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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

The IMF on corruption and COVID-19
Transparency International: 16 June 2020
In an interview, Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, looks at how the organization can tackle corruption.

World Economic Forum Suggests Fighting Corruption With Blockchain Tech
Ashley Lannquist – Cointelegraph: 17 June 2020
A new World Economic Forum study reveals how blockchain technology can be used to prevent corruption in public procurement.

Full report:
Exploring Blockchain Technology for Government Transparency: Blockchain-Based Public Procurement to Reduce Corruption
https://www.weforum.org/reports/exploring-blockchain-technology-for-government-transparency-to-reduce-corruption

For more on this theme:
Senior official estimates $30 billion in stimulus funds will be stolen through coronavirus scams

WEBCAST: Anti-Corruption in Mexico: A View from the CCC Index

No recovery from Covid-19 if corruption is not addressed

Pressure grows for anti-corruption monitor
https://au.news.yahoo.com/pressure-grows-anti-corruption-monitor-020807724--spt.html

Human rights lawyer on migration: “Corruption is always everywhere”

1MDB-linked corruption trial closes, with defence saying Najib was victim of a scam
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/1mdb-linked-corruption-trial-closes-with-defence-saying-najib-was-victim-of-a-scam

A country-by-country analysis of anti-corruption efforts in Latin America
DRUG TRAFFICKING

UN: Less land in Colombia devoted to growing coca in 2019
Christine Armario – The Associated Press: 17 June 2020

Colombia’s potential cocaine production reached a new high in 2019 despite a drop in registered hectares of coca, the base ingredient of the illicit drug, according to the United Nations.
https://apnews.com/560b505ecf0f577071947cfc5bf8b069

As Mexico focuses on coronavirus, drug gang violence rises
Drazen Jorgic and Uriel Sanchez – Reuters: 18 June 2020

Despite a decrease in crime overall, Mexico’s murder rate has risen to record levels as drug gangs take advantage of overtasked and undermanned police and security forces facing COVID-19.

For more on this theme:

Mexican cartels stockpile drugs and money amid COVID-19 pandemic

Why the Jalisco Cartel Does Not Dominate Mexico's Criminal Landscape

Mozambique: UN Official Blames Terrorism On Drug Trafficking
https://allafrica.com/stories/202006080902.html

Dominican Republic is Drug Cartels’ Supreme Transit Route in the Caribbean
https://www.newsmax.com/ramoncollado/kingpin-pld-maduro/2020/06/10/id/971537/

How Mexico’s drug cartels helped Colombia’s narcos frustrate peace process

Taliban runs opiate production and trafficking in Afghanistan UN says

How Sydney Became Australia’s Cocaine Capital

Online Drug Markets Are Entering a ‘Golden Age’

Coronavirus: Experts warn of ‘post-lockdown drugs binge’

Why The Navy’s Latest Narco Submarine Seizure Is A Big Deal
https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/06/12/why-the-navys-latest-narco-submarine-seizure-is-important/#1507532149a0
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Stop the wildlife trade: Illegal ivory trafficking shifts to Cambodia after crackdown in China
Louise Boyle – Independent: 13 June 2020

The ivory trade has taken a hit in recent years, with sweeping domestic trade bans from major consumer countries such as China. But tightened regulations and enforcement have not stamped out the trade in Asia. Instead it has forced criminal networks to adapt and shift to countries less able to enforce the tough rules, according to a new investigation into Cambodia’s illegal ivory trade.

https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/stop-the-wildlife-trade-ivory-trade-china-cambodia-animal-trafficking-a9562941.html

Conditional cash transfers to alleviate poverty also reduced deforestation in Indonesia
Paul J. Ferraro and Rhita Simorangkir – Science Advances: 12 June 2020

Subsidies to the poor in Indonesia have helped reduce illegal tree felling by 30%, according to an analysis of satellite images.

https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/24/eaaz1298

For more on this theme:

Inside the takedown of Europe’s multi-billion pound eel mafia
https://www.wired.co.uk/article/illegal-eel-trade-smuggling

Can Vietnam Stop Its Trade in Endangered Wild Animals?
https://www.rfa.org/english/commentaries/vietnam-wildlife-06092020160820.html

Jane Goodall says humanity is doomed if we don't change after this pandemic

We can all be part of the solution to illegal fishing — and help save marine life and people’s livelihoods

Response to COVID-19 Reinforces Lessons for the Fight Against Illegal Fishing

Forests in Guatemala find new guardians: refugees

Survey Backs Calls to End Illegal Wildlife Markets

China Vowed to Keep Wildlife Off the Menu, a Tough Promise to Keep
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Traffickers demand ransoms for Rohingyas held at sea in SE Asia
*Naimul Karim – Reuters: 15 June 2020*

Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh camps have told Reuters that their relatives are being held hostage at sea by human traffickers who call to demand ransom.


Coronavirus lockdowns 'conducive' to human trafficking
*Al Jazeera: 16 June 2020*

“The economic upheaval, the fact that people are essentially trapped with their abusers, the desperate straits so many find themselves in are conditions where trafficking thrives,” said Nancy McGuire Choi, interim chief executive of Polaris, a leading anti-trafficking group.


For more on this theme:

**How EMS can identify, help victims of human trafficking**

**Human trafficking, over-incarceration in Australia an ongoing concern**

**As South Korea Cracks Down on Sexual Exploitation Online, More Must Be Done to Fight Human Trafficking**

**U.S. emergency trafficking hotline says calls spiked under lockdown**

**Online child sex abuse in Thailand nears record high with coronavirus**

**In Pictures: Ethiopian migrants smuggled through Horn of Africa**

**A triangle of vulnerability: Changing patterns of illicit trafficking off Africa's Swahili coast**

**UN Alarmed by Reports Greece Forces Out Asylum Seekers**
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Can the UN Roadmap on Digital Cooperation Improve our Digital Future?
Marjorie Buchser and Ruma Mandal – Chatham House: 12 June 2020

New proposals for digital cooperation are timely as responses to the pandemic have fast-forwarded digitalization across all sectors.


For more on this theme:

(Global) The Emergence of Cyber Diplomacy in an Increasingly Post-Liberal Cyberspace
https://www.cfr.org/blog/emergence-cyber-diplomacy-increasingly-post-liberal-cyberspace

(Global) Facing the Cyber Pandemic

(Global) UN chief calls on global community to expand digital cooperation

INTERNET FREEDOM

China Has Way Too Much Power Over Zoom. These Activists Learned the Hard Way.
Chris White – The National Interest: 13 June 2020

Zoom faces growing scrutiny regarding its ties to China, which prohibits discussion of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest and the government’s violent response to the demonstrations.

https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/china-has-way-too-much-power-over-zoom-these-activists-learned-hard-way-162708

For more on this theme:

(New Zealand) The Detail: Concern over New Zealand’s new internet censorship laws
https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/the-detail/300031018/the-detail-concern-over-new-zealands-new-internet-censorship-laws

(Philippines) Maria Ressa: Philippine journalist found guilty of cyber libel

(Global) Online content moderation lessons from outside the US
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2020/06/17/online-content-moderation-lessons-from-outside-the-u-s/
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Exclusive: Massive spying on users of Google’s Chrome shows new security weakness
Joseph Menn – Reuters: 18 June 2020

A newly discovered spyware attack affected users through 32 million downloads of extensions to Google’s Chrome web browser, according to Awake Security.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Pentagon Wants to Scale Up Its Device Security Program
https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2020/06/pentagon-wants-scale-its-device-security-program/166225/

(China) China Reports Progress in Ultra-Secure Satellite Transmission

(U.S.) Persistent Vulnerabilities: Strengthening Cybersecurity Requirements for the Department of Defense
https://www.cfr.org/blog/persistent-vulnerabilities-strengthening-cybersecurity-requirements-department-defense

CYBER STATECRAFT

North Korea’s state hackers caught engaging in BEC scams
Catalin Cimpanu – ZDNet: 17 June 2020

Security researchers from Slovak antivirus maker ESET said they caught North Korean state-sponsored hackers attempting to steal money from targets they initially breached for cyber-espionage purposes.


For more on this theme:

(U.S., Iran, China) Chinese and Iranian hackers targeted Biden and Trump campaigns, Google says

(Canada) Building Trust: Lessons from Canada’s Approach to Digital Identity

(U.S., China) Chinese tech giants caught up in rising US-China tensions

(U.S., China) Justice Department opposes Google, Facebook cable link to Hong Kong
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

‘Ripple’ effect: Flaws found in protocols impact everything from printers to infusion pumps
Sean Lyngaas – Cyberscoop: 16 June 2020

Treck Inc. builds the networking protocols for everything from printers to medical devices. And that core software was recently discovered to contain no less than 19 vulnerabilities, at least two of which could let hackers remotely commandeer devices running the code. Which means that tens of millions of devices could be affected by the bugs.

For more on this theme:

(Global) Plundering of crypto keys from ultrasecure SGX sends Intel scrambling again

(Global) Hackers use fake contact tracing apps in attempt to install banking malware on Android phones
https://www.cyberscoop.com/contact-tracing-hacking-security-anomali/

(U.S., Global) Chipmaker MaxLinear reports data breach after Maze Ransomware attack

CYBER CRIME AND TERRORISM

Honda Hackers May Have Used Tools Favored by Countries

A recent cyber attack that disrupted Honda’s operations may have been the first time that criminals used sophisticated software previously known to be used only by state agents.

For more on this theme:

(U.S., Global) Financial firms facing serious hacking threat in COVID-19 era

(U.S., Global) Cybercriminals and Fraudsters: How Bad Actors Are Exploiting the Financial System During the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Global) The pandemic has unleashed a cyber crime wave
MASS SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

**Norway suspends contact-tracing app over privacy concerns**
*Vincent Manancourt – Politico: 15 June 2020*

Norway has decided to suspend its coronavirus contact-tracing app after finding download rates were extremely low. The data will be deleted because the app presented a disproportionate risk to privacy.

https://www.politico.eu/article/norway-suspends-contact-tracing-app-over-privacy-concerns/

*For more on this theme:*

**(India) Exclusive: Obscure Indian cyber firm spied on politicians, investors worldwide**

**(Global) The ‘new normal’ as cyber-spies navigate pandemic**

**(France, Global) French watchdog warns against COVID-19 smart surveillance**

**(Europe) How spies used LinkedIn to hack European defense companies**
https://www.cyberscoop.com/defense-companies-hacked-linkedin-eset-lazarus-group/

**(India) Research shows human rights activists in India were targeted with spyware**
https://www.cyberscoop.com/india-spyware-nso-group-amnesty-international-citizen-lab/

**(China) Genomic surveillance: inside China’s DNA dragnet**
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

**ISIS: Resilient on Sixth Anniversary**  
*Wilson Center: 18 June 2020*

The post-caliphate insurgency was foreshadowed in “The Jihadi Threat,” a report published by the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in 2016-17. The authors assess the ISIS threat to the Middle East and the wider world in 2020.

[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isis-resilient-sixth-anniversary](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isis-resilient-sixth-anniversary)

**Iraq keeps heat on Islamic State by targeting leaders**  
*Mustafa Saadoun – Al-Monitor: 17 June 2020*

Iraqi intelligence and military operations against ISIS have dealt a heavy blow to the terror group, which has lost a number of its leaders and fighters in recent months inside and outside of Iraq.


*For more on this theme:*

**Philippine Army says at least 4 local terror groups affiliated with ISIS**  

**ISIS split-off a threat in Netherlands: report**  
[https://nltimes.nl/2020/06/08/isis-split-threat-netherlands-report](https://nltimes.nl/2020/06/08/isis-split-threat-netherlands-report)

**ISIS admit to looting oil and ‘obscene amount antiquities’ to swell its war chest**  
[https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/isis-admit-looting-oil-obscene-22146003](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/isis-admit-looting-oil-obscene-22146003)

**Islamic State Deadlier Than COVID-19 in Parts of Iraq**  

**Lawyers fight for Islamic State bride Shamima Begum’s UK citizenship to be restored**  

**Is Islamic State making a comeback in Sinai?**  

**ISIS in Africa: The End of the ‘Sahel Exception’**  

**Southeast Asia’s Overlooked Foreign Fighter Problem**  
Keeping Terrorism at Bay in Mauritania
Anouar Boukhars – Africa Center for Strategic Studies: 16 June 2020

Mauritania was once overrun by terrorists but is now one of the more resilient countries in the region. The lessons it learned can be applied to other countries in the Sahel suffering under extremism.


Is Nigeria Losing the War Against Terrorists in Borno State?
Michael Horton – The Jamestown Foundation: 17 June 2020

Borno state in northeastern Nigeria has been home to numerous terrorist groups and continues to be one of the major sticking points between government forces and extremists.

https://jamestown.org/program/is-nigeria-losing-the-war-against-terrorists-in-borno-state/

For more on this theme:
Axis of Resistance mourns the death of Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Ramadan Shalah

Jihadists target military outpost in Ivory Coast

Breaking terrorism supply chains in West Africa
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/breaking-terrorism-supply-chains-in-west-africa

The Coronavirus Has Become Terrorists’ Combat Weapon of Choice

The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States
https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states

Al-Qaida and ISIS Turn On Each Other in the Sahel, With Civilians in the Crossfire

Negotiating With Jihadists in the Sahel and Nigeria
https://www.lawfareblog.com/negotiating-jihadists-sahel-and-nigeria

The Ban on Hezbollah Activities in Germany
https://jamestown.org/program/the-ban-on-hezbollah-activities-in-germany/

The Taliban and al-Qaeda: Enduring Partnership or Liability?
https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/the-taliban-and-al-qaeda-enduring-partnership-or-liability/

AQIM confirms leader’s death
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

The Pandemic's Double-Edged Sword
Tamara Laine and Dean Piedmont – Inkstick Media: 17 June 2020

Violent extremists are using the coronavirus pandemic to increase youth recruitment.
https://inkstickmedia.com/the-pandemics-double-edged-sword/

For more on this theme:

The appeal of ISIS fades among Europeans who returned home from Syria

Trends of radicalisation in Indonesia
https://www.thedispatch.in/trends-of-radicalisation-in-indonesia/

Europe needs to take a stand against radicalisation in the Balkan
https://www.brusselstimes.com/opinion/116648/europe-needs-to-take-a-stand-against-radicalisation-in-the-balkan/

Flanders stops cooperation with imams on radicalised prisoners

Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism: Council adopts conclusions on EU external action

WHITE NATIONALIST TERRORISM

Canada Among Very Worst White Supremacist Countries: Report
Steven Zhou – Vice: 19 June 2020

“We were really struck by the high level of engagement by Canadians,” says an author of a new report on right-wing extremism online.

For more on this theme:

Coalition urged to tackle far-right extremism after Asio revelations

The Meme-Fueled Rise of a Dangerous, Far-Right Militia
https://www.wired.com/story/boogaloo-movement-protests/

A German Neo-Nazi Plotted the Assassination of Pro-Refugee Mayor for Years, Prosecutors Say
IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION

Twitter removes more than 23,000 accounts it says are linked to China’s Communist Party


Twitter announced it had shut down myriad accounts attributed to China that spread fake news. It consisted of two interlinked parts: a highly engaged core network of 23,750 accounts and another 150,000 “amplifier” accounts to boost the reach of the disinformation being published. The Chinese influence operation spread misinformation favorable to the Beijing regime about Hong Kong and COVID-19.


Full report:
Retweeting through the Great Firewall

For more on this theme:
How to respond to disinformation
https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/how-to-respond-to-disinformation/
The party speaks for you

ASPI Webinar: Unraveling the Chinese Communist Party’s overseas influence: United front work from Australia to Europe

Australia Aims to Combat Disinformation
https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/australia-aims-to-combat-disinformation/

Russian disinformation operation relied on forgeries, fake posts on 300 platforms, new report says

The Lawfare Podcast: Laura Rosenberger on Chinese Information Operations

How Threat Actors are Manipulating the British Information Environment
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

CURRENT STATE OF THE CORONAVIRUS

Steroid drug hailed as ‘breakthrough' for seriously ill COVID-19 patients
Kate Kelland and Alistair Smout – Reuters: 16 June 2020

A cheap and widely used steroid called dexamethasone has become the first drug shown to be able to save the lives of COVID-19 patients in what scientists said is a “major breakthrough” in the coronavirus pandemic.


For more on this theme:

Coronavirus in Africa: Outbreak ‘accelerating’ across continent

Children are only half as likely to get infected with the coronavirus, study finds
https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/children-are-only-half-as-likely-to-get-infected-by-the-coronavirus-research-shows/2020/06/16/be86aff4-afb6-11ea-856d-5054296735e5_story.html

Exclusive: EU in advanced talks with Johnson & Johnson on COVID-19 vaccine deal – sources

A New Coronavirus Vaccine Made by the Army Heads to Human Trials

Beijing lockdown tightens as new coronavirus outbreak spreads

Agencies begin slow return to the office as COVID restrictions ease

Mutation may be helping the coronavirus spread more readily
CORONAVIRUS, NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Revamping Crisis Resilience and Security in the Post-Pandemic World
Elisabeth Braw – Royal United Services Institute: 18 June 2020

This report emerges from the “Revamping Crisis Resilience and Security in the Post-Pandemic World” conference held 19 May 2020.


For more on this theme:

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed Taiwan’s resilience
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/15/the-covid-19-crisis-has-revealed-taiwans-resilience/

Military IT leaders prep for an ‘even worse’ second wave of coronavirus

Australia’s Unsung COVID-19 Heroes: The Diplomats

Yemen and COVID-19: The pandemic exacts its devastating toll

Postviral Complications: What Next for the Russian Regime?
https://carnegie.ru/commentary/82066

What COVID-19 could mean for international cooperation, according to a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate


Pentagon warns China is exploiting the coronavirus pandemic to wage ‘economic warfare’ on the US

Panel: COVID-19 Pandemic Could Prompt Changes to National Security Spending

U.S. Borders with Mexico, Canada to Remain Closed Over Coronavirus Concerns

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CORONAVIRUS AND DISINFORMATION

Australia accuses China and Russia of virus disinformation

In a major foreign policy speech outlining the importance of multilateral institutions, Foreign Minister Marise Payne highlighted allegations made by the European Commission this month that Beijing and Russia were running "targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns" about the coronavirus for political ends.

https://apnews.com/e869b34c1e04fde924ef0f0602b3d11

For more on this theme:

Iran's Coronavirus Communications Create a Window of Opportunity for America

Fighting Europe's Covid-19 Infodemic: The Role of Social Media Platforms

The Paradox of Russia's Disinformation Activities in Italy
https://jamestown.org/program/the-paradox-of-russias-disinformation-activities-in-italy/


Coronavirus misinformation, and how scientists can help to fight it
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01834-3

Facebook, Google, Twitter Pledge Vigilance on Disinformation

Coronavirus: How a false rumour led to hate online

An Army of Volunteers Is Taking On Vaccine Disinformation Online
https://www.wired.com/story/can-a-keyboard-crusade-stem-the-vaccine-infodemic/