its-time-for-the-international-community-to-step-up/>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

Hack, disinform, deny: Russia's cybersecurity strategy

Agence France-Presse: 25 May 2021

Over the years, Moscow has faced numerous allegations of cyberattacks that resulted in multiple sanctions and the expulsion of its diplomats. From "troll factories" to hackers allegedly controlled by the country's security services, here is an overview of the world of Russian cybercrime.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210525-hack-disinform-deny-russia-s-cybersecurity-strategy>

For more on this theme:

Evil Eye Gazes Beyond China's Borders: Troubling Trends in Chinese Cyber Campaigns

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/evil-eye-gazes-beyond-chinas-borders-troubling-trends-chinese-cyber-campaigns>

How to leverage the Quad to counter China's Digital Sinosphere

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/how-to-leverage-the-quad-to-counter-chinas-digital-sinosphere/>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Targeting Turkish–Georgian Relations: Russian Disinformation is Taking a Local Turn

Kakhaber Kemoklidze and Natia Seskuria – Royal United Services Institute: 20 May 2021

With limited success in their anti-Western disinformation campaign in Georgia, Russian propaganda outlets are attempting to fuel hostile attitudes between Tbilisi and Ankara with invented arguments.

<https://rusi.org/commentary/targeting-turkish-georgian-relations-russian-disinformation-taking-local-turn>

For more on this theme:

Russia, Iran Leading Disinformation Charge on Facebook

<https://www.voanews.com/silicon-valley-technology/russia-iran-leading-disinformation-charge-facebook>

Influencers offered money by ‘Russian-linked’ PR agency to discredit Pfizer vaccine

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/covid-vaccine-disinformation-pfizer-russia-b1853699.html>

China orders up videos by Uyghurs denying abuses, praising Communist rule

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-05-20/chinese-authorities-order-uyghur-video-denials-abuses>

Taiwan accuses China of spreading fake news about Covid outbreak

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/22/taiwan-accuses-china-of-spreading-fake-news-about-covid-outbreak>

What Is Russia Doing in the Black Sea?

<https://carnegieendowment.org/publications/84549>

China's land grab in Bhutan is the new face of war

<https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/05/18/chinas-land-grab-in-bhutan-is-the-new-face-of-war/>

Toward a New Naval Statecraft

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2021/05/toward-new-naval-statecraft/174063/>