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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Guatemala’s president-elect faces legal challenges that seek to weaken him.

Here’s what’s happening

Sonia Pérez D. – The Associated Press: 29 August 2023

After weeks of uncertainty, the top electoral court finally certified Bernardo Arévalo as the winner. But federal prosecutors are seeking to suspend his party, throwing into doubt whether he will have support in Congress.

https://apnews.com/article/guatemala-election-corruption-explained-f7e64b92d7cb76490f-71211c129b8e9d

Ukraine uncovers corruption scheme implicating top officials

Claudia Chiappa – Politico: 25 August 2023

The ploy involves the purchase of food intended as humanitarian aid.


For more on this theme:

Guatemala Chose a New Pro-Reform President. Can He Stem Corruption and Migration?

https://www.cfr.org/blog/guatemala-chose-new-pro-reform-president-can-he-stem-corruption-and-migration

Ex-French leader Sarkozy faces 2025 trial over alleged Libya corruption


Guatemala arrests anti-corruption lawyer, prompting international outcry


Pakistani court suspends the corruption conviction and sentence of former Prime Minister Imran Khan


Corruption in Afghanistan offers lessons for billions going to Ukraine


Ukraine’s anti-graft police zero in on major wartime corruption

https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-anti-graft-police-zero-major-wartime-corruption-2023-08-21/

Attacking foreign corruption blunts China’s malign economic influence


Indonesia permit payoff raises alarm about palm oil industry corruption

DRUG TRAFFICKING

DataInsights: The Cocaine Problem Ecuador’s Presidential Candidates Cannot Wish Away
Steven Dudley and Luisa Acosta – InSight Crime: 23 August 2023
Two candidates remain in Ecuador’s presidential race and, regardless of their security policies, neither can control the rising production of cocaine, which appears to be fueling spiraling violence.

Crack cocaine floods Brussels as alarm sounds over safety in EU capital
Claudia Chiappa and Nicolas Camut – Politico: 25 August 2023
Areas around the main international railway station are unsafe, hotel workers told Politico.

For more on this theme:
Honduras arrests mayor accused of trafficking cocaine to US

Ecuador Violence Fueled by Regional Drug Trade

For Young Venezuelan Migrants in Brazil, Drugs, Gold and Early Death

The Azadi Briefing: Opium Sold Openly In Afghanistan, Despite Taliban Ban

Is the Taliban getting hooked on fentanyl?
https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/is-the-taliban-getting-hooked-on-fentanyl/

A spatial regression analysis of Colombia’s narcodeforestation with factor decomposition of multiple predictors
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-40119-3

The narco-highway creating chaos in a Honduran rainforest

Crisis and Opportunity: Unraveling Colombia’s Collapsing Coca Markets

The Taliban’s Opium Ban Has Become an Existential Problem for the West
https://www.vice.com/en/article/7kxw3b/the-talibans-opium-ban-has-become-an-existential-problem-for-the-west
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

The Poaching and Trafficking of Pangolins is Sowing Instability in Central Africa
Mark Leon Goldberg – UN Dispatch: 24 August 2023

Pangolins are small mammals with hard scales and vital to biodiversity in forested regions. They are also the most trafficked mammal in the world.

Illegal logging thrives in Mexico City's forest-covered boroughs, as locals strive to plant trees
Maria Verza – The Associated Press: 28 August 2023

The extent of the devastation is astonishing, say groups and local residents who seek to preserve the forest that recharges aquifers and helps clean the polluted air.

For more on this theme:

Satellite monitoring helped tackle illegal logging, Forest Centre says
https://yle.fi/a/74-20045647

Poachers now on conservation side

Malaysia, a strong example of deforestation success story

Peru on War Footing Against Illegal Mining
https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/peru-on-war-footing-against-illegal-mining/

Ecuador and Uruguay Bring New Energy to Fight Illegal Fishing

USVs Could Deter IUU Fishing

How ASEAN Can Win Its War Against Illegal and Unregulated Fishing

Knowledge sharers: Guatemalan farms, tech firms mapping illegal fishing

Is Evacuation of 8,600 Venezuelan Miners Just Another Smokescreen?
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

**A Victim’s Perspective on International Law in Cyberspace**
Chris Carpenter and Duncan B. Hollis – Lawfare: 28 August 2023

Costa Rica’s recent position paper improves transparency on the country’s legal views and provides a framework for future dialogue with other states.

https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/a-victim-s-perspective-on-international-law-in-cyberspace

*For more on this theme:*

(Canada) Canada rolls out generative AI code of practice

(Global) Can We Red Team Our Way to AI Accountability?
https://techpolicy.press/can-we-red-team-our-way-to-ai-accountability/

(Global) Governments race to regulate AI tools

INTERNET FREEDOM

**Internet Shutdown Pushback in Kazakhstan**
Catherine Putz – The Diplomat: 30 August 2023

Kazakh legislation allows various government entities to slow and stop internet traffic. A group of nongovernmental organizations wants the practice stopped for good.


*For more on this theme:*

(China) China is big on internet censorship unless it’s racist content, Human Rights Watch says

(Cambodia) Cambodia: Problematic laws and restrictions on information are threatening digital rights

(Iran) Suppressing Dissent, Filling Coffers: Iran’s Regime Capitalizes on Internet Censorship
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Digitalization: How the EU Can Transform Central Asia
Alouddin Komilov – The Diplomat: 23 August 2023

The European Union has the potential to contribute to the digital transformation of the region by leveraging its comparative strengths.

For more on this theme:
(Kenya) Communications Authority focuses on improving cybersecurity
https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/communications-authority-focuses-on-improving-cybersecurity/

(G20) G20 digital ministers sign up for Digital Public Infrastructure push
https://www.theregister.com/2023/08/21/g20_digital_public_infrastructure_plan/

(India) Digital Forensics: India’s Roadmap for the Next Decade
https://www.the420.in/digital-forensics-indias-roadmap-for-the-next-decade/

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

States’ use of non-state actors in cyberspace
Aishwarya Raman – Observer Research Foundation: 17 August 2023

Without proper legislation, the use of nonstate actors for cyber warfare poses a significant threat to governments, businesses and individuals.

For more on this theme:
(Australia) Op-Ed: Charting Australia’s cyber security future – Imperatives for the next strategy

(EU) What is the EU’s Cyber Resilience Act (CRA)?

(China) Mounting Cyber Espionage and Hacking Threat from China
CYBERATTACKS

North Korean Attackers Penetrated Russian Rocket Designer’s Systems
Teri Robinson – Security Boulevard: 22 August 2023

Loose alliances between governments may not extend to the digital realm — North Korean attackers not only breached a Russian missile-maker but also stayed in its systems for nearly six months.


For more on this theme:
(U.S.) University of Michigan shuts down network after cyberattack
(U.S., Chile) Huge cyberattack disables telescopes in Hawaii and Chile
https://interestingengineering.com/science/hawaii-chile-nsf-telescopes-cyberattack
(UK) UK police cyberattack stark reminder of vendor vulnerability

CYBERCRIME

Cybercriminals in Russia and Iran will threaten Canada’s security and economic prosperity, say intelligence agency and RCMP
Temur Durrani – The Globe and Mail: 28 August 2023

The threat from organized cybercrime will increase in the next two years as hackers from Iran and Russia increasingly attack critical infrastructure and high-value businesses, according to a report.


For more on this theme:
(Pakistan) Navigating Pakistan's Digital Revolution: Cybercrimes, Reporting, And Safeguarding
(Malaysia) Public-private partnership enhances strategy to address cybercrime
https://www.thesundaily.my/local/public-private-partnership-enhances-strategy-to-address-cybercrime-NE11379631
(Global) How international cybersecurity frameworks can help CISOs
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

UN experts say Islamic State group almost doubled the territory they control in Mali in under a year

Edith M. Lederer – The Associated Press: 26 August 2023

In June, Mali’s junta ordered the United Nations peacekeeping force and its 15,000 international troops to leave after a decade of working to stem the jihadi insurgency.

https://apnews.com/article/mali-islamic-state-alqaida-violence-un-e841e4d5835c7fa01605e8fd1ea03f-cf

For more on this theme:

Shut Down Smuggling Network with Terrorist Ties, US Says

Islamic State and Wagner Group Compete for Resources and Territory in Mali

Brutal Slaying Marks Islamic State’s Entry Into Conflict Between Nigerian Farmers And Herders

Lure of Jihad: How role of women in Islamic State is changing and gaining significance

The Fight for Justice for ISIS Victims in Australia

No murders in Syria’s Al Hol camp this year as it sees ‘steady progress’, says US general

As ISIS affiliate expands in central Africa, escapees recount horrors
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/12/congo-uganda-adf-isis/

Generation Jihad Ep. 98 — Fatal Transaction

Daesh continues to lose influence and effectiveness in Iraq, says US general
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2356476/middle-east

UN: ISIS leader in Sudan finances operations through Turkey
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Taliban Rule at the Two-Year Mark: Should We Worry About al-Qaeda and ISIS-K?  
Mahmut Cengiz – Homeland Security Today: 28 August 2023

The critical question of the Taliban’s takeover has been whether Afghanistan could again become a haven for terrorists and pose a threat to international security.


For more on this theme:

Somalia Military Offensive Suffers Setback as Troops Retreat  
https://www.voanews.com/a/7245333.html

Hezbollah warns against renewing UN peacekeeping mandate in Lebanon  

The Taliban’s Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan Is Part Of — Not Separate From — Its Terrorist Links  
https://www.justsecurity.org/87634/the-talibans-gender-apartheid-policies-support-radicalization/

Two years after Taliban takeover: why Afghanistan still poses a threat to the region and beyond  

Africa: ‘No African Country Will Be Truly Safe From Terrorism Until All Countries Are’  
https://allafrica.com/stories/202308110269.html

Time for a victim-centric approach in prosecuting sexual and gender-based violence committed by terrorists  

Dogo Gide’s Bandits in Northwestern Nigeria Potentially Aligning With Jihadists  

Pakistani Taliban Broaden Support Among Baloch, Merge With Separatist Groups  

TJP: A Front Group for the Pakistani Taliban?  
https://jamestown.org/program/tjp-a-front-group-for-the-pakistani-taliban/

Motorbikes and armed groups in the Sahel  
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/motorbikes-trade-armed-groups-sahel/

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s Drone Attacks Indicate a Strategic Shift  
The War in Ukraine Is About Europe’s Future
Judy Dempsey – Carnegie: 29 August 2023

Europe needs to rapidly increase its military support to ensure victory for Kyiv. A failure to do so would threaten the EU’s security and credibility — and embolden Moscow.

https://carniegeurope.eu/strategiceurope/90444

For more on this theme:

Prigozhin’s Death Shows Ultra-Patriots Are No Threat to the Kremlin
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90466

Why Yevgeny Prigozhin Had to Die
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90436

Why Putin Wanted Prigozhin Dead
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/why-putin-wanted-prigozhin-dead

Prigozhin’s death ends a week of new commitments for Ukraine

Expert Commentary: Prigozhin’s Death and the Future of Putin’s Rule

Fighting to Win: Ukraine, Russia, and the War for Survival

Russia to resume offensive in east Ukraine after regrouping, Kyiv says

Ukraine’s remarkable resilience may prove decisive in long war with Russia

How Can Ukraine Induce More Russian Soldiers To Quit?

Deportation, Treatment of Ukraine’s Children by Russian Federations Takes Centre Stage by Many Delegates at Security Council Briefing

Russia plundering Ukraine’s natural resources

US intel: Ukraine war caused ‘one of the most disruptive periods’ for global food security
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

UK and allies support Ukraine calling out Russia's GRU for new malware campaign

Study: China Main Supplier of Critical Components for Russian Drones

China Ponders Russia's Logistical Challenges in the Ukraine War

Ukraine’s Valley Forge Moment
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-valley-forge-moment/

Ripples From Putin’s Invasion Reach the Arctic
https://cepa.org/article/ripples-from-putins-invasion-reach-the-arctic/

Why Do Russians Scorn Ukrainian Independence?

Late Putinism: Mafia State
https://cepa.org/article/late-putinism-mafia-state/

Russia’s Sinister Gas Doll
https://cepa.org/article/russias-sinister-gas-doll/

Prigozhin Dies, but Russia’s Dark Fixers Live On
https://cepa.org/article/prigozhin-dies-but-russias-dark-fixers-live-on/

Russia may ‘suddenly break’ under pressure from Ukraine’s counteroffensive, former US general Petraeus says

Russia’s War in Ukraine and Women’s Agency

‘Ukraine Has Retaken The Initiative From The Enemy,’ Says Former Top NATO Officer

The spiraling cost of war means growing economic pain for Russia

Ukrainian troops ‘break through toughest Russian lines’

GMF Expert Analysis: Implications of Prigozhin’s Death
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

The Ukraine-Russia Conflict Has Reached A Stalemate
https://www.eurasiareview.com/26082023-the-ukraine-russia-conflict-has-reached-a-stalemate-analysis/

Open Source Technology and Public-Private Innovation Are the Key to Ukraine’s Strategic Resilience

How Ukraine Can Win the Peace: A Conversation with Stephen Kotkin

The Russo-Ukrainian War Through History’s Lens
https://providencemag.com/2023/08/the-russo-ukrainian-war-through-historys-lens/

Russia: Prigozhin Buried In A Cloud Of Uncertainty

How The War Could Make Ukraine A Defense Powerhouse
https://www.eurasiareview.com/26082023-how-the-war-could-make-ukraine-a-defense-powerhouse-analysis/

Ukraine’s counteroffensive might yet surprise critics
https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/ukraines-counteroffensive-might-yet-surprise-critics

Ukraine Symposium — Territorial Acquisition and Armed Conflict
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/territorial-acquisition-armed-conflict/

Europe’s last war
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/europe-s-last-war

With Prigozhin gone, what next for the Wagner Group?
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/prigozhin-gone-what-next-wagner-group