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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

AQ Podcast: What Happened To Anti-Corruption Efforts In Latin America
Americas Quarterly Online: 6 July 2023
Prosecutors, activists and journalists across the region continue their work of holding politicians and business leaders to account, but they face a more difficult environment.
https://www.as-coa.org/articles/aq-podcast-what-happened-anti-corruption-efforts-latin-america

These lawyers want to change how Mexico thinks about corruption
Cody Copeland – Courthouse News Service: 6 July 2023
They’re pushing for society to be recognized as the victim of governmental misconduct, both in the courts and on the street.
https://www.courthousenews.com/these-lawyers-want-to-change-how-mexico-thinks-about-corruption/

For more on this theme:
Singapore launches corruption probe involving transport minister

UN experts arrive in Honduras to explore anti-corruption mission installation

Vietnam officials go on trial over alleged COVID flight bribes

Mexican military to take over airports as president takes aim at corruption, mismanagement

EC calls on Croatia to improve prosecution of corruption offences

Costa Rica charges former president Solis with corruption

Kyrgyzstan: Police detains president’s nephew on corruption charges
https://eurasianet.org/kyrgyzstan-police-detains-presidents-nephew-on-corruption-charges

Promoting integrity and transparency in Ukraine: EU and UNDP organise Anti-Corruption Camp
DRUG TRAFFICKING

US rallies international effort to combat synthetic drug trade
Willy Lowry – The Nation: 6 July 2023
The United States is launching a global coalition to combat the growing threat of fentanyl and Captagon.

Russian Dark Net Markets Dominate the Global Illicit Drug Trade: Report
Habiba Rashid – HackRead: 9 July 2023
The staggering new statistic shows they hold 80% of the $1.49 billion spent in 2022.

For more on this theme:

U.S. Sanctions Serbian Security Chief For Alleged Corruption, Drug Trafficking
https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-spy-chief-vulin-sanctions-united-states/32499106.html

Syria revokes BBC accreditation over alleged bias after report on high-level ties to drug trade

Peru’s coca leaf farming expands along border, reaches record area

High seas and hidden cargo: The Middle East’s battle against containerised drug smuggling

Huge Increase in Transnational Crime in Asia’s ‘Golden Triangle’
https://www.ipsnews.net/2023/06/huge-increase-transnational-crime-asia-golden-triangle/

Cocaine-Fueled Narco Laundering Is Accelerating Deforestation, UN Warns

Amazon facing ‘urgent’ crime crisis after gutting of protections, says drugs tsar

After Taliban bans opium, a guilt-racked commander winks at harvest

Turkey emerges as vital hub for drug trafficking connecting continents: Report
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Investigating the wildlife market on the dark web
Béatrice St-Cyr-Leroux – Phys.org: 6 July 2023

An Australian research team investigating the trade in wild animals and plants scanned about 2 million ads over five years and found nearly 3,500 were for wildlife. In all, more than 150 species were for sale, and about 90% were intended for recreational drug use.

Uniting the response? Challenges in international law enforcement cooperation in wildlife crime in Asia and Africa
Alastair Macbeath and Julia Stanyard – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: 10 July 2023

The consequences of wildlife trafficking go beyond the threat it poses to ecological integrity and the survival of many species. It is also a public health threat and a security threat.
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/international-law-enforcement-cooperation-wildlife-crime-asia-africa/

For more on this theme:
Illegal ‘blast fishing’ to blame for rise in shark sightings, says Lebanese marine expert
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2326981/middle-east

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau: Safeguarding Biodiversity and Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

Strengthening cooperation for sustainable and legal trade in fish and fish products

Scientists say wildlife extinction has become a problem — a really big problem
https://kjzz.org/content/1850827/scientists-say-wildlife-extinction-has-become-problem-really-big-problem

African online platforms must take urgent action to address illegal wildlife trade say experts

Illegal wildlife trafficking thrives in Facebook groups for “animal lovers”

Can Tech Stop Animal Poachers in Their Tracks?

South Africa: How To Stop Succulent Poaching and Trafficking in its Tracks #AfricaClimateHope
https://allafrica.com/stories/202307110482.html
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

**China’s AI Regulations and How They Get Made**  
Matt Sheehan – Carnegie: 10 July 2023  
Beijing is releasing strategies to govern algorithms, chatbots and more. Global partners need a better understanding of what this regulation entails, what it says about Chinese priorities about artificial intelligence and what lessons other regulators can learn.  
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/07/10/china-s-ai-regulations-and-how-they-get-made-pub-90117

For more on this theme:  
(India) The dangers of India building its own internet  
(Global) It’s Time to Create a National Registry for Large AI Models  
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/07/12/it-s-time-to-create-national-registry-for-large-ai-models-pub-90180  
(Global) AI makes rules for the metaverse even more important  
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ai-makes-rules-for-the-metaverse-even-more-important/  
(Global) Internet referral programs are in urgent need of reform  

INTERNET FREEDOM

**New Tool Measures Economic Impact of Internet Shutdowns**  
Quinn Nghiem – Broadband Breakfast: 10 July 2023  
The calculator is being called a “major step forward” for those pushing back against such actions.  

For more on this theme:  
(Burma) Myanmar’s ‘alternative’ exams a major test amid bombs, blackouts  
(France) French government wants the power to block social media and to tap into cellphones  
(Russia) Russia Is Trying to Leave the Internet and Build Its Own  
(India) How two months of internet shutdown paralysed Manipur’s economy  
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Cyber-Biosecurity: How Can India’s Biomedical Institutions Develop Cyber Hygiene?
Shruti Sharma – Carnegie: 12 July 2023

In 2022, cyberattacks exposed increasing vulnerability of the Indian institutions. A primer shows how they can ensure the cybersecurity of their organizations.
https://carnegieindia.org/2023/07/12/cyber-biosecurity-how-can-india-s-biomedical-institutions-develop-cyber-hygiene-pub-90157

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Strengthening Cyber Partnerships: An Interview With the N.J. CISO

(Global) AI and the next digital divide in education

(Global) Fixing the global digital divide and digital access gap

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Recent Chinese cyber intrusions signal a strategic shift
Pukhraj Singh – The Strategist: 5 July 2023

The intelligence that has trickled through from the Five Eyes alliance – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States – points to interesting doctrinal and strategic developments in the Chinese cyber establishment, especially the extent and success of its integration with the People’s Liberation Army.

For more on this theme:

https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/white-house-releases-implementation-plan-for-national-cybersecurity-strategy

(Quad) The Quad: Tackling the spider, not cobwebs, in cyberspace

(China) China’s cyber behavior is reflected in the subsea cables ecosystem
CYBERCRIME

Combatting the Rise of Cyberscams
Abhishek Sharma – The National Interest: 9 July 2023
Increasingly sophisticated digital fraud requires more public-private and international cooperation.
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/techland/combatting-rise-cyberscams-206627

For more on this theme:
(Global) Chinese Cybercrime Syndicates in Myanmar Now Target Victims Worldwide

(Global) A New Kill Chain Approach to Disrupting Online Threats
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/a-new-kill-chain-approach-to-disrupting-online-threats

(Africa) Risks and rewards of AI for organised crime in Africa

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Building the right collective defense against cyberattacks for critical infrastructure
Robert M. Lee – CyberScoop: 11 July 2023
Government leaders should align across agencies with a consistent approach that empowers owners and operators.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Cloud poses special cyber risks for critical infrastructure, report warns

(Global) Growing reliance on satellites requires new approach to cybersecurity in space, expert says
https://cyberscoop.com/space-cybersecurity-critical-infrastructure/

(Australia) Cyber attacks continue to target critical infrastructure, demand to secure assets
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ISIS is Still the Most Imminent Threat in the Region: Peshmerga
Manish Rai – The Geopolitics: 12 July 2023

In an interview, Maj. Gen. Usman Mohammad Mustafa, director general of media and awareness in the Kurdish Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, speaks about planned reforms, the threat from the Islamic State group and military relations with Iraq.

ISIS Targets China And Pakistan In Afghanistan: A Growing Threat – OpEd
Sahibzada Muhammad Usman – Eurasia Review: 6 July 2023

The Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate is targeting Chinese and Pakistani interests in the country, posing a new challenge.

For more on this theme:

Ryder Says U.S. Counter-ISIS Mission Undeterred by Russia’s Unprofessional Behavior Over Syria

Russian Air Antics Helping Islamic State, Pentagon Says

US central command says it killed ISIS leader in Eastern Syria

Terror suspects accused of ‘ISIS-inspired plot’ after leaving Ukraine

Birmingham brothers admit planning to join Islamic State

German court convicts Syrian IS member of war crimes for torturing captives
https://apnews.com/article/germany-syria-war-crimes-islamic-state-verdict-be7791e2fb16d-74d8181646c5c0c4f57

Two IS Jihadists Arrested In Niger Joint Operation: Security Source

Repatriate British families from Al-Hol
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Afghanistan: The Same Old (Un)Safe Haven In The ‘Heart Of Asia’
Francesca Sabia – Istituto Analisi Relazioni Internazionali: 12 July 2023
Just as in the past, the country reconfirms itself as both a prison for civilians and a sanctuary for terror.

Brief: Al-Shabaab Surges on Multiple Fronts in Somalia
Jacob Zenn – The Jamestown Foundation: 26 June 2023
Despite the efforts of the African Union to combat the group, it is proving to be highly resilient.
https://jamestown.org/program/brief-al-shabaab-surges-on-multiple-fronts-in-somalia/

For more on this theme:
Somalia in danger of losing hard-won gains, Security Council hears
The Dark World Of Jihadist Propaganda Channels On Telegram
Boko Haram brings IEDs back to Cameroon
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/boko-haram-brings-ieds-back-to-cameroon
Boko Haram Members Kill Their Top Leader, Others Over Attempt to Form Faction
https://www.gistmania.com/talk/topic,567174.0.html
Buhari’s battle against Boko Haram and the path forward for Nigeria
New Report Warns Terrorists Could Cause Human Extinction With ‘Spoiler Attacks’
The “Axis of Instability” and the State of Global Terrorism: Interview with Ali Soufan
UNOCT/UNCCT and Interpol Launch Publications on Countering the Use of New Technologies for Terrorist Purposes
TTP Unfazed by Pakistan’s New Multidimensional Counterterrorism Strategy
Kenya’s rise in al-Shabaab attacks calls for localised solutions
CRIME AND CONFLICT

Beyond Collateral Damage: Femicides, Disappearances, and New Trends in Gender-Based Violence in Mexico
The drivers of femicides, sexual violence and disappearances are evolving, revealing intricate connections between criminal networks, state-sponsored violence and domestic abuse.

For more on this theme:

Where Transnational Crime Meets Terrorism
Thousands of Ukraine civilians are being held in Russian prisons. Russia plans to build many more
https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-prisons-civilians-torture-detainees-88b4abf2efbf383272eed-9378be13c72
Russia’s kidnapping of Ukrainian children is not unique — Putin and others have long used children as political pawns
Would Prosecuting Russia Prolong the War in Ukraine?
Unmasking Forcible Displacement of Childhood: A Multidimensional Analysis of Ukrainian Children
Alarm over Sudan ‘war crimes’
https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2610190/alarm-over-sudan-war-crimes-amid-calls-to-end-fighting
Bahrain: Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
UN records the highest number of ‘grave violations’ against children in conflicts: ‘We must do more’
Strengthening the Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
Children and Armed Conflict: A Legal Glossary on Abduction and Deportation
How Musk’s Twitter is Jeopardizing War Crimes Investigations
https://techpolicy.press/how-musks-twitter-is-jeopardizing-war-crimes-investigations/

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RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine Takes Its Place in the European Security System while Russia Fades
Vitaliy Syzov – Wilson Center: 7 July 2023

Despite much more modest economic influence, military capabilities, size and population than Russia, Ukraine is steadily increasing its role in relation to NATO and the EU.


For more on this theme:

Russian General Denounces His Bosses as Officers are Fired or Questioned

Russian general’s outburst is an earthquake for Vladimir Putin

Four scenarios for Russia’s future after the Wagner Group mutiny

Experts react: What NATO’s Vilnius summit means for Ukraine and the Alliance’s future

Russia’s Defense Ministry says Wagner mercenaries are surrendering their weapons to the military
https://apnews.com/article/russia-wagner-mercenaries-putin-prigozhin-surovikin-04cc278919360bd16ff-6514c4be5625

Is Russia purging Wagner Group troops in Africa?

What the Wagner Group Mutiny Reveals About Putin’s Grip on Power

What Conclusions Is China Drawing From the Wagner Revolt in Russia?

Beijing’s bad bet on Moscow
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/beijing-s-bad-bet-moscow

Putin is Xi’s useful idiot
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/putin-xi-s-useful-idiot

How long can Putin’s “special relationship” with Erdogan last?
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/how-long-can-putin-s-special-relationship-erdogan-last

Is There a Future for Russia’s Wagner Mercenary Army in Belarus?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90161

Judy Asks: Is Ukraine’s NATO Membership Realistic?
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/90137
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Is Prigozhin’s Mutiny the Nail in the Coffin for Putin’s Golden Boy, Dyumin?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90150

Is Russia Really Becoming China’s Vassal?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90135

NATO Vilnius Summit 2023: A Summit For Implementation
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/nato-vilnius-summit-2023-summit-implementation

How Ukrainians Living at the Front View the War, Victory, and Peace

Türkiye Moves to Unblock Sweden’s NATO Membership
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/turkiye-moves-unblock-swedens-nato-membership

Oleksii Reznikov: Ukraine’s defense doctrine will define country’s future

Wagner fallout: Time to begin preparing for a post-Putin Russia

Wagner putsch is symptomatic of Russia’s ongoing imperial decline

Captured Weapons in Ukraine Pose Windfall for Iranian Defense Industry
https://jamestown.org/program/captured-weapons-in-ukraine-pose-windfall-for-iranian-defense-industry/

The Putin Vertical Will Continue to Collapse
https://jamestown.org/program/the-putin-vertical-will-continue-to-collapse/

The Anatomy of Prigozhin’s Mutiny and the Future of Russia’s Mercenary Industry (Part One)

A Vilnius Boost for the Ukrainian Offensive
https://jamestown.org/program/a-vilnius-boost-for-the-ukrainian-offensive/

Wagner PMC Exemplifies How Putin Has Destroyed Russian State
https://jamestown.org/program/wagner-PMC-exemplifies-how-putin-has-destroyed-russian-state/

In message to Russia, G7 unveils security pledge for Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:
Russia’s threat to pull out of Ukraine grain deal raises fears about global food security

How many Russians have died in Ukraine? Data shows what Moscow hides
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-military-deaths-facd75c2311ed7be660342698cf6a409

Syria cracked down on Wagner after mutiny in Russia: Report

Should Ukraine Negotiate With Russia?
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/responses/should-america-push-ukraine-negotiate-russia-end-war

In Ukraine, civilians train in survival skills to cope with dangers from Russia’s war
https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-training-civilians-2ef2fbd00c3613a98bcb1981fc3b223e

Russia is sending ‘disposable’ soldiers to fight Ukraine high on amphetamines to ensure they ‘still run at machine guns,’ military expert says

In Brief: Russia, Ukraine and the African Peace Mission

Assessing Ukraine’s Three Axes of Advance

Iran, Russia, and the Challenges of “Inter-Pariah Solidarity”

Desperate Ukrainians take long and uncertain journey to escape Russian occupation
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-escape-a52740fe034dd6f62bd1ee2da88b2a62

China and Ukraine: The Chinese debate about Russia’s war and its meaning for the world

Would handing frozen Russian assets to Ukraine be better than reparations?

Ukraine Is Winning The Artillery War — By Destroying Four Russian Howitzers for Every Howitzer It Loses
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

GMF Expert Analysis: 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius

Analysis: Ukraine rolls back 6 months of Russian gains in 5 weeks

China and Taiwan loom large behind Ukraine at NATO summit

Ukraine plans to move to professional army after war ends, prime minister says
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-plans-move-professional-army-after-war-ends-pm-2023-07-06/

Ukraine has set the standard on software power
https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-has-set-the-standard-on-software-power-russia-war/

Ukraine Outside NATO? Be Careful What You Wish For

Russia Enters the Age of Prigozhin
https://cepa.org/article/russia-enters-the-age-of-prigozhin/

Ukraine’s Democracy Is the Point of Our War Against Russia
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-democracy-is-the-point-of-our-war-against-russia/

Ukraine war: Poland strengthens Belarus border over Wagner fears

Why Ukraine needs cluster munitions