COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)
Corruption
Drug Trafficking
Trafficking in Scarce or Protected Resources

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)
Internet Governance
Internet Freedom
Cyber Strategy and Risks
Cybercrime
Cyberattacks
Critical Infrastructure Protection

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
ISIS and Foreign Fighters
Terrorism Around the World
Crime and Conflict
Russia/Ukraine
COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Ukraine moves closer to corruption trial of former tax chief
Reuters: 24 May 2023
Anti-graft investigators have referred the case of former tax and customs head Roman Nasirov to court.

Bulgaria’s Lack Of Leadership On Corruption Has Left The Door Wide Open For Moscow
Zenger News – Forbes: 24 May 2023
Bulgaria has not implemented any of the sanctions that the EU has imposed on Russian individuals and companies since the invasion of Crimea.
https://www.forbes.com/sites/zengernews/2023/05/24/bulgarias-lack-of-leadership-on-corruption-has-left-the-door-wide-open-for-moscow/?sh=221ed5f7494c

For more on this theme:

Indonesia comms minister arrested in $560M corruption probe

Brazil’s top court convicts ex-President Collor on money laundering, corruption

Kazakh Anti-Corruption Activist Gets Eight Years In Prison On Charge He Calls Politically Motivated
https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-otepov-prison-politically-motivated/32424136.html

Ukraine’s anti-graft prosecutor says rule of law trumps trophy convictions

Hong Kong anti-corruption agency arrests 23 people including 11 footballers, coach as part of match-fixing probe

Undaunted by War, Ukrainian Anti-Corruption Activists Track Public Spending

Undertones: A look inside Venezuela’s extraordinary corruption scandal
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Crypto could be tool in fight against drug trafficking
Crystal Kim – Axios: 24 May 2023

Criminals use crypto, but that also means law enforcement can leverage blockchain analysis to stop them.

Guatemala Ex-Colonel Says Military Helped CJNG Run Drugs
Henry Shuldiner – InSight Crime: 24 May 2023

A former Guatemalan colonel confessed to assisting the Jalisco Cartel New Generation in trafficking cocaine, which confirms allegations of Guatemalan military members providing logistical support to another Mexican drug trafficking group.

For more on this theme:
How important is Captagon in al-Assad’s return to the Arab fold?

The Interplay of Drugs, Substance Abuse, and Crime: A Deeper Dive

It’s Never Been a Better Time to Buy Drugs on Telegram

Belgrade and Skopje Airports ‘Hubs for Illicit Activities’: Report

Is Mexico’s CJNG Pushing the Gulf Cartel from Tamaulipas?

Suspected fentanyl chemical suppliers have received $38 mln in crypto — Chainalysis
https://www.reuters.com/world/suspected-fentanyl-chemical-suppliers-have-received-38-mln-crypto-to-chainalysis-2023-05-24/

Mexico Drone Attacks Spike After CJNG, Familia Michoacana Alliance

Syrian regime raids on ‘small-time drug dealers’ a ‘cynical move’ to appease Arab League

Crypto: Unveiling the Dark Trade – Fentanyl, China, & Crypto’s Sinister Connection
https://www.tronweekly.com/crypto-unveiling-dark-trade-fentanyl/
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Trafficking in the Sahel: Guns, gas, and gold
United Nations News: 20 May 2023
The United Nations and partners are trying out new, collaborative ways to thwart traffickers, who are a growing problem in this fragile African region. https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136847

Taiwan's centuries-old trees under threat by 'mountain rats' who chop them down for illegal sale
Victoria Jen and Jalelah Abu Baker – CNA: 18 May 2023
Over the past two years, police have tracked down more than 20 illegal logging syndicates, prosecuting 590 suspects. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/illegal-logging-taiwan-mountain-rats-crackdown-3497701

For more on this theme:


Brazilian Blood Gold
https://newint.org/features/2023/04/03/view-brazil-yanomami-indigenous-lula


CNA Correspondent — Illegal Logging In Taiwan https://www.channelnewsasia.com/watch/cna-correspondent/illegal-logging-taiwan-3493951

To Fight Deforestation, Amazon Guardians Embrace a Tech Boom https://reasonstobecherful.world/indigenous-guards-amazon-technology-ecuador/

Targeting 3% of protected areas could accelerate progress on 30×30 goals, says Global Conservation’s Jeff Morgan https://news.mongabay.com/2023/05/targeting-3-of-protected-areas-could-accelerate-progress-on-30x30-goals-says-global-conservation-s-jeff-morgan/
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

‘Weaponised’ AI an existential threat to truth, human rights
Australian Human Rights Commission: 15 May 2023

Artificial intelligence is transformative technology that will change our world. It has the potential to help solve complex problems, boost productivity and efficiency, reduce human error, and democratize information. But the risks and potential harms of generative AI products are immediate.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Resetting the Rules for Tech to Preserve the Public Interest

(Global) Addressing Media Capture
https://www.lawfareblog.com/addressing-media-capture

(U.S., Global) The US government should regulate AI if it wants to lead on international AI governance
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2023/05/22/the-us-government-should-regulate-ai/

INTERNET FREEDOM

Zoom executives knew about key elements of plan to censor Chinese activists
Elias Groll – Cyberscoop: 17 May 2023

Pressured by the Chinese government to comply with censorship guidelines, Zoom drafted guidelines to suppress content critical of Beijing.

https://cyberscoop.com/zoom-china-doj-eric-yuan/

For more on this theme:

(Guinea) Social media restricted in Guinea amid political unrest

(Russia) Russia fines Google over ‘LGBT propaganda’ and ‘false information’

(Global) Under Elon Musk, Twitter has approved 83% of censorship requests by authoritarian governments

(Russia/Ukraine) Journalists use CS:GO to bypass Russian censorship of Ukraine war
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Secure Connected Places: Cyber Security Playbook launched
Government of the United Kingdom: 16 May 2023
A new guide will help United Kingdom communities innovate and build “smart cities” while keeping data safe from cyber threats.

For more on this theme:
(Iran) Iran is using its cyber capabilities to kidnap its foes in the real world
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/iran-cyber-warfare-kidnappings/
(U.S., Global) Combating US cyber adversaries calls for whole-of-government approach
https://www.c4isrnet.com/opinion/2023/05/16/combating-us-cyber-adversaries-calls-for-whole-of-government-approach/
(U.S.) White House plan to implement cyber strategy includes ambitious digital education effort
https://cyberscoop.com/national-cybersecurity-strategy-implementation-plan/
(GLOBAL) Digital diplomacy: How to unlock the Global Gateway’s potential in Latin America and the Caribbean

CYBERCRIME

Burnout: The Unspoken Toll Of Rising Cybercrime
Art Gilliland – Forbes: 18 May 2023
The societal implications of cybercrime are clear. From simple fraud to widespread disruption of critical supply chains and infrastructure, cyberattacks actively exploit millions of people daily.

For more on this theme:
(OSCE, Turkmenistan) First OSCE training on cybercrime and digital evidence in Turkmenistan
https://www.osce.org/centre-in-ashgabat/543765
(GLOBAL) Child hackers: How are kids becoming sophisticated cyber criminals?
https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/05/19/child-hackers-how-are-kids-becoming-sophisticated-cyber-criminals
CYBERATTACKS

Comprehensive legal framework a must to curb cybercrime
Sanjay Kundu – Tribune India: 19 May 2023

Cybercriminals do not require complex skills or techniques as malware toolkits are readily available.

For more on this theme:

(U.K.) Capita Cyberattack Hits UK Pension Funds
https://www.securityweek.com/capita-cyberattack-hits-uk-pension-funds/

(Global) New Research Reveals Over 340 Million Accounts Compromised in the First Four Months of 2023

(China, Kenya) Chinese hackers attacked Kenyan government as debt strains grew

(India) ‘Man-in-the-middle’ cyber attack: Fraudsters dupe top construction tech firm in Pune of over Rs 13 lakh

(Poland) Polish news websites hit by DDoS attacks

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Stealth Cyberattacks by China’s Volt Typhoon Threaten U.S. Infrastructure: Microsoft Unmasks Espionage Campaign
CircleID: 24 May 2023

Microsoft detected covert and targeted malicious activity aimed at critical infrastructure organizations in the United States. The attack was orchestrated by a state-sponsored group from China known as Volt Typhoon. The suspected objective was to disrupt the communication infrastructure between the U.S. and Asia during potential future crises.

For more on this theme:

(Quad) The Quad needs to talk security for subsea cables
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/quad-needs-talk-security-subsea-cables

(U.S.) Survey: Insider Threats Surge Across U.S. Critical Infrastructure
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Supreme Court unanimously sides with Twitter in ISIS attack case
Nina Totenberg – NPR: 18 May 2023
The U.S. Supreme Court handed social-media companies a major victory in the first test case involving immunity from lawsuits granted to internet platforms for the content they publish online.
https://www.npr.org/2023/05/18/1176856351/supreme-court-twitter-google-social-media

‘No one feels safe’: The Taliban promised to provide security to Afghans. New data shows threat from ISIS is growing
Eliza Mackintosh, Ehsan Popalzai, Antonio Jarne and Lou Robinson – CNN: 19 May 2023
“The Taliban are saying that they protect us, but really they cannot. Still, we face threats from different groups in Afghanistan,” Qasim, who asked that his last name not be used, told CNN.

For more on this theme:
Georgian Police Arrest ISIS Cell In Tbilisi
https://theatlasnews.co/conflict/2023/05/18/georgian-police-arrest-isis-cell-in-tbilisi/
Uzbek Man Who Killed Eight In NYC Terrorist Attack Gets 10 Life Sentences Plus 260 Years
https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbek-sentenced-nyc-terrorist-attack-eight-dead/32417050.html
Tajikistan repatriates 104 Islamic State women, children from Syrian Kurdistan
https://ekurd.net/tajikistan-repatriates-104-islamic-2023-05-22
Netherlands to open first trial on crimes against Yazidis
Book Review: Foreign Fighters and International Peace: Joining Global Jihad and Marching Back Home
The Silhouette of Indonesia’s Foreign Returned Terrorist Fighters
https://idsa.in/issuebrief/The-Silhouette-of-Indonesia-Foreign-Returned-Terrorist-Fighters-ms-raza-230523
The Kerala Story: Supreme Court lifts West Bengal’s ban on Islamic State film
The State of Play: Islamic State Khorasan Province’s Anti-India Propaganda Efforts
https://gnet-research.org/2023/05/22/the-state-of-play-islamic-state-khorasan-provinces-anti-india-propaganda-efforts/
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

It's time Australia branded Russia's Wagner Group a terrorist organization
Isabella Currie and Matthew Sussex – The Interpreter: 23 May 2023

A record of abuses in conflicts from Ukraine to Africa makes designating the Russian group the right choice.

For more on this theme:

Lebanese army says it arrests prominent Al Qaeda leader in Deir Ammar town

US Issues New Domestic Threat Warning

As tensions mount with Israel, Hezbollah stages a massive show of force in Lebanon

U.N. Finds Wagner Mercenaries Led Massacre on Village in Mali in 2022

UK-based group documents rights abuses since Taliban takeover of Afghanistan with ‘witness map’
https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-witness-map-taliban-abuses-366254ec9043d-3d66c396d6283db1d3a

The Looming Problem for al-Qaeda’s Affiliate Alliances

Russia, Wagner, and the Future of Counterterrorism in Africa

Timeline: US Embassies Threatened by Spread of Salafi-Jihadi Groups

West Mulls Designating Russia's Wagner Group as Terrorists

A Canadian Al Qaeda bomb-maker is coming out of prison. When are terrorists ready for release?

The Taliban promises China it won't allow terrorists to use Afghanistan as launching pad
CRIME AND CONFLICT

Latin America Wrestles with a New Crime Wave  
*International Crisis Group: 12 May 2023*

The threat of organized crime in Latin America is growing and poses risks to security and human rights. This update to the Watch List 2023 explains how the EU and its member states can help address the issue.

https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/latin-america-wrestles-new-crime-wave

*For more on this theme:*

Long Simmering Tensions Erupt into Deadly Violence and Mass Displacement in Manipur  
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-may-11/

Arson Attack in France Signals the Rising Strength of the Far-Right in Europe  
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-may-19/

Occupied Ukraine: First Known ‘Discreditation’ Case In Russian-Annexed Territory  

ICC war crimes prosecutor ‘wanted’ in Russia over Putin warrant  

Ukraine investigating role of Belarus in transfers of children, prosecutor says  

Ukraine launches investigation into Russian commander  

International Laws Protecting Civilians in Armed Conflict Not Being Upheld, Secretary-General Warns Security Council, Urging Deadly Cycle Be Broken  

More Than 85% Of People Facing Hunger Crises Live in Conflict-Affected Countries  

No escape, no aid as fighting intensifies in Sudan’s West Darfur  

Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Protection of Civilians  
https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/atrocity-alert-no-348/

After fleeing conflict, displaced women face rape in east Congo  
CRIME AND CONFLICT

For more on this theme:

Paramilitary Commander Salvatore Mancuso Reveals AUC’s Connections in Colombia

Delivering justice for the war crimes in Ukraine

Closing arguments begin in trial over Mali war crimes
https://www.courthousenews.com/closing-arguments-begin-in-trial-over-mali-war-crimes/

Peace in Sudan depends on justice for the Darfur genocide
https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/peace-in-sudan-depends-on-justice-for-the-darfur-genocide/

Nigeria: Tracing the rise of ‘cult’ groups to an ‘African Mafia’

Sudan’s Crisis Is Pushing Egypt to the Brink

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Putin’s Tactic of Inaction Could Backfire at Home
Tatiana Stanovaya – Carnegie: 24 May 2023
Russian President Vladimir Putin’s plan is to wait out what he sees as inevitable changes in the West and Ukraine. These days, however, Russia’s elites are liable to see defeatism in inaction.
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89826

For more on this theme:

Judy Asks: Is Ukraine a Game Changer for European Defense?
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/89832

Ukraine’s Other Battle: Zelensky vs. the Mayors
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89833

‘Turkey has to reassess its position between NATO and a disruptive Russia’

IntelBrief: South Africa No Longer Hedging, Moves Closer to Russia
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-may-18/

Ukraine’s European integration is the key to a sustainable peace
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-european-integration-is-the-key-to-a-sustainable-peace/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

- **Russian narratives ignore real reasons for Western support of Ukraine**

- **Ukraine's coming counteroffensive has a good chance of succeeding**

- **African leaders seek to persuade Russia, Ukraine to cease hostilities**

- **Without a hint of irony over Ukraine, Putin rages against countries that meddle in other states**
  https://www.cnbc.com/2023/05/24/having-invaded-ukraine-putin-rages-against-countries-that-meddle.html

- **Ukraine and the Kinzhal: Don't believe the hypersonic hype**

- **It's Not Enough for Ukraine to Win. Russia Has to Lose.**

- **Ukraine will win. Russia is denying the reality of its horrific war of choice: UK statement to the OSCE**

- **Russia's aging, obsolete tanks are actually doing some serious damage in Ukraine, report says**

- **A Mysterious Group Has Ties to 15 Years of Ukraine-Russia Hacks**
  https://www.wired.com/story/red-stinger-ukraine-russia-espionage-hackers/

- **Georgia Rapidly Cozying Up to Russia and Moving Away From the West**

- **Ukrainian Sabotage Operations Could Spell Increased Confrontation Between Russian Special Services**
  https://jamestown.org/program/ukrainian-sabotage-operations-could-spell-increased-confrontation-between-russian-special-services/

- **Uzbekistan to Receive Russian Gas via Renovated Soviet-Era Pipeline**

- **Armenia's Role in Helping Russia Circumvent Sanctions**
  https://jamestown.org/program/armenias-role-in-helping-russia-circumvent-sanctions/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is spurring a transition of global order

Cyber Warfare Lessons From the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Cyber Attacks Strike Ukraine's State Bodies in Espionage Operation
https://thehackernews.com/2023/05/cyber-attacks-strike-ukraines-state.html

Putin may lose it all by going all-in for Ukraine

Stress-Testing Chinese-Russian Relations
https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/05/stress-testing-chinese-russian-relations/

Russia's Wagner Group suspected of smuggling arms to Ukraine via Mali

Ukraine updates: Wagner Group reports 10,000 prisoner deaths

What Happens Next with the Wagner Group?
https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/05/what-happens-next-with-the-wagner-group/

Crimea Is Expanding Private Army Militias, Modeled On The Wagner Group
https://worldcrunch.com/focus/crimea-private-armies-wagner

G7 Leaders Urge China To ‘Press Russia’ To Withdraw From Ukraine
https://www.rferl.org/a/g7-leaders-china-russia-ukraine-withdrawal-communique/32420155.html

Is Wagner Chief Prigozhin ‘A Special Operation Inside A Special Operation’?
https://www.rferl.org/a/analysis-wagner-prigozhin-special-operation-ukraine/32419051.html

Belgorod: the Russian region now part of Putin’s war on Ukraine
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/23/belgorod-the-russian-region-being-dragged-into-putins-war-on-ukraine

Ukraine’s counteroffensive is shrouded in confusion. That may be the plan

Why Russia And Ukraine Will Drag On Their War Efforts In Foreseeable Future

Empire’s Twilight? Russia Loses Support in Its Own Backyard
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**US Air Force 'Chokes' Russian Military Ops In Ukraine; Analyst Decodes Why NATO Is “Winning” Without Firing A Single Shot**

**Could EU Use Energy As A Weapon Of War In Russia-Ukraine War Against India?**

**Hypersonic Hype? Russia's Kinzhal Missiles and the Lessons for Air Defense**
https://mwi.usma.edu/hypersonic-hype-russias-kinzhal-missiles-and-the-lessons-for-air-defense/

**International Investment Arbitration as Weapon Against Russian Aggression**
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/international-investment-arbitration-weapon-against-russian-aggression

**China, Iran, Belarus, and Armenia all fear a Russian defeat in Ukraine**