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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

The 2023 Capacity to Combat Corruption Index
AS/COA: 27 June 2023
The index explores 15 Latin American countries’ ability to detect, punish and prevent corruption.
https://www.as-coa.org/articles/2023-capacity-to-combat-corruption-index

For more on this theme:
Corruption trial begins for former Indonesia IT minister over mobile phone tower project

Corruption inquiry in Australia uncovers China links to state lawmaker

Arrest warrants issued against high-ranking officials in Iraq: Anti-corruption body
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/23062023

Zambian Police Arrest Former President’s Son and His Wife on Corruption Charges

Corruption risk assessment highlights challenges, enables reform, in justice system
https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/546007

Honduras anti-corruption activist says she left country after threats

Practical mechanisms for rooting out corruption

Five approaches for young people to speak up against corruption

A new super-regulator takes aim at rampant corruption in Chinese finance

Ukraine’s Anti-Corruption Front
https://www.gmfus.org/news/ukraines-anti-corruption-front

As well as fighting Russia, Ukrainians are battling corruption at home

Palm oil giants face corruption charges as Indonesia probe widens
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Myanmar junta says failing to halt surge in drug trafficking
AFP: 26 June 2023

Authorities said they torched almost a half-billion dollars’ worth of illegal drugs but warned they were failing to stop a surge in the production and trafficking of narcotics.

In the Sahel, drug trafficking thrives thanks to armed groups
Rédaction Africanews with AFP: 27 June 2023

Nonstate armed groups are very active in the African region, according to a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report.

Full report:
UNODC World Drug Report 2023
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/unodc-world-drug-report-2023-enarruzh

For more on this theme:
UNE’s One-Pronged Strategy
https://insightcrime.org/investigations/guatemala-elections-2023-unes-one-pronged-strategy/

After Peralta, Dominican Republic’s Cocaine Crackdown Targets Smaller Cities

Cartels using social media to recruit teens for drug smuggling and human trafficking
https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/cartels-are-recruiting-teens-for-human-and-drug-smuggling-75-39b0cab6-a1a4-44cd-9e6a-d9df7890b7

Saudi Arabia’s War on Drugs and Foreign Influence
https://politicstoday.org/saudi-arabias-war-on-drugs-and-foreign-influence/

Interview: Tackling transnational trafficking in Southeast Asia from the grass roots up

Fiji: Illicit Drugs, Major Challenge for National Security

Tackling the fentanyl and opioid crisis
https://share.america.gov/tackling-fentanyl-opioid-crisis/

EU drug report 2023: ‘We never had so many drugs smuggled or produced in Europe’
https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/06/16/eu-drug-report-2023-we-never-had-so-many-drugs-smuggled-or-produced-in-europe

Multi-billion dollar drug trade flooding Australia: explosive new details emerge
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

AI in the Wild: Applications to Combat the Illegal Wildlife Trade
Earth.org: 26 June 2023
As artificial intelligence intersects more regularly with daily life, many in the conservation field hope it may provide entry points to embed the technology within their efforts.
https://earth.org/combat-illegal-wildlife-trade/

Wildlife trafficking risks future pandemics and needs addressing, says new research
University of Sussex – Phys.org: 26 June 2023
The trafficking also risks triggering a loss of biodiversity and need to be tackled, finds new research into how global supply chains are being hijacked by criminals.

For more on this theme:
Increasingly Brazen Gaitanistas Attack Colombia’s Biggest Gold Mine

A Southeast Asian marine biodiversity hotspot is also a wildlife trafficking hotbed

CITES: A historic treaty protecting endangered species turns 50. Is it still an effective tool?

Dark Web Sells Thousands of Wild Animals For Their Psychedelic Properties
https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animals/dark-web-sells-wild-animals-psychedelic-properties/

Brazil’s Lula unveils plan to stop deforestation in Amazon by 2030

Brazilian Amazon at risk of being taken over by mafia, ex-police chief warns
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jun/01/brazil-amazon-crime-dom-phillips-bruno-pereira

Extreme reforestation: Baobab planters confront fires, loggers, cattle and more

Death in the Amazon: Dangers of Environmental Reporting

Decoding the covert ties between wildlife trafficking and financial crime

Engaging young Africans is key to defending wildlife
https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/engaging-young-africans-is-key-to-defending-wildlife/22bl32t
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Internet Multistakeholder Model: A Trade Association With Multistakeholder Theater
Farzaneh Badii – CircleID: 28 June 2023

Did you know that we are swimming in Domain Name System abuse? Apparently, doomsday is near if we do not do something about it.


For more on this theme:
(Southeast Asia) Southeast Asia to set ‘guardrails’ on AI with new governance code

(Global) What is Technology Governance?
https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/technology-governance-1687779582-1

INTERNET FREEDOM

Manipur’s State-Wide Internet Shutdown
The Wire: 22 June 2023

The Internet Freedom Foundation has issued a statement expressing its concern over the continuing shutdown. India has the dubious distinction of being the “internet shutdown capital of the world.”


For more on this theme:
(Hong Kong) Hong Kong: Internet intermediaries must resist censorship of protest anthem

(Global) The 10 worst countries for web freedom (and the 10 best)
https://www.independent.co.uk/advisor/vpn/worst-countries-for-web-freedom

(Russia) Kremlin shutting down Russia’s VPN window to the world

(Pakistan) Pakistan’s Long History of Throttling Press Freedom

(China) China’s banned online communities have found a new home on Reddit
https://restofworld.org/2023/reddit-china-online-communities/
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Cyber-insecurity: Preparing for public sector to better mitigate cyber-risk
Allyson Brunette – Reuters: 22 June 2023
Cybersecurity has become a growing challenge for all levels of government, especially as digitalization and remote working increase among government agencies.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Cyber Shield Hones Skills, Builds Partnerships
https://www.army.mil/article/267703/cyber_shield_hones_skills_builds_partnerships
(U.K., Ukraine) UK to harden Ukraine’s cyber defenses against Russian attacks on critical infrastructure
(Namibia) Namibia leads southern Africa in Internet access assessment

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Assessing Pakistan’s Cyber Security Landscape
Gulraiz Iqbal – Modern Diplomacy: 21 June 2023
Through the implementation of the policies, legislative reforms and awareness initiatives, Pakistan is forming a cyber ecosystem that is secure, works effectively and bolsters the resilience of infrastructure.
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/06/21/assessing-pakistans-cyber-security-landscape/

For more on this theme:
(Germany) German National Security Strategy leaves out cyber counter-attacks
(U.S., China) How DISA plans to use its workforce to combat China and global adversaries
(Malaysia) PM Anwar: Cyber Security Bill to be drafted immediately
CYBERCRIME

The Great Exodus to Telegram: A Tour of the New Cybercrime Underground
Bleeping Computer: 21 June 2023

Threat actors, ransomware gangs, malware developers and others are increasingly moving off the dark web and onto illicit Telegram channels specializing in cybercrime.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Combatting the Threat of Cyber-Enabled IP Theft

(U.S.) Cybercrime: Reporting Mechanisms Vary, and Agencies Face Challenges in Developing Metrics

(New Zealand) More vigilance urged as cyber crime losses soar by two-thirds in value

(Global) Cybercrime Doesn't Take a Vacation
https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities-threats/cybercrime-doesnt-take-a-vacation

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Emerging Technologies Broaden Attack Surface as Cyber Criminals Target Critical Marine Transportation System
Bridget Johnson – Homeland Security Today: 15 June 2023

The U.S. Coast Guard’s 2022 Cyber Trends and Insights in the Marine Environment report said there was a 20% increase in cyber-event reporting in 2022 compared with the previous year.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) How Zero Trust Can Protect Critical Infrastructure & Secure Edge Devices

(Philippines) PH needs more cybersecurity professionals as criminals start to target ‘critical infra’
https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/508819/ph-needs-more-cybersecurity-professionals-as-criminals-start-to-target-critical-infra

(Australia) Policy, Guns and Money: Cybersecurity and critical infrastructure
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

UN: Islamic State-Led Violence Kills 1,000 Civilians in Taliban-Run Afghanistan
Ayaz Gul – Voice of America: 27 June 2023
The United Nations said that bombings and other militant violence in Afghanistan had killed more than 1,000 civilians since the Taliban regained control nearly two years ago.
https://www.voanews.com/a/un-report-more-than-1-000-afghans-killed-in-deliberate-attacks-since-2021-/7154474.html

Islamic State Khorasan and Central Asia
Jason Wahlang – Manohar Parikkar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses: 28 June 2023
The Islamic State’s Afghanistan affiliate has Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in its crosshairs. The Taliban’s heavy-handed approach toward its ethnic minorities has played a crucial role in aiding the recruitment of Central Asians into the group’s ranks.

For more on this theme:
Where does ISIS have a presence now? Group's reign of terror wanes in Middle East

Taliban Vs. ISKP: Warring Actors In An Unstable Afghanistan – Analysis

US Sees Islamic State Affiliates Pooling Resources, Growing Capabilities

Interview: Why the Islamic State group is ‘returning to its roots’ in the Syrian desert

Snapshot: The ISIS survivors rebuilding their lives
https://metro.co.uk/2023/06/17/snapshot-the-isis-survivors-rebuilding-their-lives-18941763/

Kurdish Official Lists ISIS and Climate Change as Top Threats

Popular demands to participate in trial of ISIS mercenaries
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Climate-vulnerable communities are falling prey to armed groups
Jack Durrell and Siobhan O’Neil – The Nation: 27 June 2023

Newly collected data from Iraq suggests that the Islamic State group — and other armed groups — may have historically benefited from the climate crisis, and a resurgent group, or others, may try to do so again.
https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2023/06/27/climate-change-conflict-war/

For more on this theme:

Hamas military commander shot dead in Gaza

Israel seizes cryptocurrency said to be used to finance Hezbollah and Iran’s Revolutionary Guard
https://apnews.com/article/israel-iran-hezbollah-cryptocurrency-ff5bdf5ddce532c30c2e-3c939901c199

Taliban Flouts Terrorism Commitments by Appointing al-Qaida-Affiliated Governors

Wagner group mercenaries in Africa: why there hasn’t been any effective opposition to drive them out

Brief: Cameroonian President Holds Emergency Meeting to Address ISWAP Attacks
https://jamestown.org/program/brief-cameroon-prepares-to-respond-to-recent-iswap-attacks/

Global Terrorist Threat Evolves as the West Focuses on Great Power Competition
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-june-16/

We Must Intensify Our Work to Create Future without Terrorism, Secretary-General Tells High-Level Conference

Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda aiding Pakistani Taliban’s insurgency

EU terror report
https://professionalsecurity.co.uk/news/case-studies/eu-terror-report/

What Boko Haram founders told me about insurgency – Obasanjo

Afghanistan: Taliban ‘may be responsible for gender apartheid’ says rights expert
CRIME AND CONFLICT

A Criminal Cancer Spreads in Southeast Asia
Priscilla A. Clapp and Jason Tower – United States Institute of Peace: 26 June 2023

In post-coup Myanmar, crime syndicates are working with the military and moving into more complex fraud schemes.

https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/06/criminal-cancer-spreads-southeast-asia

For more on this theme:

What To Do About The Taliban’s Continued War Crimes
https://inkstickmedia.com/what-to-do-about-the-talibans-continued-war-crimes/

UN adds Russia to list of shame for killing children in Ukraine

UN report finds Russia tortured, executed civilians in Ukraine; Kyiv also abused detainees

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

What Does the Wagner Mutiny Mean for Putin and His War on Ukraine?
Heather Ashby and Mary Glantz – United States Institute of Peace: 27 June 2023

The war in Ukraine revealed the rot within the Russian state; Yevgeny Prigozhin’s desperate moves show that Putin’s rule is more brittle than ever.


For more on this theme:

Expect Changes in Russia as Response to Wagner Rebellion

Wagner revolt in Russia dims outlook for its operations in Africa

Experts react: What Russia’s Wagner Group rebellion means for Putin, Ukraine, China, and more


Did Prigozhin Just Save Taiwan?
https://www.cfr.org/blog/did-prigozhin-just-save-taiwan
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Wagner Group: The Evolution Of A Private Army**
https://thesoufancenter.org/research/wagner-group-the-evolution-of-a-private-army/

**The Prigozhin Uprising, the Aftermath, and What Comes Next**

**Russia's Security Forces Learn Bitter Lessons From Putin's Maneuvering**
https://cepa.org/article/russias-security-forces-learn-bitter-lessons-from-putins-maneuvering/

**Putin and Prigozhin avert bloodshed, but their feud is not over**

**Moscow Scrambling to Solve Manpower Shortages — Without Another Mobilization**
https://jamestown.org/program/moscow-scrambling-to-solve-manpower-shortages-without-another-mobilization/

**Mutiny Undercuts Russian Intrigues in the Global South**

**The beginning of the end for Putin?**

**Prigozhin’s putsch: Putin won’t forget, or forgive**

**Putin insists Russia is united after the Wagner Group uprising, vows to uphold deal**
https://www.npr.org/2023/06/26/1184390064/putin-speech-prigozhin-wagner-group-deal

**Ukraine Battles Fierce Despite Chaos in Russia**

**Analysis: Why Prigozhin’s bid for power in Russia failed**

**GMF Expert Analysis: Mutiny in Russia**

**What Prigozhin’s Half-Baked “Coup” Could Mean for Putin’s Rule**

**Prigozhin’s Mutiny: A Reminder About Analytic Humility**

**What the Russian Crisis Means for Europe**
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/90052
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Who Was Prigozhin Counting On to Back His Failed Mutiny?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90051

Prigozhin’s Mutiny Took Russian Propaganda by Surprise
https://jamestown.org/program/prigozhins-mutiny-took-russian-propaganda-by-surprise/

A very Russian revolution

Public records map Wagner Group’s Hong Kong connections

Is the Wagner Group really getting into the ransomware business?
https://techmonitor.ai/technology/cybersecurity/wagner-group-ransomware

Will a short-lived mutiny be the end of Russia’s Wagner Group?

How Should NATO Think About Ukrainian Membership After Russia's Coup Attempt?

Ukrainians have good reason to cheer Russia's Wagner rebellion
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukrainians-have-good-reason-to-cheer-russias-wagner-rebellion/

Putin's portrayal of response to uprising as a Kremlin win is proving a hard sell

No Return for Yevgeny Prigozhin — or Russia
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90069

Not your typical army: how the Wagner Group operates
https://www.npr.org/2023/06/28/1184935970/not-your-typical-army-how-the-wagner-group-operates

US asks what's next for Wagner Group in Middle East, Africa, after mutiny attempt

Wagner Group's future in Africa is uncertain after Moscow uprising

Wagner drama drags Belarus deeper into Russia's wartime turbulence

As Wagner troops marched on Moscow, Ukraine made further gains
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:
Is Russia About to Crumble (Again ...)?
https://cepa.org/article/is-russia-about-to-crumble-again/

IntelBrief: More Than Mutiny: Russia’s Assassination Plots and Political Prisoners
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-june-29/

For China, Putin’s Russia Has Become A Lesson In How Not To Exercise Power

Baker Institute report: Russia-Ukraine provides policy lessons on oil, natural gas as geopolitical weapons

Ukraine’s Zelenskyy says forces advancing ‘in all directions’

How Ukraine can pin down Russia in Crimea without a land campaign

Kakhovka Dam Destruction: Russia’s Ecocide and Economic War Against Ukraine (Part Two)

Putin’s Nuclear Provocations Proliferate
https://jamestown.org/program/putins-nuclear-provocations-proliferate/

What Does Lukashenka’s Role as Mediator in Russian Crisis Imply?

For Europe, Time to Plan for a Post-Putin Russia

Russia’s dangerous nuclear consensus

Five steps toward Ukrainian victory and a lasting peace with Russia

Russia’s war of aggression threatens Ukrainian water security: UK statement to the OSCE
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Where Did All That Russian Gas Go?**

**Already Ready — Russians and the Next War**
https://cepa.org/article/already-ready-russians-and-the-next-war/

**China’s Ukraine Peacemaking Aims To Court Europe – Analysis**

**Ukraine’s Second Frontline: The Battle for EU Membership**
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-second-frontline-the-battle-for-eu-membership/

**Ukraine Conflict: Veteran U.S. Commander Says ‘Wars Aren’t Won On The Defense, Wars Are Won On The Offense’**
https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-war-dubik-interview-defense-offense-tavberidze/32476276.html

**Ukraine pleads for more U.S. support as Russia exploits advantage in the skies**

**The Cyber Domain in the Russo-Ukrainian War**
https://besacenter.org/the-cyber-domain-in-the-russo-ukrainian-war/

**How Advanced Is Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation?**
https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/29000/

**Africa must use Ukraine-Russia crisis to reconsider how it feeds itself**

**Analysis — Where are Russia’s top generals? Rumours swirl after mercenary mutiny**

**Russian general who may have known about Wagner mutiny goes missing**