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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Corruption and terrorism: The case of Kenya
Narrelle Gilchrist and Norman Eisen – Brookings: 22 August 2019

Studies point to a direct correlation between high levels of corruption and terrorism. Kenya, plagued by al-Shabaab, can’t seem to effectively use the aid it receives to counter the group because of rampant corruption.


A trail of ‘bloody gold’ leads to Venezuela’s government

Gold mining in Venezuela now fuels its entire economy. But the extraction is brutal, often overseen by criminal gangs. “Just like the blood diamonds [in Africa], the gold that is being extracted from Venezuela, outside of any protocol, is bloody gold,” said Gen. Manuel Cristopher Figuera, the former head of Venezuela’s intelligence service.


For more on this theme:
Mitigating Corruption Risk: The Multinational Toothache That Won’t Go Away

Strengthening Anti-Corruption War

UN Investigates Corruption in Its Own Agencies in Yemen

BOC creates special text Hotline 8484 on anti-corruption drive

North Macedonia Govt Announces New Anti-Corruption Team

Liberia: USAID/LPAC Boss Stresses Significance of Curbing Corruption In Liberian Schools
https://frontpageafricaonline.com/crime/liberia-usaid-lpac-boss-stresses-significance-of-curbing-corrup-
tion-in-liberian-schools/

Sierra Leone embraces new Strategy to tackle corruption

‘I will eventually get killed’: Meet Bryan Kramer, Papua New Guinea’s anti-corruption tsar
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/11/i-will-eventually-get-killed-meet-bryan-kramer-papua-new-
guineas-anti-corruption-tsar
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Syria’s Next Big Export: Illegal Pills
Stephen Starr – OZY: 12 August 2019

Evidenced by the recent capture of a huge shipment of Captagon, a drug favored by ISIS fighters, Syria is exporting the illegal drug to global markets. With the war unlikely to end soon, we can expect to see more illicit pill shipments coming from Syria.
https://www.ozy.com/fast-forward/syrias-next-big-export-illegal-pills/95965

Myanmar’s illicit drug problem requires a regional response
John Coyne – Australian Strategic Policy Institute: 21 August 2019

Myanmar is no stranger to the transit and production of illegal drugs. But the country is moving away from its plant-based drug trade and is producing methamphetamines and other synthetics. To curtail this illicit trade, Myanmar is going to need help from its neighbors.

For more on this theme:
How do you stop people dying from illegal drug taking?

France’s cannabis legalization debate misses one crucial point

Drug deaths soar to highest level on record

National workshop focused on developing policies to combat illicit drug trade
https://antiguaobserver.com/national-workshop-focused-on-developing-policies-to-combat-illicit-drug-trade/

Honduras ratifies the commitment on the prevention and the war against drug trafficking before the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission

Facebook and other social media a boon for drug dealers, study finds
https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1729067/facebook-and-other-social-media-a-boon-for-drug-dealers-study-finds

How Nudge Tech Helped Halve One City’s Overdose Victims

Argentina Tries To Stop Synthetic Drug Traffickers Sidestepping Prosecution

White House Steps Up Crackdown on International Opioid Trafficking
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

The fight to protect the world’s most trafficked wild commodity
Eileen Guo – National Geographic: 16 August 2019

Guatemalan forests are being devastated by the Chinese demand for rosewood. According to Interpol, illegal logging is valued even higher than wildlife trafficking, and much of it is fueled by China.


Study: Organized Crime Profits From Illegal Wildlife Trafficking
Annie Todd – Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: 16 August 2019

According to a new study by Michigan State University, environmental crimes take an estimated $91 billion to $259 billion from the world’s economy annually, accounting for 64% of organized crime finances.


For more on this theme:

The world’s biggest conference on wildlife trade is happening. Get the details.

Pangolin scales are not a party drug, say researchers

Songbirds silenced as Colombia fights wildlife trafficking
https://www.apnews.com/1c17d6bb40b84e77919f6372d31c34b8

How Many Red Pandas Are Left in the Wild?
https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/many-red-pandas-left-wild-190727892.html

How The Finance Sector Can Help Stop Illegal Wildlife Trade

China, Russia: Moscow Threatens Lumber Export Ban Against China Over Illegal Logging Concerns

How timber markets can help save tropical forests

Precision conservation: High tech to the rescue in the Peruvian Amazon

China is proving key to reducing Africa's wildlife trafficking
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/china-is-proving-key-to-reducing-africas-wildlife-trafficking
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Human Trafficking and the Children of Central America
Jarrod Sadulski – In Public Safety: 21 August 2019
Migrant travelers, particularly women and children, are highly vulnerable to human trafficking. This is especially true for those making their way from Central America to the U.S. border.

Coyotes earn a living smuggling migrants to the U.S. Not right now, one says
Patrick J. McDonnell – Los Angeles Times: 16 August 2019
Thanks to crackdowns on human smuggling on the Mexican side of the border, many “coyotes” are hanging up their hats and waiting for things to die down before they try again to move migrants into the U.S.

For more on this theme:
Mexico lacks basic data on hundreds of trafficking victims — government watchdog
http://news.trust.org/item/20190822160639-1x0zi

What Jeffrey Epstein’s case says (and doesn’t say) about human trafficking in America

Migrant Crossings: Witnessing Human Trafficking in the U.S.

Human trafficking in the US is a much bigger problem than we think

Govt unable to control thriving human trafficking

Teenage Brides Trafficked to China Reveal Ordeal: ‘Ma, I’ve Been Sold’

Human Smugglers Work With Corrupt Thai Officials: UN Report

Why the EU and the US Should Act Now to Decriminalize Humanitarian Aid to Refugees and Migrants

Youth cautioned against irregular migration
https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Youth-cautioned-against-irregular-migration-774198
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Indonesia blocks internet in Papua over unrest fears, drawing flak over alleged censorship
Agence France-Presse: 23 August 2019

To curtail the inflammatory online posts that could spark more violence, Indonesia has cut off internet access to Papua.


For more on this theme:
(Kashmir) Netizen Report: The shutdown in Kashmir continues

(Global) Digital Native: How free is the internet?
https://indianexpress.com/article/express-sunday-eye/digital-native-how-free-is-the-internet-5907436/

(U.S.) Federal officials raise concerns about White House plan to police alleged social media censorship

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Firefox and Chrome Fight Back Against Kazakhstan’s Spying
Lily Hay Newman – Wired: 21 August 2019

Google, Mozilla and Apple are incorporating technical protections in their internet browsers to counter Kazakhstan’s online surveillance activities.

https://www.wired.com/story/chrome-firefox-kazakhstan-surveillance/

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) How government agencies can up their cybersecurity game
https://www.fifthdomain.com/thought-leadership/2019/08/12/how-government-agencies-can-up-their-cybersecurity-game/

(Global) Google comes up with its own plan to tackle online privacy

(China) China’s Lax Attitude About Privacy Is Shifting — Data Sheet
CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

Twitter and Facebook crack down on accounts linked to Chinese campaign against Hong Kong
Kari Paul – The Guardian: 19 August 2019
Social media giants Twitter and Facebook are pushing back against Chinese-sponsored information operations against protestors in Hong Kong. The companies accused China of spreading disinformation and blocked or removed thousands of accounts.

For more on this theme:
(Global) The age of cyber influencing
https://tribune.com.pk/story/2032795/6-age-cyber-influencing/
(Global) Trends in Online Foreign Influence Efforts
(Southeast Asia) Thailand asks tech firms to set up centers against ‘fake news’ in Southeast Asia
(U.S.) How to give the military's tactical information warriors a chance

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Canada Launches Small Business Cybersecurity Certification Program
Danny Bradbury – InfoSecurity Magazine: 13 August 2019
To improve the security of small to medium-sized enterprises, Canada launched a cyber security certification program through the University of New Brunswick.

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) #BHUSA: Schneier Advocates For Public Interest Technologists
(Bulgaria) Will There be a Public-Private Partnership in Cybersecurity?
https://www.novinite.com/articles/199510/Will+There+be+a+Public-Private+Partnership+in+Cybersecurity%3F
(U.S.) Former Acting AG Whitaker Says Public-Private Partnership Needed to Ensure Cybersecurity
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Reliance on e-services has become a security issue in Estonia as it pioneers eGovernment
Jaroslaw Adamowski – SC Media: 16 August 2019

Realizing that the entire country relies heavily on e-services, Estonia had declared it must improve its cyber security and resilience throughout the nation to avoid theft or heavy disruption.

For more on this theme:
(China) China’s Cryptocurrency Almost Ready for Prime Time
https://interestingengineering.com/chinas-cryptocurrency-almost-ready-for-prime-time
(U.S.) NGA takes big step to enable AI, big data and more
(Global) Follow the Digital Silk Road
https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/follow-digital-silk-road-5g-china-vietnam
(India) India’s digital divide is not just about accessibility

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Foreign power was behind cyber attack on Czech ministry: Senate
Reuters: 13 August 2019

The Czech Republic has determined that recent cyber attacks against the foreign ministry were conducted by a nation-state. Media reports cite sources who accuse Russia.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-czech-security-cyber/foreign-power-was-behind-cyber-attack-on-czech-ministry-senate-idUSKCN1V31DS

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Feds never faced a ‘major’ cybersecurity attack in 2018
(Global) Kaspersky AV injected unique ID that allowed sites to track users, even in incognito mode
(Global) What’s Trending in Data Breaches and Cyberattacks?
(U.S.) Hackers breach 20 Texas government agencies in ransomware cyber attack
CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**AEMO ‘concerned’ about nation-state attacks on power grids**
*Stilgherrian – ZDNet: 22 August 2019*

Distributed energy resources such as rooftop solar will create “a fairly wicked supply chain issue.” How will the sector address organization culture issues as IT and operational technology are merged?  

*For more on this theme:*

- **(U.S.) Lawmakers embrace hackers in Vegas as 2020 election looms**

- **(U.S.) Lockheed Launches New Weapons Cybersecurity Strategy**

- **(Global) Lack of Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity Investments in Smart Cities Will Seed the Future IoT Vulnerabilities**

- **(Global) Securing the Industrial Internet of Things in the Utilities Sector**

**HUMAN RESOURCES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**An ICS Cyber Security Storm is Brewing: How to Prevent Staff Burnout**
*Stefan Liversidge – Nozomi Networks: 13 August 2019*

With a huge shortage of qualified cyber security experts, those who are in the field usually are overworked in an already demanding and stressful field. How do we ensure against burnout?  
https://www.nozominetworks.com/blog/an-ics-cyber-security-storm-is-brewing-how-to-prevent-staff-burnout/

*For more on this theme:*

- **(U.S., Global) Closing the talent gap for public sector cybersecurity**

- **(U.S.) New Army cyber warfare units seriously undermanned, GAO says**

- **(Global) “We must leave ‘no stone unturned’ in addressing the skills gap”: Symantec’s Sunil Varkey**
NOTEWORTHY PODCASTS

France is not alone in its plan to tax tech giants
David Dollar and Lilian Faulhaber – Brookings: 19 August 2019

Lilian Faulhaber, a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, joins Brookings Senior Fellow David Dollar to discuss France’s new digital services tax and its implications for the large American tech companies Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon.


For more on this theme:

(Global) The Cyberwire Daily Podcast — Episode 920

(Global) The Cyberwire Daily Podcast — Episode 918

(Global) Backups backups backups.
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

A look at the Islamic State affiliate’s rise in Afghanistan
The Associated Press – 19 August 2019

After a large-scale attack during a wedding in Afghanistan, President Ashraf Ghani vowed to push ISIS out of the country. This article addresses the past and present status of ISIS in Afghanistan.
https://www.apnews.com/add4a393afed4ca798401c5a0958f2c2

ISIS Is Regaining Strength in Iraq and Syria

ISIS is down, but not out. It has as many as 18,000 remaining fighters ready to strike and a war chest of as much as $400 million left at its disposal. Sources say ISIS has been practicing guerrilla warfare and adding new recruits.

For more on this theme:
With new tactics and targets, ISIS demonstrates resilience in Syria (interactive map)
Tajik Man Emerges In Afghanistan As Leader Of IS Unit Of Central Asian Fighters
France Clashes With UN Human Rights Expert Over ISIS Suspects’ Trials in Iraq
ISIS: Forgotten But Not Gone
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/isis-forgotten-not-gone
Islamic State Working to Make US Military’s Fears Come True
https://www.voanews.com/usa/islamic-state-working-make-us-militarys-fears-come-true
Bangladesh ISIS releases video titled ‘The Best Outcome is for the Pious’; renews their pledge to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
Understanding the Threat Posed by ISWA in Nigeria
https://www.cfr.org/blog/understanding-threat-posed-iswa-nigeria
Insurgents and the Flip Side of Special Operations
Pompeo says ISIS is ‘more powerful’ in some places but downplays overall threat
WHITE NATIONALIST TERRORISM

Right-wing extremists are a global problem. They need a global response.
The Washington Post: 19 August 2019

Although the most recent mass shootings occurred in the U.S., the problem of white nationalist terrorism is not unique to that country. In fact, it appears to be a global problem requiring a global solution.

Germany’s far-right: Police to restructure as threat of extremism grows
Deutsche Welle: 19 August 2019

Germany is looking to restructure its law enforcement agencies to better handle the threat posed by domestic right-wing terrorists.

For more on this theme:

Only the Right Can Defeat White Nationalism

The Fight in the Right: It is Time to Tackle White Supremacist Terrorism Globally

The gathering threat of domestic terrorism
https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2019/8/21/the-gathering-threat-of-domestic-terrorism

Proposed Bills Would Help Combat Domestic Terrorism
https://www.lawfareblog.com/proposed-bills-would-help-combat-domestic-terrorism

To Fight White Supremacist Violence, Let’s Not Repeat the Mistakes of the War on Terror
https://theintercept.com/2019/08/17/domestic-terrorism-war-on-terror/

Militant Neo-Nazi Group Actively Recruiting Ahead of Alleged Training Camp

Radicalization during financial hardships “Breaking Hate”
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

South India: The Islamist Connection – Analysis
Jasminder Singh – S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies: 13 August 2019
In response to the Sri Lankan Easter Sunday bombing, India is trying to round up people with links to Islamist networks. India fears an attack could happen at any time, especially now that ISIS has declared an Indian “province.”
https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/icpvtr/south-india-the-islamist-connection/#.XVZDSUxFw2w

Islamic State, Al-Qaeda Hunker Down to Rebuild in Weaker Nations
Glén Carey – Bloomberg: 20 August 2019
Even though ISIS no longer controls physical territory, there are plenty of places around the globe where weak central governments and ungoverned spaces can provide the safe havens terrorists need to regroup and rebuild.

For more on this theme:
Hezbollah’s Rainbow Coalition
Al-Qaeda ‘bloop reel’ released in feud between jihadi factions in Yemen
ISIS vs. Al Qaeda: What Lies in the Future of Global Jihadism?
Taliban Trolls Could Adopt New Terrorist Tactics in the Wake of America’s Peace Plan
US welcomes Paraguay’s action against Hezbollah
https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-americas/us-welcomes-paraguay-s-action-against-hezbollah-1.901472
After Hamza bin Laden
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/after-hamza-bin-laden/article29183367.ece
Al-Shabaab releases new videos documenting terror attacks
Brazil Considers Labeling Hezbollah as Terrorists in Pivot to U.S.
Israel blames Islamic Jihad for Gaza violence, tells Hamas to clamp down
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Give youth jobs to end radicalisation, state told
Stephen Astarko – The Star: 21 August 2019

In Kenya, the government brought together seven youths to discuss ways to counter al-Shabaab through social media. The group identified unemployment as a leading cause of radicalization and said youths need to be engaged in meaningful activities.


Counter messaging and credible voices can stop the spread of radicalization
Anifur Rahman Rabbi – Dhaka Tribune: 20 August 2019

John T Godfrey, a deputy coordinator for the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, spoke to journalists after a roundtable in Bangladesh on counterterrorism and countering violent extremism.


For more on this theme:

How Syrians in Kurdish areas get rid of extremism

The Tit-for-Tat Dynamics of 21st Century Extremism

Why people become terrorists — and the reason it happens over and over again

De-Radicalization — A New Strategy For Israel
https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/de-radicalization-a-new-strategy-for-israel/

Want to fight radicalization? Start by changing your language, says scholar
https://www.rudaw.net/english/interview/16082019