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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Exclusive: Flush with corruption cash, Brazilian states step up deforestation fight
Jake Spring – Reuters: 3 June 2020
A settlement with state-run oil firm Petrobras allows Brazilian states to partially compensate for weakening environmental protections under President Jair Bolsonaro.

Coronavirus: Latin America’s corruption fighters gain new ground
Sandra Weiss – Deutsche Welle: 2 June 2020
Though corruption is likely to be higher during the coronavirus pandemic, the graft is more likely to be discovered.

For more on this theme:

Global Emergency Funds Must Not Be Pocketed for Corruption

NGO: Charges Not Enough to Tackle Water Corruption in South Africa

U.S. Blacklists Bosnian Politician Over Involvement In ‘Significant Corruption’
https://www.rferl.org/a/us-pompeo-bosnia-corruption-zukic/30640375.html

Corruption convictions nearly doubled in China last year

Money Launderers, Corruption See A Coronavirus Advantage, Transparency International Warns

When China went to war on endemic football corruption
https://www.deccanherald.com/sports/football/when-china-went-to-war-on-endemic-football-corruption-841958.html

New research reveals the true extent of corruption in fisheries
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/heres-what-we-know-about-corruption-in-fisheries/

The African movement tracking coronavirus cash corruption
https://www.thenational.ae/world/africa/the-african-movement-tracking-coronavirus-cash-corruption-1.1025455

Former Mayor Accused Of Corruption Elected Iran’s Speaker Of Parliament
DRUG TRAFFICKING

New Honduran law targets ‘narco jets’ carrying cocaine from Venezuela
Kevin Sieff – The Washington Post: 29 May 2020

Honduras passed a new law that allows its security forces to intercept planes suspected of transporting drugs and to share more intelligence with the United States and countries in Latin America.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/honduras-drug-trafficking-law-us/2020/05/29/77c177f6-a1c0-11ea-be06-af5514ee0385_story.html

Rohingya Refugees Smuggle Drugs for Insurgents in Myanmar
Michael Van Ginkel – Wilson Center: 25 May 2020

Rohingya refugees fleeing anti-Muslim persecution in Burma, also known as Myanmar, are being exploited by the Arakan Army to smuggle synthetic drugs into Bangladesh. Lacking other sources of income, the Rohingya are vulnerable to recruitment by the army’s drug smugglers.

https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2020/05/rohingya-refugees-smuggle-drugs-insurgents-myanmar/

For more on this theme:
Cocaine and Guinea-Bissau: How Africa’s ‘narco-state’ is trying to kick its habit

With Coronavirus Hurting Drug Business There’s an Opportunity to Corner Cartels

Venezuela’s Role in Cocaine Trafficking and President Maduro’s Indictment

COVID-19 is increasing the power of Brazil’s criminal groups
https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/latamcaribbean/2020/05/28/covid-19-is-increasing-the-power-of-brazils-criminal-groups/

Honduras Politician’s Murder Linked to Underworld Violence in Copán

Special Report: U.S. takes aim at the power behind Venezuela’s Maduro - his first lady

As Crime Dips Worldwide, Agile Syndicates Adapt to Pandemic

The Never-Ending List of Allegations Against Mexico’s Former Top Cop

Why It’s Difficult to Control Money Laundering in Colombia
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Back from extinction: a world first effort to return threatened pangolins to the wild
Alexander Richard Braczkowski, Christopher O’Bryan, Duan Biggs and Raymond Jansen – The Conversation: 4 June 2020

For the first time since being identified as a highly trafficked and endangered species, pangolins are being reintroduced into the wild. There is hope that the animals — which are suspected of being linked to the coronavirus — will once again thrive in areas of Africa where they have been extinct for decades.


Illegal logging in Romania overwhelms authorities
Benjamin Ribout – EURACTIV: 3 June 2020

Thousands of hectares have once again been cleared in one of Europe’s last large primeval forests in Romania in recent months. The country’s authorities are overwhelmed.


For more on this theme:

Rhino Poaching Drops Significantly During Lockdown in South Africa

CITES, the Treaty that Regulates Trade in International Wildlife, Is Not the Answer to Preventing Another Zoonotic Pandemic

Criminologists Have Much to Offer in Examining Wildlife Crimes

Thermal Imaging Cameras Help Fight Rhino Poaching

Banning bushmeat could make it harder to stop future pandemics

Illegal logging ‘mafia’ stripping hornbill habitat in Northeast India

‘This makes Chinese medicine look bad’: TCM supporters condemn illegal wildlife trade

Statistical models and ranger insights help identify patterns in elephant poaching

‘Ban on bushmeat’ after Covid-19 but what if alternative is factory farming?
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/26/ban-on-bushmeat-after-covid-19-but-what-if-
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Displaced Rohingyas at Sea: Scourge of Human Trafficking
Sreeparna Banerjee – Observer Research Foundation: 3 June 2020
Displaced and bouncing between countries, the Rohingyas are at high risk of human trafficking.

Refugees at increased risk of coronavirus due to barriers to healthcare
Dorien Braam and Petra Molnar – The Conversation: 27 May 2020
The lack of health care available and the conditions of camps put vast populations of refugees around the world at higher risk for COVID-19.

For more on this theme:
The Human Cost of Labor Trafficking
https://www.cfr.org/podcasts/human-cost-labor-trafficking
Modern Slavery
https://www.cfr.org/interactives/modern-slavery/#/section1/item-1
Fewer suspected modern slaves uncovered in UK under coronavirus
Human trafficking: Lebanon stops issuing visas to Nigerians
Brazil enlists rappers for national campaign against child labor
Fast moves in India-Australia relations risk pushing millions more into modern slavery
Closed borders give rise to new wave of trafficking in Cambodia
Migrant Women Exploited by Those They Trust
http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/06/migrant-women-exploited-trust/
Europe’s COVID crisis does little to disparage Mediterranean migrants
PROGRAM ON CYBERSECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

What Is the Contract for the Web?
Sydney Butler – TechNadu: 4 June 2020

The Contract for the Web is an initiative to establish social norms online and return the internet to the forum originally imagined by its founders.

https://www.technadu.com/what-is-the-contract-for-the-web/103593/

For more on this theme:

(China) China’s Sovereignty and Internet Governance

(Europe, Global) Europe asks for views on platform governance and competition tools
https://techcrunch.com/2020/06/02/europe-asks-for-views-on-platform-governance-and-competition-tools/

(India) To curb online hate speech, India needs a Code of Conduct — without govt control
https://theprint.in/opinion/to-curb-online-hate-speech-india-needs-a-code-of-conduct-without-govt-control/432240/

INTERNET FREEDOM

India asks internet service providers to block WeTransfer
Reuters: 1 June 2020

No specifics are mentioned in an order from the Indian government directing all internet service providers (ISPs) to block file-sharing website WeTransfer. But the legal clause invoked states the site must be blocked in the “interest of national security or public interest.”


For more on this theme:

(China) Is China Changing Its Thinking on Data Localization?

(New Zealand) New bill comes with online takedown powers

(Japan) Cyberbullying regulation in Japan could have a chilling effect
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

What the COVID-19 pandemic teaches us about cybersecurity – and how to prepare for the inevitable global cyberattack
Nicholas Davis and Algirda Pipikaite – World Economic Forum: 1 June 2020

COVID-19 shows that the world is at great risk of disruption by pandemics, cyber attacks or environmental tipping points. To be ready for a similar global cyber pandemic, the world must apply lessons from the coronavirus pandemic to cyber security.


For more on this theme:
(U.S.) NSA’s cyber wing looks to safeguard COVID research and expand outreach

(Global) The Internet of Bodies is here. This is how it could change our lives

(Global) Cyber Security Is A Global Threat
https://www.cshub.com/threat-defense/post-show-reports/cyber-security-is-a-global-threat

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Israel’s new government promises Bedouins fast internet
Danny Zaken – Al-Monitor: 4 June 2020

Israel Communication Minister Yoaz Hendel is determined to offer Bedouin villages technological solutions for a fast internet connection.


For more on this theme:
(U.K.) 13th Signal Regiment: British Army creates new cyber unit to protect forces

(Africa) Making Swahili visible: Identity, language and the internet
https://globalvoices.org/2020/06/02/swahili-identity-language-and-the-internet/
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

‘Valak’ gives crooks flexibility in multi-stage malware attacks
Sean Lyngaas – Cyberscoop: 28 May 2020

The financial, retail, manufacturing and health care sectors have been targeted by the Valak malware since it emerged late last year, though it is unclear how successful Valak’s operators have been at stealing data.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Huge Cyberattacks Attempt To Silence Black Rights Movement With DDoS Attacks

(Global) Highly-targeted attacks on industrial sector hide payload in images

(U.S., Global) Ransomware gang says it breached one of NASA’s IT contractors
https://www.zdnet.com/article/ransomware-gang-says-it-breached-one-of-nasas-it-contractors/?mid=1#cid=1122263

(China, Global) EasyJet Cyber Attack Likely the Work of Chinese Hackers

CYBER CRIME AND TERRORISM

Are Criminals Playing Games with Us?
Kayla Izenman and Anton Moiseienko – Royal United Services Institute: 29 May 2020

As in-game economies flourish, game developers should take responsibility for keeping the virtual worlds they create free from real crime.
https://www.rusi.org/commentary/are-criminals-playing-games-us

For more on this theme:
(Global) New WhatsApp Warning As This Malicious Hack Strikes Again: Here’s What You Do

(Global) “Evolution of IoT Attacks” Study Exposes the Arms Race Between Cybercriminals and Cybersecurity
NOTEWORTHY PODCASTS

Seniors and millennials more alike than people think.
The Cyberwire: 4 June 2020
Paige Schaffer of Generali Global Assistance discusses the digital habits of seniors and millennials and the latest scams.
https://thecyberwire.com/podcasts/hacking-humans/101/notes

For more on this theme:
(Global) The global pandemic is forcing rapid cloud migration and an increased need for partners to deploy agentless security solutions

(Global) Daily Podcast: Ep 1098
https://thecyberwire.com/podcasts/daily-podcast/1098/notes

(Global) Cyber Security Today

MASS SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Companies Must Defend Digital Rights in the COVID-19 Era
Mark Stephens – Project Syndicate: 4 June 2020
Tech companies have a role to play in ensuring that people receive accurate information, especially during the current “infodemic.” While widespread contact-tracing apps can help countries reopen their economies more safely, use of the apps can become a slippery slope to censorship and surveillance.

For more on this theme:
(France) French contact-tracing app approved by lawmakers, to launch this weekend

(GLOBAL) Ethics and governance for digital disease surveillance
https://science.sciencemag.org/content/368/6494/951.full

(GLOBAL) iMessage And WhatsApp Users Warned About Serious Threat Of New Restrictions
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ISIS is using coronavirus to rebuild its terrorism network in Iraq and Syria
Gayle Tzemach Lemmon – NBC News: 28 May 2020

Over the past two months, the Islamic State has carried out a series of large-scale and coordinated attacks in parts of Syria and Iraq. The spike has renewed fears about the group’s resurgence. The heightened activity is especially worrying because the conditions that have made it appear set to worsen in the coming months.


In Afghanistan, the Islamic State Threatens Long-Term Peace
Emran Feroz – Foreign Policy: 4 June 2020

The string of recent attacks shows that while the Afghan government and the Taliban have called for a truce, the Islamic State terrorists are looking to break the peace.

https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/04/afghanistan-islamic-state-taliban-peace-cease-fire/

For more on this theme:
Prosecuting IS returnees in Germany requires the law’s longest arm

EU calls for returning ISIS fighters to be prosecuted as war criminals
https://www.thenational.ae/world/eu-calls-for-returning-isis-fighters-to-be-prosecuted-as-war-criminals-1.1023407

Over 100 ‘Islamic State’ fighters return to Germany

No, Isis Is Not Using Bitcoin To Hide $300 Million
https://www.forbes.com/sites/colinharper/2020/05/23/no-isis-is-not-using-bitcoin-to-hide-300-million/#60c2e21979ee

ISIS thrives in Covid-19 shadows in Philippines

Finland’s Challenges Facing Potential Repatriation of ISIS Detainees

ISIS Cybersecurity Magazine Warns of ‘Nightmare’ Windows in ‘Fierce War’ Online
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/isis-cybersecurity-magazine-warns-of-nightmare-windows-in-fierce-war-online/

Detained Senior ISIS Leader Qardash a ‘Treasure Trove’ of Intelligence for Iraq: Analyst
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

What Does COVID-19 Mean for Terrorism in Bangladesh?
Shafi Md Mostofa – The Diplomat: 4 June 2020
How does the pandemic intersect with challenges of Islamist radicalization in Bangladesh?

Al-Qaeda’s return
Katherine Zimmerman – American Enterprise Institute: 4 June 2020
United States policymakers shouldn’t dismiss al-Qaida’s growth in far-flung corners of the world even though the terror group has killed relatively few Americans since 9/11.

For more on this theme:
Taliban Control In Afghanistan
https://www.rferl.org/a/taliban-control-in-afghanistan-/30637802.html

Exclusive - Iraqi Hezbollah’s Role Goes Beyond that of their Lebanese Namesake

The Philippines’ Broad Anti-Terrorism Law Takes Aim at Dissent

West Africa: Govt Risks Inflaming Local Conflict With Military Strategy Against Islamists – Report
https://allafrica.com/stories/202006030001.html

Escape from Boko Haram

Mozambique forces in major fighting with insurgents, says president
https://www.reuters.com/article/mozambique-insurgency/mozambique-forces-in-major-fighting-with-insurgents-says-president-idUSL8N2DD0B3

Sri Lanka’s fight against LTTE terrorism: In retrospect

Islamist Militants in Mozambique Intensify Attacks in Cabo Delgado Province

Sahel – a new battlefield between IS and Al-Qaeda?

The Taliban, The Government, And Islamic State: Who Controls What In Afghanistan?

US accuses ex-Venezuela politician of helping recruit Hezbollah, Hamas operatives
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Extremism Is on the Rise in West Africa. Education Is Suffering.
Amy Mackinnon – Foreign Policy: 29 May 2020

A new report from Burkina Faso shows that rising violence is taking a toll for a generation of children.


Extremists could fill gap if world fails Covid-19 test, study finds
Paul Peachey – The Nation: 31 May 2020

Extremists may fill the vacuum if governments around the world fail to come to grips with the coronavirus pandemic, a United Kingdom government-funded study has warned.

https://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/extremists-could-fill-gap-if-world-fails-covid-19-test-study-finds-1.1026890

For more on this theme:

How Islamist Extremists and White Supremacists Try to Exploit Civil Unrest
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/how-islamist-extremists-and-white-supremacists-try-to-exploit-civil-unrest/

The Evolution Of East African Salafi-Jihadism – Analysis

Integrate Prevention of Violent Extremism agenda into COVID-19 economic recovery plan

Early intervention is key to diverting young people from violent extremism

UAE passes draft law re-launching global counter-extremism centre

Who’s Behind the Violence at George Floyd Protests in US?
https://www.voanews.com/usa/whos-behind-violence-george-floyd-protests-us

Repression in Mozambique Is Stoking an Islamist Insurgency, Risking Wider Unrest
WHITE NATIONALIST TERRORISM

Internal EU report: Far-right terrorist attacks rise
Nicolaj NIELSENG – euobserver: 11 May 2020

Right-wing terror threats and their online hate ideology are growing in some European Union states, according to an internal EU document. “Activities from right-wing violent extremists are on the rise,” notes the 4 May document, addressed to national delegations and seen by euobserver.

https://euobserver.com/justice/148311

For more on this theme:

Coronavirus latest: Germany’s Maas warns against ‘radical extremists’ at weekend demos

Right Wing Extremism and COVID-19 in Australia
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

CURRENT STATE OF THE CORONAVIRUS

NIH Director Hopes For At Least 1 Safe And Effective Vaccine By Year’s End
Sarah McCammon – National Public Radio: 4 June 2020

Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health and a member of the White House coronavirus task force, says some of the vaccines could begin trials by July. “That is a phenomenal thing to be able to say, considering these things usually take several years,” and considering how recently the virus was identified, Collins noted.

https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/06/04/868833292/nih-director-hopes-for-at-least-1-safe-and-effective-vaccine-by-years-end

For more on this theme:

Chinese Authorities Say That the Coronavirus Didn't Originate From the Wuhan Market

Backlash in China after front-line doctor dies

Better Governance, Better Outcomes: East Asian Experiences Tackling COVID-19

Army vaccine researchers are preparing for the possibility of new COVID-19 strains

Globalizing the Fight Against the Pandemic

Dr. Anthony Fauci says there’s a chance coronavirus vaccine may not provide immunity for very long

Anti-vax sentiment is on the rise in Asia. Could it hit efforts to fight coronavirus?

Coronavirus may not be mutating, but experts say there is still potential for danger

CURRENT STATE OF THE CORONAVIRUS — CONTINUED

For more on this theme:

Ethiopia’s Unconventional COVID-19 Response

China outraged over Brazil coronavirus comments

Strengthening Routine Immunizations and Responding to Covid-19

Proteins in COVID-19 patients’ blood could predict severity of illness, study finds

CORONAVIRUS, NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

China delayed releasing coronavirus info, frustrating WHO
The Associated Press: 3 June 2020
Though the World Health Organization publicly praised China for its prompt response and information sharing, behind the scenes it was a different story – a story of delays and obfuscation.
https://apnews.com/3c061794970661042b18d5aeaaed9fae

Op-ed: The coronavirus pandemic should change the way we look at national security
Sue Gordon – CNBC News: 28 May 2020
The pandemic has pulled the future forward, forcing a changed perspective of national security, and now we must quickly adapt how we operate to reflect this reality, writes former Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence Sue Gordon.

For more on this theme:

Pandemic is an opportunity for developing nations
https://www.orfonline.org/research/pandemic-is-an-opportunity-for-developing-nations-67138/

Asia’s Ethnic Conflicts in the Wake of Covid-19

‘Biggest threat to election security is the coronavirus,’ security expert warns

World Order after Covid-19
https://www.csis.org/analysis/world-order-after-covid-19
CORONAVIRUS, NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS — CONTINUED

For more on this theme:

Yes, Blame WHO for Its Disastrous Coronavirus Response

As America Socially Distances, The Army ‘Tactically Disperses’
https://www.npr.org/2020/05/29/862978934/as-america-socially-distances-the-army-tactically-disperses

Chinese defence spending in the age of COVID-19


Turkey’s “Coronavirus Diplomacy” and its Impact on Relations With the EU

Why COVID-19 offers a chance to transform UN peacekeeping

How Can Wargaming Improve Government Response to Catastrophic Events?
https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/05/how-can-wargaming-improve-government-response-to-catastrophic.html

With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility – How to Harness Technologies in the Fight Against COVID-19

Global Health Security: COVID-19 and Its Impacts — Supply Chain Dependency: Decoupling from China?

Covid-19 and Fragile Countries: UN Peacekeepers Must Stay the Course

Developing countries can respond to COVID-19 in ways that are swift, at scale, and successful
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/06/04/developing-countries-can-respond-to-covid-19-in-ways-that-are-swift-at-scale-and-successful/

COVID-19: The Impact on China-Africa Debt

Education Is Crucial to Africa’s COVID-19 Response
CORONAVIRUS, NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS — CONTINUED

For more on this theme:

Has COVID-19 Changed How China’s Leaders Approach National Security?
https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/has-covid-19-changed-how-chinas-leaders-approach-national-security

Covid-19 and Grand Strategy
https://www.csis.org/events/online-event-future-strategy-forum-covid-19-and-grand-strategy

Cooperation and Conflict in the Time of Covid-19

Covid-19 and the Military

The pandemic could lead statisticians to change how they estimate GDP
https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2020/05/30/the-pandemic-could-lead-statisticians-to-change-how-they-estimate-gdp

UN Peacekeeping Recognizes that Women are Key to Lasting Peace amid COVID-19
https://www.cfr.org/blog/un-peacekeeping-recognizes-women-are-key-lasting-peace-amid-covid-19

Elections and Protests in Latin America: Covid-19’s Impact

UN/DESA Policy Brief #76: COVID-19 poses grievous economic challenge to landlocked developing countries

Cybersecurity Lessons From the Pandemic, or Pandemic Lessons From Cybersecurity

Transcript: Coronavirus and Corruption: How Kleptocracy Threatens the Global Response

3 reasons why civil society is essential to COVID-19 recovery

UNECA projects COVID-19 could push 29 million Africans into extreme poverty

Australia’s defence budget in the age of Covid-19: Room for a cut?
CORONAVIRUS AND DISINFORMATION

From extremism to coronavirus: How a nonprofit pivoted to confront Arabic-language misinformation
Raf Sanchez and Chima Elbialy – NBC News: 4 June 2020

Even before the coronavirus hit the Arab world, rampant misinformation had begun to spread online. Faisal Al Mutar decided then that such misinformation had the potential to get people killed and redirected his organization, Ideas Beyond Borders, to join the fight against coronavirus falsehoods.


For more on this theme:
The ‘Crisis’ in Coronavirus Crisis Communications: Southeast Asia and the Contest of Narratives

Bending the Curve of Fake Pandemic News

Lawmakers, tech companies struggle to curb coronavirus disinformation

EU code of practice on disinformation ‘insufficient and unsuitable,’ member states say

China’s influence on the EU in the era of masks, spies, and disinformation

Coronavirus disinformation fueling death threats against doctors in northern Colombia

Technology Helps Address Coronavirus Misinformation Deluge
https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2020/06/02/technology-helps-address-coronavirus-misinformation-deluge/#556c55f03a4e

Troll farms from North Macedonia and the Philippines pushed coronavirus disinformation on Facebook

Social media firms fail to act on Covid-19 fake news