CONTENTS

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 Statecraft and Strategy
- Cyber Attacks, Threats and Vulnerabilities
- Cyber Crime
- Critical Infrastructure Protection

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
- ISIS and Foreign Fighters
- Terrorism Around the World
- Conflict and Crime
- Russia/Ukraine

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Africa’s urban planners face huge corruption pressures: some answers
Laura Nkula-Wenz – The Conversation: 24 May 2022
Understand and tackling corruption in cities is crucial because they are increasingly becoming home to much of the global population. According to the United Nations, more than two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities by 2050. The fastest urban growth is happening in Africa and Asia.
https://theconversation.com/africas-urban-planners-face-huge-corruption-pressures-some-answers-170281

Bulgarian PM says fighting corruption includes Russian influence
Antonia Kotseva – EURACTIV: 20 May 2022
Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, speaking during a government business breakfast with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said fighting corruption includes tackling foreign influence.

For more on this theme:
Liberia: Of Corruption, Unexplained Disappearances and Mysterious Killings
https://www.liberianobserver.com/liberia-corruption-unexplained-disappearances-and-mysterious-killings
Controversial Attorney General Outlasts Guatemala’s Anti-Corruption Efforts
Ex-Moldovan President Dodon Detained After Home Searched By Anti-Corruption Police
https://www.rferl.org/a/moldova-president-arrested-corruption/31865208.html
Ecuador’s Ex-VP Ordered Back to Prison Over Corruption
Ukraine’s Anti-Corruption Campaigners See No Misuse of Western Military Aid
Strategic Corruption: The cybercrime & corruption connection
Iran high-rise collapse reignites debates on corruption
https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/iran-high-rise-collapse-reignites-debates-corruption
Mexican journalists are being murdered while trying to uncover and end corruption in the state
**DRUG TRAFFICKING**

**Super Labs and Master Chefs — The Changing Face of Europe's Drug Trade**
*Cat Rainford and Alessandro Ford – InSight Crime: 19 May 2022*

Cocaine processing has taken root on European soil. Mexican and Dutch synthetic-drug traffickers have partnered, and a new chemical technique is encouraging the establishment of super labs in Europe’s methamphetamine trade.


**To stem Iraq’s drug trade, rein in the militias that enable it**
*Haid Haid – The Arab Weekly: 25 May 2022*

Many groups are involved in enabling drug operations between Syria and Iraq, but Kataib Hezbollah reportedly has the most influence over this illicit trafficking business.

https://thearabweekly.com/stem-iraqs-drug-trade-rein-militias-enable-it

*For more on this theme:*

**Afghanistan’s opium problem requires a humanitarian solution**

**Otoniel’s Extradition Heralds End for a Generation of Colombian Traffickers**

**Uruguay faces a wave of violence that could mean a homicide record — government blames drug trafficking**

**Narco-Cattle Ranching in Honduras’ La Mosquitia**
https://insightcrime.org/investigations/narco-cattle-ranching-honduras/

**The Cocaine Queen of Honduras Was Just Arrested After a Shootout Killed Her Son**

**Jordan army official confirms Syria military assists drug traffickers**

**Southern Brazil ports and Montevideo have become drugs exporting hubs**
https://en.mercopress.com/2022/05/12/southern-brazil-ports-and-montevideo-have-become-drugs-exporting-hubs

**The Jalisco Cartel’s Quiet Expansion in Guatemala**

**Crafty Trafficking — How Cocaine is Flowing Between LatAm and Australia**

**Is Venezuela Becoming a Major Cocaine Producer?**
https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/is-venezuela-becoming-a-major-cocaine-producer/
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

‘Mexican cartels are taking control of the fishing and logging industry’
Teresa de Miguel – El País: 23 May 2022

Researcher Vanda Felbab-Brown says that organized crime groups are trafficking species to China in exchange for the chemical precursors necessary to make drugs such as fentanyl.

In Singapore, a forensics lab wields CSI-like tech against wildlife traffickers
Claire Turrell – Mongabay: 20 May 2022

A laboratory launched last year is making breakthroughs in tracking down criminal syndicates trafficking in wildlife.
https://news.mongabay.com/2022/05/in-singapore-a-forensics-lab-wields-csi-like-tech-against-wildlife-traffickers/

For more on this theme:
Can celebrities and social media influencers really ‘rewrite extinction’?
https://news.mongabay.com/2022/05/can-celebrities-and-social-media-influencers-really-rewrite-extinction/

This Tiger Cub is Only the Tip of the Iceberg of an Illegal Trade
https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/this-tiger-cub-is-only-the-tip-of-the-iceberg-of-an-illegal-trade/

Africa’s hot and dusty courtrooms — a frontline in the global fight against illegal wildlife trade

New weapon in fight against wildlife crime launched in Western Cape

Malawi steps up action against illegal charcoal trade (analysis)
https://news.mongabay.com/2022/05/malawi-steps-up-action-against-illegal-charcoal-trade-analysis/

Mexican farmers demand redress for illegal mining and violence on their land
https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/may/17/mexican-farmers-demand-redress-for-mining-and-violence-on-their-land

Illegal mining footprint swells nearly 500% inside Brazil Indigenous territories

Kenya’s fight to save sea turtles: Illegal fishing is devastating turtle habitat
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

How to safeguard the internet after the war in Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has potentially serious consequences for the future of the global internet as we know it, and a large international meeting set for 2025 might prove decisive.

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/safeguarding-the-internet-post-ukraine/

For more on this theme:

(Global) The Declaration for the Future of the Internet Is for Wavering Democracies, Not China and Russia

(Global) Transparency is the best first step towards better digital governance
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2022/05/10/transparency-is-the-best-first-step-towards-better-digital-governance/

(Global) How Web3 will level the playing field and unlock income equality
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/what-is-web3-why-care-future/

INTERNET FREEDOM

‘Disastrous for press freedom’: What Russia’s goal of an isolated internet means for journalists
Alicia Ceccanese – Committee to Protect Journalists: 23 May 2022

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine presents a danger not only for reporters operating in the war zone. The campaign could also pose a broader threat to press freedoms and other civil liberties if it brings the Kremlin closer to its dream of creating a domestically controlled internet.

https://cpj.org/2022/05/disastrous-for-press-freedom-what-russias-goal-of-an-isolated-internet-means-for-journalists/

For more on this theme:

(China) China orders livestreaming platforms to step up oversight of underage users

(Europe) Europe’s Tech Regulations May Put Free Speech at Risk
https://cepa.org/europes-tech-regulations-may-put-free-speech-at-risk/

(China) China’s Censors Aim to Contain Dissent During Harsh COVID-19 Lockdowns

(India) India’s order to collect VPN user data sparks outcry
https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/India-s-order-to-collect-VPN-user-data-sparks-outrcy
CYBER STATECRAFT AND STRATEGY

Can the new National Cyber Strategy make the UK a security leader?
Sam Forsdick – Raconteur: 23 May 2022

Are the U.K.’s latest plans to develop the country’s cyber capabilities sufficient to deal with the latest digital threats?
https://www.raconteur.net/technology/can-the-new-national-cyber-strategy-make-the-uk-a-security-leader/?zephr_sso_ott=ImNsdY

For more on this theme:
(EU) The geopolitics of technology: How the EU can become a global player
https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-geopolitics-of-technology-how-the-eu-can-become-a-global-player/

(Great Britain) Britain can legally launch cyber attacks against hostile states, says Attorney General
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/05/19/britain-can-legally-launch-cyber-attacks-against-hostile-states/

(U.S.) How State and Local Governments Can Make Their Security Operations Ready for the Future

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Scott Ikeda – CPO Magazine: 20 May 2022

The spate of ransomware attacks on critical infrastructure companies in 2021 was seen as a major escalation by criminal groups. The Conti ransomware gang threatened to overthrow the government of Costa Rica, having established a presence throughout its national agencies.

For more on this theme:
(Russia, Italy) Pro-Russian hackers attack institutional websites in Italy, police say

(U.S., Global) US Car Giant General Motors Hit by Cyber-Attack Exposing Car Owners’ Personal Info

(Iran, U.K.) Pro-Iran Group ALTahrea Hits Port of London Website by DDoS Attack
https://www.hackread.com/pro-iran-altahrea-hit-port-of-london-website-ddos-attack/

(Greenland) Greenland says health services ‘severely limited’ after cyberattack
https://therecord.media/greenland-cyberattack-healthcare-systems/
CYBER CRIME

How to disrupt cybercrime networks
Michael Daniel, Amy Hogan-Burney, Derek Manky and Tal Goldstein – World Economic Forum: 25 May 2022

Improving visibility into cybercrime operations will benefit legal authorities in investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions.
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/disrupting-cybercrime-networks/

For more on this theme:
(Global) How effective is international co-operation in targeting cyber criminals?
https://www.itweb.co.za/content/KjlyrvwBgEmqk6am

(Lesotho) National Assembly Approves Cyber-Crime Bill

(Global) US Signs on to New Electronic Evidence Protocol in International Cybercrime Agreement

(Global) Fighting Cybercrime: Three Important Principles To Remember
https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2022/05/24/fighting-cybercrime-three-important-principles-to-remember/?sh=726fe8974c17

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Cyber security: Global food supply chain at risk from malicious hackers

Modern “smart” farm machinery is vulnerable to malicious hackers, leaving global supply chains exposed to risk, experts warn.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Energy sector should be better prepared for cyber attacks, said DNV
https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/05/19/energy-sector-should-be-better-prepared-for-cyber-attacks-said-dnv/

(U.S.) DOD: It’s Not Just State Actors Who Pose Cyber Threat to U.S.

(Global) Cyber Attacks on the Power Grid
https://securityboulevard.com/2022/05/cyber-attacks-on-the-power-grid/

(U.S.) Want to protect critical infrastructure? Start with NIST’s Cybersecurity Framework
ISIS ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Islamic State group ‘trying to control’ Mali-Niger border with series of attacks
France 24: 24 May 2022
ISIS appears to be trying to seize control of the border between the two African countries.

For more on this theme:
US, others say Africa has become main target of IS group
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-islamic-state-group-africa-race-and-ethnicity-syria-cb04e42b5360b2deecfcf4c854556a74

Voice of Khorasan Magazine and the Internationalization of Islamic State’s Anti-Taliban Propaganda

Islamic State Strategies and Propaganda in Iraq Raise Prospects for Resurgence

Dutch court calls for repatriation of ISIS women to face trial
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/130520221

ISIS prison camps ‘unsustainable’ as Syria terror threat grows
https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/2022/05/12/isis-prison-camps-unsustainable-as-syria-terror-threat-grows/

New ISIS Strategy and the Resurgence of Islamic State Khorasan

ISIS attacks a strategic facility in Sinai — Significance and possible implications

Foreign Fighters: The Terrorism/IHL Conundrum and the Need for Cumulative Prosecution
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/foreign-fighters-terrorism-ihl-conundrum-cumulative-prosecution/

Will the ‘Islamic State’ benefit from the Ukraine war?

A stubborn threat: Islamic State in Iraq in early 2022

Islamic State in Afghanistan building capability to strike on US soil, Pentagon IG says
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

How Hezbollah Is Sparking Instability In Latin America
Matthew Smith – Oilprice.com: 24 May 2022

Geopolitical instability is on the rise in Latin America, and an unlikely player may be partially to blame. Hezbollah, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, has established a strong presence in the region and has turned to illicit activities to bolster its finances.


For more on this theme:

Will Ayman al-Zawahiri’s Call for Indian Muslims to Join al-Qaeda Fall on Deaf Ears?
https://jamestown.org/program/will-ayman-al-zawahiris-call-for-indian-muslims-to-join-al-qaeda-fall-on-deaf-ears/

No End in Sight: Jihadist and Baluch Ethno-Nationalist Suicide Terrorism in Pakistan Since the U.S. Withdrawal From Afghanistan

Navigating pro-Jemaah Islamiyah boarding schools
https://www.todayonline.com/commentary/navigating-pro-jemaah-islamiyah-boarding-schools-1894391

Fractures in the Extremist Landscape: Understanding and Exploiting Jihadist Fratricide

Don’t Let Over-the-Horizon Counterterrorism Eliminate the Premier Security Force Assistance Product: Partner Special Operations Forces

Afghan Taliban brokers ceasefire between Pakistan and TTP

World at War: Is Al-Shabaab the biggest threat on the African continent?

Taliban dissolves Afghanistan’s human rights commission as ‘unnecessary’

Taliban Poised to ‘Loosen’ Restrictions on al-Qaida

Afghanistan’s Forgotten War: The Clash Between the Taliban and ISKP
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/05/13/afghanistans-forgotten-war-the-clash-between-the-taliban-and-iskp/
CONFLICT AND CRIME

Costa Rica’s Limón Province Becomes Murder and Drug Trafficking Center
Alessandro Ford – InSight Crime: 23 May 2022

It is currently the country’s homicide capital as surging cocaine flows have renewed fighting for its port, a major point of departure for drugs out of the country.


For more on this theme:

Bogotá’s Microtrafficking Gangs Fuel Killings and Torture in Post-Pandemic Boom

Uruguay’s Microtrafficking Approach Under Question as Homicides Jump

Russian soldier sentenced to life in prison in Ukraine conflict’s first war crimes trial

Podcast: Human rights crimes spiking with war in the Ukraine

Ninety Per Cent of War-Time Casualties Are Civilians, Speakers Stress, Pressing Security Council to Fulfil Responsibility, Protect Innocent People in Conflicts

Putin could be charged with the crime of aggression for the Ukraine war — but it’s an expensive process with high stakes

When War Crimes Evidence Disappears
https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/25/when-war-crimes-evidence-disappears

Putin’s Mariupol Massacre is one of the 21st century’s worst war crimes

Joint Statement from the European Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom on the establishment of the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group (ACA) for Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Putin’s war in Ukraine is driving a hidden horror: Sex trafficking of women and children
Josh Meyer – USA Today: 20 May 2022

Sex trafficking of Ukrainians isn’t new, but victims are now being exploited throughout the world. No one knows the scope of the problem due to lax controls over who is fleeing Ukraine.
https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/05/20/putins-ukraine-war-sex-trafficking/9733542002/?gnt-cfr=1

For more on this theme:
The buzz in Europe's halls of power about Ukraine's EU bid

Putin deploys nuclear-capable missiles to Belarusian border with Ukraine

Cyber Attacks on Ukraine: Not What You Think

How Can We Avoid Further Escalation of the International Conflict Caused by Russia's Invasion of Ukraine?

The Media Fog of War: Propaganda in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/05/20/the-media-fog-of-war-propaganda-in-the-ukraine-russia-conflict/

Twitter aims to crack down on misinformation, including misleading posts about Ukraine
https://www.opb.org/article/2022/05/19/twitter-misinformation-policy-misleading-posts-ukraine/

Russia Cannot Respond to NATO's Northern Expansion
https://cepa.org/russia-cannot-respond-to-natos-northern-expansion/

Russia's Military Telegrams its Discontent
https://cepa.org/russias-military-telegrams-its-discontent/

Appeasement is the worst possible policy for both Ukraine and Russia

Three possible futures for a frozen conflict in Ukraine

Interview: Can Ukraine's Military Continue To Outperform Russian Forces?

Three months of war: Russia underachieves, Ukraine overachieves
https://www.npr.org/2022/05/24/1100898004/a-battlefield-assessment-three-months-after-russia-invaded-ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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Russia's Potemkin Army
https://mwi.usma.edu/russias-potemkin-army/

The Putin puzzle: Why is the Russian dictator so obsessed with Ukraine?

How the Russia-Ukraine war impacts India’s self-reliance campaign
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/southasiasource/how-the-russia-ukraine-war-impacts-indias-self-reliance-campaign%ef%bf%bc/

Analysis: Russia prepares to seize western firms looking to leave

A Marshall Plan for Ukraine
https://cepa.org/a-marshall-plan-for-ukraine/

Russia's Hunger Blockade
https://cepa.org/russias-hunger-blockade/

Hunger Games
https://cepa.org/hunger-games/

The Art Of Currencies In The Ukraine War – Analysis

Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow? Tensions mount between US and China over Taiwan

Centuries of Russian oppression have forged Ukraine's remarkable resilience

For Finland, the Cold War never ended. That's why it's ready for NATO.

The Oil War: Facing EU Embargo, Russia Targeted Ukraine's Supplies – Analysis

War hacks: How outgunned Ukraine finds ways to counter Russia
https://www.npr.org/2022/05/25/1101166542/war-hacks-how-outgunned-ukraine-finds-ways-to-counter-russia

The Window To Expel Russia From Ukraine Is Now
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/19/russia-ukraine-war-west-military-aid/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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- Hacks, Oil Deals, And Veiled Criticism: China-Russia Ties Continue To Morph After Ukraine Invasion
  https://www.rferl.org/a/china-russia-ties-ukraine-invasion/31865874.html

- China Treads A Fine Line On The Russia–Ukraine War – Analysis
  https://www.eurasiareview.com/21052022-china-treads-a-fine-line-on-the-russia-ukraine-war-analysis/

- What Does Europe Look Like 3-7 Years After Russia's War in Ukraine?
  https://cepa.org/what-does-europe-look-like-3-7-years-after-russias-war-in-ukraine/

- Pragmatism Defeats Propaganda — Finland’s Move to NATO
  https://cepa.org/pragmatism-defeats-propaganda-finlands-move-to-nato/

- This Is Not Just ‘Putin’s War’ And Russians Should ‘100 Percent' Feel Guilty: A Veteran Russian Analyst Pulls No Punches

- The Ailing Belarusian Economy And Lukashenka's Plea On Big Brother's Behalf – Analysis

- Ideology matters in unravelling Russia's invasion of Ukraine

- Reviving the Prospects for Coercive Diplomacy in Ukraine
  https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/05/reviving-the-prospects-for-coercive-diplomacy-in-ukraine/

- Maritime and Trade Talk — The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: A Trade Finance Compliance Perspective

- Ukrainian Teachers Balk As Moscow Seeks To Impose ‘Russian Standards' In Occupied Territories
  https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-kherson-education-russian-occupation/31862426.html

- Exclusive: Russian hackers are linked to new Brexit leak website, Google says

- Central Asian Economies Don't Need Russia – Analysis

- The Russia-Ukraine war at three months
  https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/05/23/the-russia-ukraine-war-at-three-months/

- The Ukraine War Threatens Asia's Regional Architecture – Analysis
  https://www.eurasiareview.com/22052022-the-ukraine-war-threatens-asias-regional-architecture-analysis/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

What Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is revealing about tech in modern warfare

Asia’s Ambivalence Towards Sanctioning Russia – Analysis

The Russia-Ukraine War: A Setback for Arms Control

How currency sanctions on Russia could disrupt trade with Africa

Will Russia Retaliate Militarily To Finland And Sweden Joining NATO? – Analysis

Russia Downplays Negative Economic Impact of Ukraine War for Its Central Asian Allies

Chaos on Tajik-Afghan Border Could Make Russian Intervention More Likely
https://jamestown.org/program/chaos-on-tajik-afghan-border-could-make-russian-intervention-more-likely/

Russia’s Unlucky Past Has a Stranglehold on Its Future
https://carnegieendowment.org/eurasiainsight/87192

Russia’s National Security Narrative: All Quiet on the Eastern Front
https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/05/23/russia-s-national-security-narrative-all-quiet-on-eastern-front-pub-87185

Blocking NATO Expansion Could Mean Far-Reaching Implications for Turkey

Bungling the Prewar and First Moves in Finland 1939 and Ukraine 2022: A Comedy of Errors for Stalin’s Soviet Union and Putin’s Russia, Respectively