

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

In Peru, a corrupt land-titling scheme sees forests sold off as farms

Yvette Sierra Praeli – Mongabay: 12 August 2021

An irregular land-titling system is behind the deforestation of a swath of Amazon rainforest in Peru. In 2015, more than 40 land-registry files were filled out with false information to make it appear that forests were farmland. This allowed for the deforestation of more than 1,000 hectares of forests.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/08/in-peru-a-corrupt-land-titling-scheme-sees-forests-sold-off-as-farms/>

Adm. Faller: China exploiting corruption in Latin America

Phelim Kine – Politico: 12 August 2021

China is pursuing a dramatic increase in trade and investment in Latin America. Adm. Craig S. Faller, who will retire later this year as head of U.S. Southern Command, has a keen sense of the security risks and opportunities posed by China's growing influence and activity in the Western Hemisphere. Faller visited with Caribbean leaders earlier this month and agreed to share some observations with China Watcher about his three years monitoring the region.

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-china-watcher/2021/08/12/adm-faller-china-exploiting-corruption-in-latin-america-493948>

For more on this theme:

Indian Journalist Killed After Investigating Police Corruption

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/14993-indian-journalist-killed-after-investigating-police-corruption>

South Africa's President Says ANC Cleaning Up Corruption

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/south-africas-president-says-anc-cleaning-corruption>

China's Communist Party expels censor accused of corruption

<https://apnews.com/article/technology-religion-china-09463e3a3e0f26dedc16b6cecdf8395c>

Tunisia lawyers slam as 'dangerous' closure of anti-corruption body

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210824-tunisia-lawyers-slam-as-dangerous-closure-of-anti-corruption-body/>

Soeharto: the giant of modern Indonesia who left a legacy of violence and corruption

<https://theconversation.com/soeharto-the-giant-of-modern-indonesia-who-left-a-legacy-of-violence-and-corruption-164411>

Artificial Intelligence: The Next Generation Anti-Corruption Technology

<https://www.analyticsinsight.net/artificial-intelligence-the-next-generation-anti-corruption-technology/>

Moldova's Govt Has 'Unequivocal Mandate' to Tackle Judicial Corruption

<https://balkaninsight.com/2021/08/24/moldovas-govt-has-unequivocal-mandate-to-tackle-judicial-corruption/>

Haiti grapples with food insecurity and political corruption in aftermath of 7.2 magnitude quake

<https://www.kcrw.com/news/shows/press-play-with-madeleine-brand/afghanistan-haiti-art-food>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Illegal drug trade thrives under the Taliban, U.N. officials say

Pamela Falk – CBS News: 19 August 2021

As the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan, U.S. President Joe Biden's administration must deal with a troubling new reality. The Taliban, which now controls the country, is deeply dependent on the illegal drug trade, United Nations officials tell CBS News. The militant group relies financially on the sale of opium, methamphetamine and hashish – and collects millions of dollars in taxes from farmers who grow the crops.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/drugs-opium-taliban-afghanistan/>

From Syria to Libya: Inside the booming drugs trade thriving on regional chaos

The New Arab: 24 August 2021

An investigation by Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, The New Arab's Arabic-language sister publication, reveals a thriving drug-trafficking network between Syrian and Libyan ports led by a convicted criminal with dual nationality.

<https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/captagon-and-cannabis-inside-syrias-booming-drugs-trade>

For more on this theme:

Afghanistan's Drug Trade Helps Taliban

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/afghanistan-s-drug-trade-helps-taliban/6004890.html>

After the last 'summer of terrible drugs' it's time to make NZ's temporary drug checking law permanent

<https://theconversation.com/after-the-last-summer-of-terrible-drugs-its-time-to-make-nzs-temporary-drug-checking-law-permanent-165612>

Feds say cartels increasing maritime human and drug trafficking in Southern California

<https://www.shorenewsnetwork.com/2021/08/24/feds-say-cartels-increasing-maritime-human-and-drug-trafficking-in-southern-california/>

How Myanmar's coup fuelled a rise in the illegal drugs trade

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/how-myanmar-s-coup-fuelled-a-rise-in-the-illegal-drugs-trade-1.4653998>

China has failed to cut its fentanyl trafficking, US congressional panel finds

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/china-failed-cut-fentanyl-trafficking-214910674.html>

Is Afghanistan-made methamphetamine about to flood Europe?

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/24/in-europe-fears-of-a-flood-of-afghan-made-methamphetamine-grow>

Homicides Pile Up in Ecuador in Revenge for Key Drug Seizure

<https://insightcrime.org/news/homicides-pile-up-in-ecuador-in-revenge-for-key-drug-seizure/>

The Sinaloa Cartel's Top Woman Will Be Out of Prison in Just 3 Years

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/dyv9pk/the-sinaloa-cartels-top-woman-will-be-out-of-prison-in-just-3-years>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Slaves to deforestation: Labor abuses fuel Brazil's Amazon destruction

Fabio Teixeira – Reuters: 23 August 2021

A spike in rainforest loss has provoked an international outcry, but the workers who do the logging, often in slave-like conditions, remain invisible.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20210823120004-rbx7>

Fish and ships: Chinese fishing and Europe's Indo-Pacific strategy

Frédéric Grare – European Council on Foreign Relations: 24 August 2021

The fisheries sector has become a central geopolitical issue in the Indo-Pacific. China is a major cause of the problems in the industry, thanks to the size of its fleet and the tonnage of its captures. China also contributes to the erosion of ocean governance through its participation in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

<https://ecfr.eu/publication/fish-and-ships-chinese-fishing-and-europes-indo-pacific-strategy/>

For more on this theme:

Hawaii Fishermen Concerned Over Growing Chinese Presence

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/hawaii-fishermen-concerned-over-growing-chinese-presence>

Weak controls fuel surge in wildlife trafficking by air across Latin America

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/08/weak-controls-fuel-surge-in-wildlife-trafficking-by-air-across-latin-america/>

Myanmar Junta's Coup Gives Greenlight to Timber Traffickers

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-juntas-coup-gives-greenlight-to-timber-traffickers.html>

Environmental Activists in Cambodia Are Resorting to Disguises to Avoid Arrests

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/5db4vx/environmental-activists-cambodia-climate-change>

The Scale of Illegal Coltan Trafficking in Colombia and Venezuela

<https://insightcrime.org/news/colombia-backdoor-for-venezuelan-coltan/>

The Taliban now controls one of the world's biggest lithium deposits

<https://qz.com/2047785/under-the-taliban-what-will-happen-to-afghanistans-minerals/>

New NOAA Report Identifies China, Russia Among Countries That Have Ships Engaged In Illegal Fishing

<https://www.deeperblue.com/new-noaa-report-identifies-china-russia-among-countries-that-have-ships-engaged-in-illegal-fishing/>

Hong Kong Brings Wildlife Trafficking under Organized Crime Bill

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/15037-hong-kong-brings-wildlife-trafficking-under-organized-crime-bill>

Key players in Latin America and the Caribbean's aviation industry connect to address wildlife trafficking

<https://www.traffic.org/news/key-players-latin-america-and-caribbean-aviation-industry-connect-to-address-wildlife-trafficking/>

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Australian Senate passes bill banning imports made using forced labour

Daniel Hurst – The Guardian: 22 August 2021

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government faces growing pressure to tighten Australia's customs laws after the Senate passed a bill to ban importing products made using forced labor.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/aug/23/australian-senate-poised-to-pass-bill-banning-imports-made-using-forced-labour>

For more on this theme:

With Assam silk and trees, Indians fight climate change and trafficking

<https://news.trust.org/item/20210825120512-dfra0>

Exploited, held captive and rescued from Togo: How four Bangladeshis survived human trafficking

<https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/exploited-held-captive-and-rescued-togo-how-four-bangladeshis-survived-human>

Smuggling people from Afghanistan to Turkey

<https://www.dw.com/en/smuggling-people-from-afghanistan-to-turkey/a-58981207>

Desperate people on a dangerous route: Why Lampedusa is a magnet for migrants

<https://news.sky.com/story/desperate-people-on-a-dangerous-route-why-lampedusa-is-a-magnet-for-migrants-12390357>

Left Adrift at Sea: Dangerous Journeys of Refugees Across the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea January 2020 - June 2021

<https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/left-adrift-sea-dangerous-journeys-refugees-across-bay-bengal-and-andaman-sea-january>

Record Level of Maritime Smuggling Moving North Along California Coast

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/record-level-of-maritime-smuggling-moving-north-along-california-coast>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Cuba passes regulations criminalizing online content, further restricting internet access

Committee to Protect Journalists: 19 August 2021

New telecommunications regulations in Cuba will further censor information on the island.

<https://cpj.org/2021/08/cuba-passes-regulations-criminalizing-online-content-further-restricting-internet-access/>

For more on this theme:

(China) How China's top internet regulator became Chinese tech giants' worst enemy

<https://qz.com/2039292/how-did-chinas-top-internet-regulator-become-so-powerful/>

(China) How China's Ultra-Loyal Web Army Silences Beijing's Critics

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-25/how-china-s-ultra-loyal-web-army-can-silence-beijing-s-critics>

(Afghanistan) Fears loom over Afghanistan's internet

<https://www.politico.eu/article/afghanistan-braces-for-fight-over-taliban-internet-information-control/>

(Russia) Russia's latest crackdown on dissent is much more sweeping than ever before

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/08/25/russias-latest-crackdown-dissent-is-much-more-sweeping-than-ever-before/>

CYBER STATECRAFT

U.S. Expands Cybersecurity Collaboration with Singapore

Mariam Baksh – NextGov: 23 August 2021

The move comes as China has become more assertive in the region.

<https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2021/08/us-expands-cybersecurity-collaboration-singapore/184767/>

For more on this theme:

(India) India's cyber security: Approach and preparedness

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/ht-insight/economy/indias-cyber-security-approach-and-preparedness-101629893039734.html>

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Elon Musk's satellites beam internet into remote Chilean fishing hamlet

Reuters: 20 August 2021

Since October, it has been offering a “Better Than Nothing Beta” program to subscribers in the United States, while also running pilot trials in other countries. In Chile, a second antennae will be installed in Caleta Sierra, a small fishing port close to the arid northern deserts.

<https://cio.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/corporate-news/elon-musks-satellites-beam-internet-in-to-remote-chilean-fishing-hamlet/85477190>

For more on this theme:

(Nigeria) 5G Deployment in Nigeria

<https://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2021/08/23/5g-deployment-in-nigeria/>

(U.S.) Digital divide: Gap is narrowing, but how will schools maintain progress?

<https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2021/0825/Digital-divide-Gap-is-narrowing-but-how-will-schools-maintain-progress>

CYBERCRIME

International Law's Role in Combating Ransomware?

Gary Corn – Just Security: 23 August 2021

As it has done in other domains, international law has an important role to play in setting some semblance of security and stability for a globally interconnected cyberspace.

<https://www.justsecurity.org/77845/international-laws-role-in-combating-ransomware/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Technology and crime: A never-ending cat-and-mouse game

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/08/25/technology-and-crime-a-never-ending-cat-and-mouse-game/>

(U.S.) Biden Administration, Tech Giants Launch Initiatives to Fight Cybercrime

<https://www.channelfutures.com/security/biden-administration-tech-giants-launch-initiatives-to-fight-cybercrime>

(U.S.) T-Mobile hack is a return to the roots of cybercrime

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/08/19/tmobile-breach-data-hacks/>

(Australia) Australian powers to spy on cybercrime suspects given green light

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/aug/25/australian-powers-to-spy-on-cybercrime-suspects-given-green-light>

CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Cybercrime Group Asking Insiders for Help in Planting Ransomware

Ravie Lakshmanan – The Hacker News: 20 August 2021

A Nigerian threat actor has been observed attempting to recruit employees by offering to pay them \$1 million in bitcoins to deploy Black Kingdom ransomware on companies' networks as part of an insider threat scheme.

<https://thehackernews.com/2021/08/cybercrime-group-asking-insiders-for.html>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Researchers Detail Modus Operandi of ShinyHunters Cyber Crime Group

<https://thehackernews.com/2021/08/researchers-detail-modus-operandi-of.html>

(U.S.) Eskenazi Health says 'some' data leaked online following cyber attack

<https://fox59.com/news/eskenazi-health-says-some-data-leaked-online-following-cyber-attack/>

(Singapore) Nearly 73,500 patients' data affected in ransomware attack on eye clinic in S'pore

<https://www.straitstimes.com/tech/tech-news/nearly-73500-patients-data-affected-in-ransomware-attack-on-eye-clinic-in-spore>

(Japan) Cyber Attack on Crypto Exchange Liquid Results in Loss of \$97 Million in Ethereum Tokens and Other Assets

<https://www.cpomagazine.com/cyber-security/cyber-attack-on-crypto-exchange-liquid-results-in-loss-of-97-million-in-ethereum-tokens-and-other-assets/>

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Facing Foreign Election Foes, States Hire 'Cyber Navigators'

Matt Vasilogambros – PEW: 25 August 2021

Local election officials are on the front lines of election defense, but they often are underfunded or lack the technical know-how to protect systems from cyber threats.

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2021/08/25/facing-foreign-election-foes-states-hire-cyber-navigators>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Security Strategies For Critical Infrastructure, Connected Devices

<https://governmentciomedia.com/security-strategies-critical-infrastructure-connected-devices>

(Global) Critical Infrastructure Attack Trends: What Business Leaders Should Know

<https://securityintelligence.com/articles/critical-infrastructure-attack-trends-business-leaders/>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

'Rewards for killings being paid in Bitcoins', Jaishankar on ISIS terror group

Mint: 20 August 2021

ISIS terror group is paying bitcoins as a form of reward for killings, Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told the United Nations.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/rewards-for-killings-being-paid-in-bitcoins-jaishankar-on-isis-terror-group-11629420904255.html>

Who are Isis-K, and what is their relationship with the Taliban?

James Rothwell – The Telegraph: 27 August 2021

ISIS-K, the terrorist splinter cell, said it was behind the deadly bombing at Kabul airport in Afghanistan.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2021/08/27/who-isis-k-islamic-state-what-relationship-with-taliban/>

For more on this theme:

The Rise of Saifullah: Islamic State's New Point Man for Southeast Asia?

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/the-rise-of-saifullah-islamic-states-new-point-man-for-southeast-asia/>

Ex-MI5 chief warns Isis could take advantage of Afghanistan's fall

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/20/ex-mi5-chief-warns-isis-take-advantage-afghanistan-fall-jonathan-evans>

ISIS is defeated. What becomes of the 'Cubs of the Caliphate' in Iraq?

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/isis-is-defeated-what-becomes-of-the-cubs-of-the-caliphate-in-iraq/>

Chaos in Afghanistan creates power vacuum for ISIS, al-Qaeda to reorganize, counterterrorism expert says

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2021-08-25/chaos-afghanistan-creates-power-vacuum-isis-al-qaeda-reorganize-counterterrorism>

Welcome Home? ISIS Returnees Test Balkan Countries' Ability to Reintegrate

<https://balkaninsight.com/2021/08/20/welcome-home-isis-returnees-test-balkan-countries-ability-to-reintegrate/>

Islamic State threat moves online, expands across Africa: Senior counterterrorism expert

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1098112>

Taliban takeover of Afghanistan a 'US-backed conspiracy', says Islamic State

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2021/08/20/islamic-state-brand-taliban-takeover-afghanistan-us-backed-conspiracy/>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Return of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan: The Jihadist State of Play

Aaron Y. Zelin – *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*: 18 August 2021

Regardless of the Taliban's promises to keep foreign terrorist elements in check, its victory is already boosting elements within the jihadist movement and may once again spur foreign fighter traffic to Afghanistan.

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/return-islamic-emirate-afghanistan-jihadist-state-play>

For more on this theme:

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's Latest Merger Enables Renewed Attacks in Pakistan

<https://jamestown.org/program/tehreek-e-taliban-pakistans-latest-merger-enables-renewed-attacks-in-pakistan/>

Al-Shabaab: why women join the Islamist militant group – podcast

<https://theconversation.com/al-shabaab-why-women-join-the-islamist-militant-group-podcast-165276>

Al Qaeda is still in Afghanistan and the Taliban are still their allies

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/afghanistan-al-qaeda-taliban-allies/>

Al-Shabaab storms Somali military base

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/africa/569182-al-shabaab-storms-somali-military-base?rl=1>

Somali Forces Recapture Town After Brief Al-Shabab Seizure

<https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/somali-forces-recapture-town-after-brief-al-shabab-seizure>

Africa's jihadists: What Taliban takeover of Afghanistan means

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58279439>

Nigeria Says 'Safe to Assume' Boko Haram Leader Is Dead

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/nigeria-says-safe-assume-boko-haram-leader-dead>

BOKO HARAM: Opposition to amnesty grows as military defends 3,116 terrorists' surrender

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/boko-haram-opposition-to-amnesty-grows-as-military-defends-3116-terrorists-surrender/>

Hezbollah Says Iranian Fuel Tanker to Sail to Lebanon Soon

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/hezbollah-says-iranian-fuel-tanker-sail-lebanon-soon>

Taliban Ramp Up on Social Media, Defying Bans by the Platforms

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/18/technology/taliban-social-media-bans.html>

UN to survivors, victims of terrorism: 'You are not alone'

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1098182>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

Are Russia's Wagner mercenaries in Libya on the way out?

The Arab Weekly: 20 August 2021

The issue is complicated by Libyan political divisions and foreign entanglements.

<https://thearabweekly.com/are-russias-wagner-mercenaries-libya-way-out>

For more on this theme:

How Iran Helped Houthis Expand Their Reach

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/how-iran-helped-houthis-expand-their-reach/>

Libyan Leader Warns Foreign Meddling Poses Risk to Landmark Vote

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-20/libyan-leader-warns-foreign-meddling-poses-risk-to-landmark-vote>

In Central Africa, Russia Won the War—but It's Losing the Peace

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/21/in-central-africa-russia-won-the-war-but-its-losing-the-peace/>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

Russian Intelligence Agencies Enrolled Ransomware Gangs To Attack US Government Agencies, Report Finds

Alicia Hope – CPO Magazine: 23 August 2021

Russian intelligence agencies worked with ransomware gangs to compromise various U.S. government agencies, Analyst1 cybersecurity firm found. The firm's "Nation-State Ransomware" report says that advanced persistent-threat actors assisted the Russian intelligence agencies to develop and deploy malware against U.S. government targets.

<https://www.cpomagazine.com/cyber-security/russian-intelligence-agencies-enrolled-ransomware-gangs-to-attack-us-government-agencies-report-finds/>

Investigation of an Iranian Misinformation Network: Are Some IRGC Domains Still Up?

CircleID: 20 August 2021

In June, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) shut down and seized several websites believed to be involved in misinformation campaigns. These websites published news content and seemingly had connections to Iranian governmental entities and were deemed by the DOJ to be owned or controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

<https://circleid.com/posts/20210820-investigation-of-an-iranian-misinformation-network-are-some-irgc-domains-still-up>

For more on this theme:

IT Leaders: Nation State Campaigns Are Inspiring Cybercrime Attacks

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/nation-state-campaigns-inspire/>

IT leaders fear 'trickle-down' of nation-state cyber attacks

<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252505571/IT-leaders-fear-trickle-down-of-nation-state-cyber-attacks>