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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Former IAAF president Lamine Diack sentenced to 2 years in prison
Lamine Diack, former head of the international track federation’s governing body, has been sentenced to two years in prison after being found guilty on corruption charges related to the Russian doping scandal, a Paris court announced.
https://apnews.com/78720e6ef996722757b6d4171df3c4cf

Ukraine’s reforms remain hostage to corrupt courts
Diane Francis – Atlantic Council: 15 September 2020
After the 2019 elections, the victorious presidential candidate in Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, moved toward reforming the corrupt system he had campaigned against. But one year later, these efforts have suffered a setback: Judicial reform has proven impossible because the courts can block changes to the legislation.
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-reforms-remain-hostage-to-corrupt-courts/

For more on this theme:
How corruption is making people sick

Denmark wants to employ blockchain in fight vs corruption

Ukrainian government approves national anti-corruption strategy

The United States Sanctions Chinese State-Owned Entity for its Role in Corruption in Cambodia

Iraqi officials arrested as part of Kadhimi’s anti-corruption campaign
https://thearabweekly.com/iraqi-officials-arrested-part-kadhimis-anti-corruption-campaign

SA businessman rolls out fresh anti-corruption initiative

The role of technology and anti-corruption measures in fighting COVID-19

Pacific women urged to pursue decision making roles and fight against corruption
https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/426056/pacific-women-urged-to-pursue-decision-making-roles-and-fight-against-corruption
DRUG TRAFFICKING

White House labels Venezuela's Maduro cocaine 'kingpin' over alleged drug trafficking ties
Caitlin McFall – Fox News: 17 September 2020

Venezuela faces more pressure amid international allegations of drug trafficking and human rights abuses. “The most complicit kingpin in this Hemisphere is the Venezuelan dictator, Nicolas Maduro,” the White House said in a statement. “He joined a multitude of other regime cronies who are either under U.S. indictment or were sanctioned for drug crimes by the Department of the Treasury.”


Are Recent Cocaine Busts Evidence of Revived Jamaica-UK Drug Route?
Parker Asmann – InSight Crime: 10 September 2020

Although the Pacific is still the preferred route, the Caribbean has undergone a resurgence as a critical transit zone for transnational criminal groups trafficking cocaine to consumers in the United States and Europe.


For more on this theme:
Brazil freezes $43 million of assets in international drug trafficking probe
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-crime-idUSKBN262241

Thailand seals border with Myanmar to stem Covid-19, drug trafficking

Italian-led investigation busts ethnic Albanian crime gang

Iraqi commission announces national drug abuse, arrest figures

‘Heroin as easily available as cigarettes in Kashmir’

Study links 2018 drop in overdose deaths to change in China drug policy

New York charges Johnson & Johnson with insurance fraud over opioid claims

Singapore Halts Planned Hanging of Drug Trafficker One Day Before Execution
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Illegal fishing in Mexico and policy responses
Vanda Felbab-Brown – Brookings: 14 September 2020

Illegal fishing in Mexico is an extensive and growing problem. Public focus has centered on the poaching of the totoaba in the Sea of Cortez, but illegal fishing in Mexico involves many other species and vast areas.

Wildlife trade threats: The importance of genetic data in saving an endangered species
Science Daily: 14 September 2020

The wildlife trade is running rampant in Southeast Asia, and Vietnam plays a key role in combating wildlife trafficking. The genetic analysis by a research team there will further help the country combat illicit trafficking.

For more on this theme:
Yucca Cacti Theft Illuminates Mexico’s Hidden Plant Trafficking Problem

Costa Rica Boosts Plan to Track Vessels, Combat Illegal Fishing

How Covid-19 turned out to be good news for rhinos

Extinction: Urgent change needed to save species, says UN

South Africa’s Private Game Reserves Are Struggling to Survive Without Tourists. The Animals Are, Too

‘Nobody has done anything’: Amazon indigenous group decries illegal mining

Indigenous Leaders Slain in Peru Amid Pandemic

How the Blockchain Can Turnaround Africa’s Mining Industry

USCG Releases New Plan to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

**Human Smugglers Continue to Cash In on Haitian Migrants**

*Chris Dalby – InSight Crime: 14 September 2020*

Despite being the poorest country per capita in the Western Hemisphere, according to the World Bank, Haiti’s political, security and economic crisis has lined the pockets of criminal gangs. And Chile has been a destination of choice for smuggled Haitians, given its friendlier stance on migration and perceived economic opportunities.


*For more on this theme:*

- **New human trafficking routes identified in Kenya**

- **India’s Covid crisis sees rise in child marriage and trafficking**

ORGANIZED CRIME

**The Use of Terrorist Tools by Criminal Organizations: The Case of the Brazilian Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC)**

*Guilherme Damasceno Fonseca – Perspectives on Terrorism: September 2020*

The use of guerrilla and terrorist tactics by criminal gangs is not new or rare. However, there is very little research on the use of terrorist tools and strategies. The author looks at the Brazilian prison gang PCC, perhaps the most dangerous criminal organization on the continent, to learn more.

[https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2020/issue-4/fonseca.pdf](https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2020/issue-4/fonseca.pdf)
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM
The 22-year-old helping to lead Belarus’ protests from behind a screen in Poland
Patrick Reevel – ABC News: 16 September 2020

Once Belarus turned off the internet, 22-year-old Stepan Svetlov stepped up. Svetlov runs NEXTA, a social media channel on the messenger app Telegram that has become a crucial organizing tool in the protests that have shaken the 26-year rule of Alexander Lukashenko.


For more on this theme:
(Global) How a Hacker Launched a Decentralized Network to Track Internet Censorship

(Belarus) Networking firm Sandvine cancels Belarus contract, citing ‘custom code’ that aided censorship

(South Africa) Citizens reject ‘Internet Censorship Act’, threaten court action
https://www.itweb.co.za/content/rxP3jqBmBe9MA2ye

PRIVACY AND SECURITY
As cyberattacks rise globally, Japan’s digital security found lacking
Osamu Tsukimori – The Japan Times: 18 September 2020

Japan’s push for digitalization amid the COVID-19 pandemic brings with it an increased risk of cyber attacks.


For more on this theme:
(South Korea) Internet censorship body blocks access to website for digital punishment of crimes
https://www.ajudaily.com/view/20200914172831917

(Global) How MIT’s SCRAM could break the cyber-attack logjam

(U.S., Global) DOD Works to Increase Cybersecurity for U.S., Allies
https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2351916/dod-works-to-increase-cybersecurity-for-us-allies/
DOJ says five Chinese nationals hacked into 100 U.S. companies

Tom Winter – NBC News: 16 September 2020

Five members of an alleged Chinese hacking group have been indicted for their role in a scheme to hack into more than 100 companies in the U.S., the Justice Department announced. The hacking group targeted many other companies around the globe.

https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/doj-says-five-chinese-nationals-hacked-100-u-s-companies-n1240215

For more on this theme:

(China, Vatican) China Gives Hackers Its Blessing to Break Into Vatican Emails

(Iran, U.S.) US indicts two hackers for retaliating for Soleimani’s killing; more Iran-related charges expected soon

(China) Chinese Views of Big Data Analytics
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA176-1.html

(EU) Cyber diplomacy and shifting geopolitical landscapes

FBI says credential stuffing attacks are behind some recent bank hacks

Catalin Cimpanu – ZDNet: 14 September

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation is raising an alarm about the rising number of credential stuffing attacks targeting financial institutions.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Attack on VA computer systems exposed personal information of about 46,000 veterans

(China, Iran, U.S.) CISA: Chinese state hackers are exploiting F5, Citrix, Pulse Secure, and Exchange bugs
CYBER CRIME

Researchers: North Korean Hackers In League With Russian Cybercriminals
Agence France-Presse: 16 September 2020

North Korean hackers are likely working with Russian-speaking cyber criminals on ransomware and other malicious software, according to new research from security firm Intel 471.

For more on this theme:

(China, U.S., Global) Chinese hacking groups are bullying telecoms as 2020 goes on, CrowdStrike says
https://www.cyberscoop.com/chinese-hacking-us-telecoms/

(Global) Eugene Kaspersky interview: ‘We don’t have enough people to protect the world from cyber criminals’
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/09/14/eugene-kaspersky-interview-dont-have-enough-people-protect-world/

(U.S.) Remote Workers Vulnerable to Cyberattacks

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Govt systems to be classed critical infrastructure under cyber reforms
Justin Hendry – ITNews: 14 September 2020

According to Australian Home Affairs Secretary Mike Pezzullo, select federal government systems and networks will now be classified as critical infrastructure alongside nationally significant private-sector systems.

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) House passes bipartisan IoT security bill to fix ‘glaring gap’ in cyber infrastructure

(Global) Critical Infrastructure Encompasses More than It Once Did and Must Be Better Protected

(U.S., Global) Companies should know the real risks of cyber-physical security
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

**CISA, FBI working with industry to make it ‘more painful’ for hackers to function**

*Jory Heckman – Federal News Network: 17 September 2020*

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation are improving lines of communication between government and industry and making it harder for hackers to do their jobs.


*For more on this theme:*

**(U.S., U.K., Middle East) Public-private collaboration could help protect government systems from cyber threats**


**(U.S.) Midlands Voices: Public-private cyber partnership can boost Nebraska’s economy, safety**


**(Malaysia) Cyber security strategy to provide direction on curbing cyber threats**

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Alarming rise of ISIS in South linked to seeds of radicalisation sown in Kerala 30 years ago
Vicky Nanjappa – Oneindia: 18 September 2020

The Islamic State threat looms over India. The terror group and its various manifestations are now active in 12 states across the country.


Islamic State expanding globally amid setbacks: US official
Agence France-Presse: 18 September 2020

ISIS is expanding globally with 20 affiliates, despite being forced out of Syria and the killing of its leaders. It "has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to rebound from severe losses over the past six years by relying on a dedicated cadre of veteran midlevel commanders, extensive clandestine networks, and downturns in CT [counterterrorism] pressure to persevere," said Christopher Miller, director of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center.


For more on this theme:

The case of indicted American-Turkish ISIS suspect reveals how Turkey became a hub for jihadists

UK school where ISIS fanatic tried to recruit ‘army of children’ for terror attacks given official warning
https://www.thenational.ae/world/uk-school-where-isis-fanatic-tried-to-recruit-army-of-children-for-terror-attacks-given-official-warning-1.1079239

Iraq Discusses Increasing Cooperation with NATO to Defeat ISIS
https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2514766/iraq-discusses-increasing-cooperation-nato-defeat-isis

Islamic State East Asia relisted as terror organisation in Australia

How the Islamic State found a haven in Syrian desert

Morocco Warns of Growing Islamic State in African Sahel-Sahara Region
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Illicit Trade and Terrorism  
Louise I. Shelley – Perspectives on Terrorism: September 2020  
Terrorist participation in illicit trade is not just about revenue generation. But diversification of illicit products has been key to their survival.  

Afghan-Taliban Peace Talks Continue as Fighting Kills Dozens  
Ayaz Gul – Voice of America: 17 September 2020  
The spate of violence accompanied historic peace negotiations that started in Doha, Qatar. Both sides — Afghanistan and Taliban officials — acknowledge that ending four decades of conflict will be difficult and require patience.  

For more on this theme:  
A New Look at Iran’s Complicated Relationship with the Taliban  
Peace Talks Have Begun in Afghanistan, Major Pitfalls Await  
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/peace-talks-afghanistan-taliban-pitfalls-await  
Zawahiri asserts al Qaeda’s independence in new message  
Bangladesh’s Long Road Ahead in Countering Terrorist Fundraising  

IRREGULAR WARFARE: SOFT POWER

From Asia to Africa, China Promotes Its Vaccines to Win Friends  
With pledges of a coronavirus vaccine, China is on a charm offensive to repair strained diplomatic ties and bolster engagement with other countries.  

For more on this theme:  
The Problem with Soft Power  
US Public Opinion Is Changing the Relationship With China  
IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES

The CCP’s United Front Network in Sweden
Pär Nyrén – The Jamestown Foundation: 16 September 2020

Though a slightly different use of the term “proxy forces,” the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) attempts to use their various in-country organizations to influence their Chinese diaspora and the countries in which they live. This article focuses on the CCP’s use of the its proxy forces in Sweden.

https://jamestown.org/program/the-ccps-united-front-network-in-sweden/

For more on this theme:

The Role of Coopted Diaspora Groups in Czech and European United Front Work

Putting Money in the Party’s Mouth: How China Mobilizes Funding for United Front Work

The China-U.S. Exchange Foundation and United Front “Lobbying Laundering” in American Politics

IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

China Has Built a Massive Global Database for Hybrid Warfare, International Media Reports
Abhijnan Rej – The Diplomat: 14 September 2020

A major international media investigation has revealed that a technology firm linked to the Chinese Communist Party has created and mined a global database of 2.4 million individuals — many of them political leaders, scientists, journalists and others in positions of influence — to monitor them and their networks.


For more on this theme:

Facebook Is Failing in Global Disinformation Fight, Says Former Worker

There Goes the Neighborhood: The Limits of Russian Integration in Eurasia