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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

China’s medical sector faces unprecedented anti-corruption crackdown
Gu Ting – Radio Free Asia: 9 August 2023
A nationwide probe is expected to go on for one year and may extend to offenses committed over 20 years.

‘No remedy’: A broken public health system fosters neglect and corruption
Frontier: 8 August 2023
Patients in Myanmar have to pay bribes in public hospitals on the brink of collapse for lack of staff and funding, leaving charities struggling to care for the poor while charlatans exploit the most vulnerable.

For more on this theme:
Fighting corruption in the Philippines
https://www.manilatimes.net/2023/08/03/business/top-business/fighting-corruption-in-the-philippines/1903620

Back to the Future: Czechia’s Stuttering Fight Against Corruption

Corruption, looting preventing Africa from realising potential: AU Commission
https://ewn.co.za/2023/08/01/corruption-looting-preventing-africa-from-realising-potential-au-commission

Siemens cooperating with Austrian authorities in corruption probe

Under pressure Altice owner Drahi says Portugal corruption probe a ‘shock’

Corruption reigns supreme in Iran — and it’s getting worse
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/corruption-sanctions-mismangement-iran/

Anti-Corruption Efforts in Honduras Are Gaining Steam

Dredges: Gold Spurs Crime and Corruption on Brazil-Colombia Border

Spotlight on military corruption in China as Xi sacks nuclear force commander & deputy at once
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Expanding Drug Trafficking on Peru's Borders With Colombia and Brazil
Juan Diego Cárdenas and Seth Robbins – InSight Crime: 8 August 2023

The Amazon forest and watershed provide ideal cover for coca cultivation and processing. As a result, a cocaine trafficking chain has emerged there — one that begins with coca grown in Peru.


Fast, cheap and deadly
Jackie Botts – Reuters: 9 August 2023

How fentanyl replaced heroin and hooked the United States.

https://www.reuters.com/graphics/MEXICO-DRUGS/FENTANYL/dwvkadblovm/

For more on this theme:
Influential Albanian Politician Led Organized Crime Group in Australia, Intelligence Reports Claim

Banana crates from Ecuador now 'usual suspect' for Turkey's cocaine police

Once Colombia's most-wanted drug lord, the kingpin known as Otoniel gets 45 years in prison in US
https://apnews.com/article/colombia-otoniel-us-drug-trafficking-charges-sentencing-1d55da4e7ca-f907a836f9f0a92209d2

As Singapore Hangs More Drug Offenders, Some Worry Cases Aren't Always Clear-Cut
https://time.com/6301702/singapore-death-penalty-drug-cases/

China Executes South Korean for Drug Trafficking

Son of Colombia’s president admits illegal money entered election campaign, prosecutor says
https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/son-colombias-president-admits-illegal-money-entered-election-campaign-2023-08-03/

Narcos Ravage Río Plátano Reserve in Honduras

Manipur: A Land of Jewels? Navigating Ethnic Struggles and the Drug Trafficking Puzzle
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Environmental Crimes Plague Amazon's Tri-Border Regions
Juan Diego Cárdenas – InSight Crime: 8 August 2023
In these vast jungle areas, isolated stretches of critical primary forests are being razed to mine gold, grow coca and harvest timber.
https://insightcrime.org/investigations/environmental-crimes-plague-amazons-tri-border-regions/

Why ASEAN nations need to jointly fund their fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
Asmiati Malik – The Conversation: 4 August 2023
In maritime Southeast Asia, where more than 10 million fishers earn their living, the impact of illegal fishing practices is particularly relevant. Local fishermen have to deal with the economic, social and environmental repercussions of the illegal tools and bombs used in unlicensed fishery activities.

For more on this theme:
Threatened water towers: Mapping illegal logging in Kenya’s forest reserves

The fight to save ‘sacred’ Carpathian forests from loggers

Cameroon government again opens way for logging in Ebo Forest

In Brazil’s Amazon, a ‘new agricultural frontier’ threatens protected lands

Landmark Amazon Summit Needs to Grapple with Crime as well as Climate

Forests & finance: Fears for forests in Angola, flashes of hope from Kenya & Ghana

University Of Southampton Scientists Demonstrate Plans For Underwater AI Bot That Detects Illegal Fishing
https://indiaeducationdiary.in/university-of-southampton-scientists-demonstrate-plans-for-underwater-ai-bot-that-detects-illegal-fishing/

Beneath the Surface of Timber Trafficking on the Peru-Colombia-Brazil Border
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Cyber governance in Africa is weak. Taking the Malabo Convention seriously would be a good start
Nnenna Iheanyi-Ajufo – The Conversation: 31 July 2023

Several African countries are pursuing digital transformation, but concerns exist over the absence of appropriate policies to create a resilient and secure cyber environment.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Who will govern artificial intelligence?

(China) China Wants to Limit Children’s Smartphone Use to Combat Addiction. Here’s What to Know

(Kenya) Promoting Human Rights and Freedoms and Inclusive Data Culture for Internet Governance in Kenya

INTERNET FREEDOM

The Times Stand Still: Internet Shutdowns, the Irony of the Multistakeholder Process and Realpolitik
Thobias Moura – CircleID: 7 August 2023

Governments worldwide increasingly resort to shutting down the internet in an attempt to control information and silence dissent. The alarming trend is not limited to developing nations grappling with civil unrest or political transition.

For more on this theme:
(China) China’s Censors Back Down on Generative AI

(Global) Internet shutdowns: here’s how governments do it

(Russia) Experts say Kremlin’s censors testing new restrictions as Russian Internet users report VPN failures
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Brazil’s Cyber Strategy Under Lula: Not a Priority, but Progress Is Possible
Joe Devanny and Russell Buchan – Carnegie: 8 August 2023

The administration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has proposed an ambitious agenda to reform domestic cyber governance, but it is unlikely to depart significantly from Brazil’s established positions on global cyber diplomacy.


For more on this theme:

(Global) The Global Cloudscape: The Geopolitics of Data Governance and Digital Power Play

(Africa) Move Africa from Artificial Intelligence talk to action

(U.S., China) Why the China cyber threat demands an airtight public-private response

CYBERATTACKS

Parsing the UK electoral register cyberattack
Zack Whittaker – TechCrunch: 9 August 2023

What the Electoral Commission is saying (and not saying) about the massive hack of 40 million voters.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) A cyberattack has disrupted hospitals and health care in several states
https://apnews.com/article/cyberattack-hospital-emergency-outage-4c808c1dad8686458ebeababd08fecf

(Canada) Nova Scotia government still unsure of widespread impact from spring cyberattack

(China, Japan) Chinese cyberattack on vital Japanese defence networks
CYBERCRIME

**AI making cyberattacks more effective**
Ryan Morrison – Tech Monitor: 7 August 2023

Company data posted by staff into tools like ChatGPT is potentially vulnerable to being used in cyberattacks powered by artificial intelligence.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Interpol Shuts Down African Cybercrime Group, Seizes $2 Million

(Global) Decoding Cybercrime: The Powerful Role of Digital Forensics

(Global) Black hat gangs: a tale of patriotism and profit

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

**Risk Register 2023: Infrastructure cyberattack could harm thousands**
Ryan Daws – Telcoms Tech News: 4 August 2023

In a stark warning, the United Kingdom government has alerted the public to the impact of a cyberattack on critical infrastructure.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) TSA renews cybersecurity guidelines for pipelines
https://therecord.media/tsa-renews-guidelines-for-pipelines

(Global) Protecting Critical Infrastructure: The Importance of Global Threat Intelligence in Telecommunications Security

(U.S.) White House launches contest to improve critical infrastructure cybersecurity with AI

(Bangladesh, Global) Bangladesh hacktivists target critical infrastructure in India, Israel, and Australia
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

The Islamic State group says its leader was killed by militants in Syria and names his successor

Bassem Mroue – The Associated Press: 3 August 2023

Abu al-Hussein al-Husseini al-Qurayshi, who headed the extremist organization since November, died fighting in Syria.

https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-leader-killed-syria-b81b6eb5aac6963ed6b0c6a762b-14fcd

ISIS At Play From Afghanistan: Bajaur Suicide Bombing And Surging Threats Of Terrorism — OpEd

Hammad Baloch – Eurasia Review: 6 August 2023

The reverberations of the suicide bombing that shook a political rally in the Bajaur district of northwest Pakistan continue to send shockwaves through the nation, instilling widespread concern about security preparations leading up to the impending national election.


For more on this theme:

The Growing Threat Of ISIS-K And Implications For Global Security — OpEd


The Hunt: Germany foils a terror plot by ISIS terrorists posing as Afghan refugees


Afghan Taliban say dozens of Pakistanis involved in recent Islamic State attacks


Fire breaks out at north Syria camp housing families linked to Islamic State group fighters


Islamic State Claims 16 Soldiers Dead in Mali Attack

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Hezbollah’s Multi-Faceted Approach to Destabilizing Israel’s Northern Border
Joe Trzman – Long War Journal: 8 August 2023

Over the past 13 months, a series of provocative acts and attacks have revealed the growing threat posed by Lebanese Hezbollah.


For more on this theme:

Remembering the impact of Al Qaeda’s bombings of U.S. embassies, 25 years later

How the coup in Niger could expand the reach of Islamic extremism, and Wagner, in West Africa

Niger’s junta asks for help from Russian group Wagner as it faces military intervention threat
https://apnews.com/article/wagner-russia-coup-niger-military-force-e0e1108b58a9e955af465a3e-fe6605c0

Whatever Happened to Al Qaeda?

Taliban takeover in Afghanistan has “emboldened” TTP, increasing cross-border attacks: UNSC report

UN report blows lid off Al-Qaeda’s plot to target India

Fanboys or the Frontline?: How al-Shabaab’s Social Media Influencers are Controlling the Narrative
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/fanboys-or-the-frontline-how-al-shabaabss-social-media-influencers-are-controlling-the-narrative/

African Militant Islamist Group-Linked Fatalities at All-Time High
https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-militant-islamist-group-linked-fatalities-at-all-time-high/

Turning away from terrorism: lessons from the Lake Chad Basin
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/turning-away-from-terrorism-lessons-from-the-lake-chad-basin

Boko Haram Terrorists Demand Smaller Ransoms, Victims Say It’s Because They’re Desperate
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine keeps up Russia pressure as drone raids intensify psychological war
John Psaropoulos – Al Jazeera: 3 August 2023

A new series of suspected Ukrainian drone attacks inside Russia deepen a sense of insecurity that has been slowly building up since a Kremlin assault in May.


For more on this theme:

Unseen Scars: The Plight of POWs Held by Russia — and the Ongoing Struggle of Those Released

Wagner fighters seek to unsettle NATO’s eastern flank, Polish PM says
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/wagner-group-will-try-destabilise-natos-eastern-flank-polish-pm-says-2023-08-03/

Ukraine recap: counter-offensive gathers pace while Wagner Group takes on new role
https://theconversation.com/ukraine-recap-counter-offensive-gathers-pace-while-wagner-group-takes-on-new-role-211008

Prigozhin’s Uncertain Fate
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/prigozhins-uncertain-fate

Russia targets neighbour Kazakhstan with army recruitment ads
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-targets-neighbour-kazakhstan-with-army-recruitment-ads-2023-08-03/

Ukraine declares war on Russia’s Black Sea shipping
https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-declares-war-on-russia-black-sea-shipping/

Global food prices rise after Russia ends Ukraine grain deal and India restricts rice exports

Russia’s war with Ukraine has generated its own fog, and mis- and disinformation are everywhere
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-disinformation-f8ee274890cd62362be3dd75fbc7dd6b

Ukraine’s invisible battle to jam Russian weapons

China assures Russia it remains ‘impartial’ on Ukraine war after attending Saudi peace talks
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

How — and when — Ukraine's war with Russia could end

Forced Passportization In Russia-Occupied Areas Of Ukraine

How tomorrow never comes: Russia's war against Ukraine and its impact on Taiwan

Drone Wars over Moscow
https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/08/drone-wars-over-moscow/

Three lessons from Europe's response to Ukrainian migration

Occupied Ukraine’s Turncoat Elites Struggle to Make Their Mark in Russian Politics
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90342

Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine Has Rocked Moldovan Politics
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90356

Putin’s Age of Chaos

Analysis: China’s Ukraine peace-talks gambit shows shift in approach

Ukraine Military Situation: New Conscription Plan Further Militarizes Russia — Analysis

The Second Russia-Africa Summit: A Continent At A Crossroads — Analysis

Agricultural obstacles may complicate Ukraine’s path toward EU membership
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/agricultural-obstacles-may-complicate-ukraines-path-toward-eu-membership/

New report highlights evidence of escalating Russian genocide in Ukraine

Russia accused of deliberately targeting journalists in Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Ukraine’s slow counteroffensive is a wake-up call for the West
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-slow-counteroffensive-is-a-wake-up-call-for-the-west/

During Past 15 Months, Russians Register Over 21,000 Enterprises in Georgia

Moscow’s Mixed Signals About Its Strategic Intent in the Black Sea

Ukraine’s Slow-Moving Counteroffensive: Problems and Solutions (Part One)

Ukraine’s ‘Counteroffensive’ in the Global South
https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-counteroffensive-in-the-global-south/