CONTENTS

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)
  Corruption
  Drug Trafficking
  Trafficking in Scarce or Protected Resources
  Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration
  Organized Crime and Money Laundering

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)
  Internet Governance
  Internet Freedom
  Cyber Statecraft
  Cybercrime
  Cyberattacks, Threats and Vulnerabilities
  Protection of Critical Infrastructure

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
  ISIS and Foreign Fighters
  Terrorism Around the World
  Radicalization
  Irregular Warfare: Proxy Forces and Private Military Groups
  Irregular Warfare: Cyber

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Albanian Prime Minister Announces Network of Anti-Corruption Staff in Public Institutions
Alice Taylor – Exit News: 15 July 2021
Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama has announced that in every state and public institution, the government will place people whose job it will be to look out for corruption.

Iraqi PM blames corruption for deadly hospital fires
Halgurd Sherwani – Kurdistan24: 24 July 2021
Iraq’s prime minister last week blamed two recent hospital fires in Iraq that killed scores of COVID-19 patients on endemic corruption in the country, saying in an interview that investigations are still underway.

For more on this theme:

Sweeping Corruption Probe Tests Dominican Republic’s Anti-Graft Fight

How voters shook up Europe’s most corrupt state
https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2021/0714/How-voters-shook-up-Europe’s-most-corrupt-state

Hungry, unemployed, and without hope: How corruption and COVID launched South Africa’s riots

US bars Honduran ex-president Lobo over alleged corruption

Moldovan pro-EU party plans corruption crackdown after election landslide

Maximizing Biden’s Plan to Combat Corruption and Promote Good Governance in Central America

Dark money politics: Why Europe should join Biden’s fight against corruption

Health Corruption – Isn’t it talking point for the global health security during CoVID-19?
DRUG TRAFFICKING

US Drug Deaths Explode, Fueled by Mexico Production of Synthetics
Parker Asmann – InSight Crime: 19 July 2021

The United States saw a record toll in drug overdose deaths last year, driven in part by two powerful synthetic drugs mass-produced in Mexico and then smuggled over the border.

Capture of Drug Smuggling Drone Gives a Glimpse of Future of Trafficking
Toms Dumpis – Morocco World News: 15 July 2021

The Chinese-made drone cost an estimated 30,000 euros to 150,000 euros and could carry 150 kilograms of cargo.

For more on this theme:
Laos Seizes Record Meth Haul Amid Regional Production Boom

Mexico’s Drug Cartels Are Stealing Oil Again

Saudi Journalist: Why Does The World Keep Silent Over Hizbullah’s Drug Trafficking And Money Laundering Activities?

Invisible Drug Kingpin ‘Don Lucho’ Assassinated in Colombia

Biden Vows to Continue Encounter with China Over Opioids
https://www.voanews.com/usa/biden-vows-continue-encounter-china-over-opioids

Prescription drugs, controlled chemicals fuel illicit drug trade in India

Inside The Nation’s Overdose Crisis in Prisons and Jails

Is the Netherlands now Europe’s Narco state?
https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/brexit-news/europe-news/the-netherlands-and-its-drug-problem-8132118

Yaba smuggled in through newer, easier routes
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Nigeria and Cameroon must confront timber trafficking together
Oluwole Ojewale – Institute for Security Studies: 15 July 2021
Stopping the billion-dollar illegal timber trade will require Nigeria and Cameroon to take law enforcement efforts more seriously.

Wildlife Trade Is ‘Key Risk Factor’ Behind Global Spread Of Disease, Study Finds
Jemima Webber – Plant Based News: 16 July 2021
New research found that the wildlife trade is increasing the risk of another global pandemic.

For more on this theme:
Shark fin ID pages now in multiple languages

Indian Scientists Find Strong Link Between Wildlife Trade and Zoonotic Diseases

Ecologists develop a novel forensic tool for detecting laundering of critically endangered cockatoos
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/07/210712122128.htm

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Pacific
https://www.army.mil/article/248348/illegal_unreported_and_unregulated_fishing_in_the_pacific

COVID Or Not, Eating Wildlife Continues In Asia
https://theaseanpost.com/article/covid-or-not-eating-wildlife-continues-asia

Going for gold in western Mali threatens human security
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/going-for-gold-in-western-mali-threatens-human-security

A Battle On The Gulf Pits The Coast Guard Against Mexican Red Snapper Poachers
https://www.npr.org/2021/07/18/1014782927/gulf-coast-guard-mexican-red-snapper-poachers

Taskforce to tackle piracy, abductions and wildlife trafficking at sea to be launched

Red Flag Indicators: for wildlife and timber trafficking in containerized sea cargo

Stronger environment law enforcement needed to combat illegal wildlife trade

Javan leopards, the dwindling ‘guardians’ of Java’s forests
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

How the UK Became an Origin Country for Human Trafficking
Amandas Ong – Vice: 20 July 2021

For years the United Kingdom was known as a destination country for victims of trafficking. But now more and more vulnerable British nationals are being taken away from their communities and trafficked within the borders of the UK.


For more on this theme:

Concerns remain over anti-trafficking bill

Pandemic led to ‘increased’ human trafficking: UN report

On Lithuania’s plea, Iraq to probe human smuggling to Europe
https://apnews.com/article/europe-middle-east-migration-iraq-smuggling-9618cc0107f8b0ed-9de8d3e280803e66

Human Smugglers Profit From Despair of Haitian Migrants in Brazil

ORGANIZED CRIME AND MONEY LAUNDERING

EU to ban cryptocurrency anonymity in anti-money laundering plan
Naomi O’Leary – The Irish Times: 20 July 2021

Under pressure to act after a series of banking scandals involving billions of dollars in illicit transactions, the European Union has a plan to beef up its anti-money-laundering system by creating an agency devoted to tackling financial crimes and a unified rulebook for its member states.


For more on this theme:

How Bitcoin is used for international money laundering

Blockchain transparency helps flag money laundering activities
https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/07/16/blockchain-transparency-helps-flag-money-laundering-activities/

Neil Mackay’s Big Read: The inside story on how organised crime gangs took over Scotland’s illegal trade in puppies
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Opinion: Russia and China's hypocritical attempt to control cyberspace

At the very moment that Russia and China are facing more pressure from Western governments to stop malicious cyberattacks, they've announced a pact to work together for new rules to control cyberspace.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/07/20/russia-china-are-trying-control-internet-even-they-censor-it/

For more on this theme:
(Nigeria) Nigeria: Foundation Partners Unesco On Internet Governance Policy
https://allafrica.com/stories/202107220481.html
(U.S., Russia) Can the United States and Russia Agree on Cyber Rules?

INTERNET FREEDOM

Censorship circumvention tool helps 1.4 million Cubans get internet access
David Shepardson – Reuters: 16 July 2021

Psiphon Inc.’s freely available internet censorship-circumvention tool has helped nearly 1.4 million Cubans gain access to websites, the company said, after Cuba’s government curbed access to popular social media and messaging platforms.


For more on this theme:
(U.S., Hong Kong) US business chamber fears internet censorship in Hong Kong, urges guarantees on free flow of info
(U.S., Cuba) Cubans could break through Havana’s internet censorship with high-altitude tech balloons
(China) Chinese Censors Shut Down Popular Science Social Media Accounts
(Vietnam) Tighter livestreaming control on social network in Vietnam
CYBER STATECRAFT

Serdar Berdimuhamedov and Turkmenistan’s Digital Transformation
Rustam Muhamedov – The Diplomat: 20 July 2021
As the Turkmen president’s son continues his tour of top government positions, digitalization remains a critical priority for the regime.

For more on this theme:
(Africa) How African states can tackle state-backed cyber threats
(Pakistan) Pakistan aiming big for a Digital Economy
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/07/19/pakistan-aiming-big-for-a-digital-economy/

CYBERCRIME

UN Determined To Counter Cyber Crime And Ensure Peace And Security
J. Nastranis – In Depth News: 20 July 2021
As digital advances continue to revolutionize human life, the United Nations has called for remaining “vigilant” about malicious technologies that “could imperil the security of future generations.” Currently, there are over 4.6 billion internet users around the world.

For more on this theme:
(New Zealand, Global) More cybersecurity graduates needed to take on crime worth more than the drug trade
(Africa) Kaspersky Research Suggests Africa Beyond the Reach of Sophisticated Cybercrimes
(Australia) Australian organisations are quietly paying hackers millions in a ‘tsunami of cyber crime’
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Saudi Aramco confirms data leak after $50 million cyber ransom demand
Hannah Murphy and David Sheppard – Financial Times: 22 July 2021

“Aramco recently became aware of the indirect release of a limited amount of company data which was held by third-party contractors,” the Middle Eastern oil major said last week in an email. “We confirm that the release of data was not due to a breach of our systems, has no impact on our operations, and the company continues to maintain a robust cybersecurity posture.”
lion-cyber-ransom-demand/

For more on this theme:
(Global) This ransomware gang hunts for evidence of crime to pressure victims into paying a ransom
https://www.zdnet.com/article/this-ransomware-gang-hunts-for-evidence-of-crime-to-pressure-victims-in-
to-paying-a-ransom/

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Low-Tech Cyber Attacks on Industrial Networks Are Up After a String of Successes
Scott Ikeda – CPO Magazine: 9 July 2021

When one thinks of cyberattacks on industrial networks, one often pictures advanced nation-state threat actors using sophisticated techniques (such as the Stuxnet virus). A report from Mandiant Threat Intelligence indicates that the modern trend may be in the other direction.
https://www.cpmagazine.com/cyber-security/low-tech-cyber-attacks-on-industrial-networks-are-up-after-
a-string-of-successes/

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Paying attention to critical infrastructure can combat sophisticated cyberattacks
https://thehill.com/opinion/cybersecurity/563180-paying-attention-to-critical-infrastructure-can-com-
bat-sophisticated?rl=1

(U.S.) Officials warn of cybersecurity vulnerabilities in water systems
https://thehill.com/policy/equilibrium-sustainability/564189-officials-warn-of-cybersecurity-vulnerabili-
ties-in-water-systems?rl=1

(U.S.) US has new cyber security rules for pipelines
https://www.itpro.co.uk/business/policy-legislation/360301/us-has-new-cyber-security-rules-for-pipelines
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

**ISWAP takes aim at the state in Cameroon**  
The government must act fast to block Islamic State’s advances into Cameroon’s Far North region since the assassination of rival Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau.  
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/iswap-takes-aim-at-the-state-in-cameroon

‘Islamic State’ poses growing threat across Africa  
Cai Nebe – Deutsche Welle: 15 July 2021  
After the so-called Islamic State saw its influence wane in the Middle East, the group and its affiliates targeted poorly governed areas in Africa. But just how big is the threat across the continent?  

For more on this theme:  
**Majlis Podcast: Mixed Results For Women Jihadists Brought Back To Kazakhstan**  
https://www.rferl.org/a/majlis-women-extremists-kazakhstan/31340279.html  
**Syrian Families Released from Camp Face Challenges at Home**  
**Focusing The Anti-ISIS Fight On Africa**  
https://theowp.org/reports/focusing-the-anti-isis-fight-on-africa/  
**Europe and Africa Rally Behind Mozambique in its Fight Against ISIS**  
**Inside the Digital Lives of the Women of the Islamic State**  
https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/08/islamic-state-women-prison-radicalism-telegram/  
**German spy chief warns of Islamic State’s strength**  
**Islamic State fortifies its position in the Lake Chad Basin**  
**An American ISIS Fighter Describes the Caliphate’s Final Days — and His Own**  
https://theintercept.com/2021/07/15/american-isis-podcast/  
**Secrets of an ISIS Smartphone, review: how did these men end up as murderous extremists?**  
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2021/07/15/secrets-isis-smartphone-review-did-men-end-murderous-extremists/
“Over the past decades, Hezbollah has built a well-oiled, multibillion-dollar money-laundering and drug-trafficking machine in Latin America that cleans organized crime’s ill-gotten gains through multiple waypoints in the Western hemisphere, West Africa, Europe, and the Middle East,” according to a report from the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Research.


For more on this theme:

Hindu terror associate of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen spills the beans on human trafficking

Jihadist Content Targeted on Internet Archive Platform
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/jihadist-content-targeted-on-internet-archive-platform/

Tunisia’s Evolving Counterterrorism Strategy
https://africacenter.org/spotlight/tunisias-evolving-counterterrorism-strategy/

Mozambique’s Insurgency Requires a Multi-Pronged Response

Convicted terrorists lead religious services in federal prisons: IG

Jihadis expand control to new Burkina Faso fronts

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Counterterrorism and Peacekeeping in the Sahel

Terror attacks: Why is Ghana less affected than its neighbors?

Abu Hanzala, who inspired many to join al-Qaeda and ISIS, runs jihadist outfit from a prison in Turkey

Taliban seek to cut off Afghan population centres: Top US general

Jihadists issue threat as Somalia elections loom
RADICALIZATION

**Is the internet really more effective at radicalizing people than older media?**

*John Letzing and Andrew Berkley – The World Economic Forum; 13 July 2021*

The World Economic Forum created a visualization of radicalization in the United States over a 70-year period that illustrates the expanded role of internet use in fostering extremism.

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/07/is-the-internet-really-more-effective-at-radicalizing-people-than-older-media/

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IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

**Russian proxies in occupied Donbas being trained in assault crossing of water obstacles intelligence**

*MENAFN: 20 July 2021*

Russian occupation forces have been increasing their combat capabilities in eastern Ukraine and are now training to deploy pontoon crossings as part of offensive drills.


For more on this theme:

- **His brother was tortured and killed by Russian mercenaries. Now this Syrian refugee wants justice**
  

- **Libya PM unaware of Russia, Turkey deal on foreign fighters**
  

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IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

**U.S., NATO and EU to blame China for cyberattack on Microsoft Exchange servers**

*Christina Wilkie – CNBC; 19 July 2021*

A new joint effort made up of NATO member states, the European Union, Australia, New Zealand and Japan is coming together to confront the global threat posed by Chinese state-sponsored cyberattacks.


For more on this theme:

- **Mapping China’s Presence In Africa’s Digital Economy – Analysis**
  

- **Russian defence ministry says its website hit by foreign cyberattack**
  

- **Home and office routers come under attack by China state hackers, France warns**
  
IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER — CONTINUED

Norway says cyber attack on parliament carried out from China

Israel’s Prime Minister Wants to Create Global Cyber Network Shield

U.S. Fights Cyber Attacks by Blacklisting, Sanctioning Russian Tech Firms

Facebook says it disrupted Iranian hacking campaign tied to Tortoiseshell gang

US offers up to $10 million reward for information on cyberattacks against critical infrastructure by foreign states

Biden Goes After China’s Cyber Attackers

CISA releases alert, analysis on Chinese cyber operations

Chinese state-backed hacking: time to level the playing field and breach the Great Firewall

Foreign actors will seek to interfere in next Canada election - spy agency