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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Sri Lanka passes anti-corruption bill as part of IMF bailout plan
Al Jazeera: 20 July 2023

This is the first time an International Monetary Fund program has been linked to such a measure in Asia.

Ukraine tackles corruption in bid for EU membership and more stable future
Kal Berjikian – Euronews: 26 July 2023

Ukraine’s recent push to tackle corruption is part of a decadelong battle that accelerated after Russia’s full-scale invasion and its formal application to join the European Union.

For more on this theme:

Altice co-founder denies wrongdoing in corruption inquiry

Singapore political scandals a ‘setback’ says deputy PM

Thai officials accused of corruption in airport biometrics procurement

Efforts to Combat Army Corruption Intensify in Ukraine
https://www.kyivpost.com/post/18892

Lebanon struggles to emerge from financial crisis and government corruption

Corruption across Africa rose dramatically in 2022 but citizens fear to speak up — Afrobarometer

How Austria has tightened laws to prevent political corruption
https://www.thelocal.at/20230707/how-austria-has-tightened-laws-to-prevent-political-corruption

Death of a radio host: the web of corruption, lies and revenge behind the killing of Martinez Zogo

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DRUG TRAFFICKING

Monagas: The Missing Link for Venezuela Drug Traffickers
InSight Crime: 24 July 2023

The northeastern state has shot up in drug seizures in 2023, a sign that traffickers may be seeking alternative routes as authorities crack down in other states.

Jordan’s War on Illegal Drugs From Syria May Need Iran
Dale Gavlak – Voice of America: 26 July 2023

When Jordan and other nations brought Syria back into the Arab League, one of the conditions was that it tackle its burgeoning unregulated drug production and stop using Jordan as a transit point for its criminal trade to wealthy Persian Gulf nations.
https://www.voanews.com/a/jordan-s-war-on-illegal-drugs-from-syria-may-need-iran-/7198850.html

For more on this theme:

Singapore hangs first woman in 19 years after she was convicted of trafficking 31 grams of heroin
https://apnews.com/article/singapore-woman-executed-drug-trafficking-d73c6cfff32d6f8065cc076e6d-d098e00

Venezuela’s ex-spymaster pleads not guilty to US drug trafficking charges

Philippine president sacks 18 police officers allegedly linked to illegal drugs trade

Coca price crash contributing to Colombia food insecurity, UN says

Iraq: ‘First’ Captagon laboratory found in country, says ministry
https://www.middleasteye.net/news/iraq-first-captagon-lab-found-country

How Mexico’s Sinaloa Cartel Has Stayed United for Decades

The Rise and Fall of the Choneros, Ecuador’s Drug Trafficking Opportunists

Narcotrafficking’s Impact on Source, Transit, and User Countries

The UK’s problem with cocaine
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Sanctions alone won’t shut down Libya’s illicit economies
Matt Herbert – Institute for Security Studies: 20 July 2023
But they have forced those involved in crime networks to lower their profiles and adapt their activities.
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/sanctions-alone-wont-shut-down-libyas-illicit-economies

Africa’s growing illegal mining: Financial drain and corruption threaten the continent
Chris Erasmus – Nation: 27 July 2023
It is increasingly in direct proportion to the need for minerals and resources found predominantly in Africa.

For more on this theme:
Forests & Finance: Cameroon raw log ban expands and Nigerian villagers act against ‘forest bandits’

Kenyans invade forests for charcoal after lifting of ban

Ecuador Redoubles Efforts to Combat Illegal Mining
https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/ecuador-redoubles-efforts-to-combat-illegal-mining/

Brazilian companies invest in blockchain to fight illegal gold mining

Open Ocean Project: AI and satellite data to help end illegal fishing

Scientists unveil plans for underwater AI bot that detects illegal fishing

UAE joins forces with UN and Interpol to tackle environmental crimes

Global map of wildlife trade reveals true cost to the planet
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02416-9

Women in Conservation: Challenging stereotypes and making a difference in wildlife protection
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

How Does China’s Approach To AI Regulation Differ From The US And EU?
*Forbes*: 18 July 2023
Artificial intelligence and geopolitics go hand in hand.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Meta Ran a Giant Experiment in Governance. Now It’s Turning to AI

(Global) Could the metaverse be more trustworthy than our current internet?

(Europe) How Europe is Regulating the Industrial Metaverse
https://www.xrtoday.com/virtual-reality/how-europe-is-regulating-the-industrial-metaverse/

INTERNET FREEDOM

Russia Is Censoring Its Biggest Social Network 30 Times More Since Invading Ukraine
*Mack DeGeurin – Yahoo News*: 26 July 2023
VKontakte, the homegrown Facebook clone and its biggest social network, saw a whopping increase in censorship requests from government officials during the eight-month period after the invasion in February 2022, according to a report.

For more on this theme:
(Global) From a lab in Ann Arbor, fighting internet censorship around the world

(China) Beijing wants to make the Great Firewall of China even greater
https://www.theregister.com/2023/07/17/great_firewall_even_greater/

(Pakistan) Pakistan ranks third globally for imposing internet restrictions: Report

(Jordan) Jordan should scrap ‘draconian’ cybercrimes bill, Human Rights Watch says
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Partnerships a Must in Shoring Up Cyber Defenses
Erich Smith – U.S. Army: 20 July 2023

In the ever-changing digital landscape, cyberspace is all-encompassing, presenting new threats that surpass national borders in scale and complexity.

https://www.army.mil/article/268509/partnerships_a_must_in_shoring_up_cyber_defenses

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(Global) Digitalisation for People, Planet and Prosperity

(Africa) How to ensure government digitisation works to benefit Africa

CYBERATTACKS

12 Norway Government Ministries were Targeted in a Cyberattack
Eswar – GB Hackers on Security: 24 July 2023

The most recent was aimed at the country’s public sector, and investigations are ongoing, according to reports.

https://gbhackers.com/12-norway-government-ministries-were-targeted-in-a-cyberattack/

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Are your smart devices safe? New government logo will ID devices less prone to cyberattack.

(Russia, Global) A recent increase in cyber attacks coming from Russia
https://www.npr.org/2023/07/14/1187872408/a-recent-increase-in-cyber-attacks-coming-from-russia

(Global) Maritime cyber attacks database launched

(Canada) CardioComm, a provider of ECG monitoring devices, confirms cyberattack downed its services
CYBERCRIME

Draft Global Cybercrime Treaty a Worry, Advocates Say
Liam Scott – Voice of America: 24 July 2023

The treaty that has backing from Russia, China and Venezuela concerns some democracies and civil liberty organizations.

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(Global) Efficient Recovery of Stolen Cryptocurrencies Made Possible by Cybernetics Advancements

(Russia, Global) KillNet’s Kremlin Connection Unclear as the Cybercrime Collective Grows

(U.S.) US DoJ Announces Plan to Shakeup Cybercrime Investigations

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

What the National Cyber Strategy Implementation Plan means for critical infrastructure
Roman Arutyunov – SC Media: 26 July 2023

The plan published by the White House is a significant effort by the Biden-Harris administration to mitigate cyber risk.

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Take the First Steps Towards Better Cybersecurity With these Four Goals
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(U.S.) CISA: Most cyberattacks on gov’ts, critical infrastructure involve valid credentials
https://therecord.media/cisa-cyberattacks-using-valid-credentials

(China, U.S., Global) The Chinese groups accused of hacking the US and others
https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinese-groups-accused-hacking-us-others-2023-07-21/
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Why ISIS doesn’t always publicize its attacks
Haid Haid – Asia Times: 25 July 2023
The Islamic State group’s strategic reluctance to claim responsibility must be considered when evaluating its still significant military capabilities.

TRM Labs Uncovers Crypto Use By Pro-ISIS Groups Across Asia: Report
Mishal Ali – Tron Weekly: 24 July 2023
TRM Labs, a blockchain intelligence provider, discovered that pro-Islamic State groups increasingly use cryptocurrencies for illicit financial activities.
https://www.tronweekly.com/crypto-use-by-pro-isis-groups-across-asia/

For more on this theme:
Suspected ISWAP militants kill 25 in Nigeria’s Borno state, residents say

Mozambican terror group is strikingly similar to Nigeria’s deadly Boko Haram
https://theconversation.com/mozambican-terror-group-is-strikingly-similar-to-nigerias-deadly-boko-haram-201039

ISIS threat not over yet: French Minister of Armed Forces

Sikh Minorities in Pakistan’s Peshawar Fear Attacks by Daesh Terror Group

ISIS tried to exterminate the Yazidis. These women survived life inside the caliphate

Taliban rejects claims that leaders of Daesh/ISIS terror group were sent to Afghanistan
https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/taliban-rejects-claims-that-leaders-of-daesh-isis-terror-group-were-sent-to-afghanistan/2952204

UN expert slams Syria detention of minors over parents’ ISIL ties

Jihad and Punishment: Repatriation and Criminal Accountability of Islamic State-Linked Women in the Nordic States
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Has Côte d’Ivoire found the solution to violent extremism?
William Assanvo – Institute for Security Studies: 25 July 2023
The threat isn’t over, but the spread has been contained by adapting and balancing military and social responses.
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/has-cote-divoire-found-the-solution-to-violent-extremism

Has Wagner spelt the end of private armies?
Kabir Taneja – Observer Research Foundation: 24 July 2023
The future of the Wagner Group, a mercenary conglomerate linked to Russian foreign policy, is uncertain, raising questions about its global footprint.
https://www.orfonline.org/research/has-wagner-spelt-the-end-of-private-armies/

For more on this theme:
Radical British preacher Anjem Choudary is charged with directing a terrorist organization

Here Is Why the Taliban Cannot Change

Counterterrorism and Deradicalisation: The Indonesian Way

Pakistan warns Afghan Taliban against harboring militants

How the Taliban Suppressed Opium in Afghanistan — and Why There’s Little to Celebrate
https://time.com/6294753/taliban-opium-suppression-afghanistan/

The Azadi Briefing: Taliban Intensifies Efforts To Eradicate Secular Education In Afghanistan
https://www.rferl.org/a/azadi-afghanistan-taliban-education/32503707.html

Pakistani Taliban Release New Magazine Geared Toward Women

Tackling terrorism in Africa needs urgent collective efforts
https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/tackling-terrorism-africa-needs-urgent-collective-efforts
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine's counteroffensive is ramping up after months of slow progress
Ivana Kottasová, Oren Liebermann, Vasco Cotovio and Olga Voitovich – CNN: 27 July 2023

Kyiv appears to be escalating deployment of extra troops to the southern front, signaling a new phase of the operation, U.S. and Russian officials said.


For more on this theme:
China秘密 sends enough gear to Russia to equip an army

Hundreds of thousands of people fled Russia after it invaded Ukraine — and now the countries that took them in are seeing a boost in their economies
https://news.yahoo.com/hundreds-thousands-people-fled-russia-095327835.html?tsrc=daily_mail&uh_test=0_0

Ukrainian drone strike hits Moscow’s cyber headquarters
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/07/24/russia-ukraine-war-latest-drone-attack-moscow-odesa/

Kremlin Says Less Than One-Third Of African Leaders Invited To St. Petersburg Summit To Attend
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Inspired by Ukraine war, Taiwan launches drone blitz to counter China

China is showing up big for Russia but a Cold War historian says Putin is making a ‘potentially grave error’ and shouldn’t expect the lifeline to last
https://news.yahoo.com/china-showing-big-russia-cold-002150750.html?tsrc=daily_mail&uh_test=0_0

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The EU Can’t Treat Ukrainian Refugees Like Short-Term Visitors

A Winnable War
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All Is Not Well on Russian Front Lines
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New Draft and Mobilization Rules in Russia: Increased Coercion

Ukraine’s Manpower Requirements Reaching a Critical Threshold
https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-personnel-needs-reaching-a-critical-threshold/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

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Ukraine's Success on Land Raising Importance of Black Sea Fleet for Moscow
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Ukrainian Resistance Adapts to Key Role in Counteroffensive
https://jamestown.org/program/ukrainian-resistance-adapts-to-key-role-in-counteroffensive/

Can Africa and China help end the Russia-Ukraine war?

Land mines are in place around a Russian-occupied nuclear plant in Ukraine, UN watchdog warns

Angry Russia refuses to speak at UN meeting on its attacks on Ukraine's key port city of Odesa
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-unesco-odesa-orthodox-454c8dbf-f5795067aac5722f20bac199

Inside Ukraine’s counteroffensive as forces step up grueling fight against Russia

Lithuanian border towns grapple with threat of Russia-Ukraine war

At Ukraine’s Edge, Russia Presses Hybrid War on Tiny Moldova

Drone war: The price Iran pays for helping Russia against Ukraine
https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2023/0720/Drone-war-The-price-Iran-pays-for-helping-Russia-against-Ukraine

Beneath the Surface, Prigozhin’s Mutiny has Changed Everything in Russia
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90275

Suspensions, Detentions, and Mutinies: the Growing Gulf in Russia’s Civil-Military Relations
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90266

Why NATO Should Be Cautious About Admitting Ukraine

Ukraine war: how Russians are rallying on the home front to support ‘their boys’
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**Analysis: Russia's Danube attacks tighten noose on Ukraine's grain sector**

**Russia Asks Africa to Feast Amid Famine**
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**The Russian Federation's Escalating Commission of Genocide in Ukraine: A Legal Analysis**

**Cash is king**
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**Don't You Love Me? Cracks in the Iran-Russia Romance**
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**China Studies Nuclear Risk in the Context of the Ukraine War**

**China Steadily Expanding Investments In Russia Since The Ukraine Conflict**

**Erdogan Looks West: What Does It Mean For Putin?**

**Traitors Can Be Useful, Putin Decides**
https://cepa.org/article/traitors-can-be-useful-putin-decides/

**Wagner Mutiny Ex Post Facto: What's Next In Russia And Africa?**

**Ukraine's tech sector is playing vital wartime economic and defense roles**

**Rebuilding efforts should prioritize the key pillars of Ukraine's democracy**
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/rebuilding-efforts-should-prioritize-the-key-pillars-of-ukraines-democracy/

**Ukraine's gas storage facilities can play a key role in European energy security**
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Ukraine’s digital revolution is proving vital for the country’s war effort
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-digital-revolution-is-proving-vital-for-the-coun-
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Who is to Judge Mr. Putin?
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