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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Hungary faces reckoning with EU that could cost it billions
Justin Spike – The Associated Press: 17 September 2022

The EU’s executive arm has, for nearly a decade, accused Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban of dismantling democratic institutions, taking control of the media and infringing on minority rights. Orban denies the accusations. Now the EU appears set to impose financial penalties on his government over corruption concerns and alleged rule-of-law violations that could cost Budapest billions and cripple its already ailing economy.

https://apnews.com/article/entertainment-music-hungary-justin-bieber-59e4c4855a3ece7f2a388a49d4a69ba1

Corruption Puts Military Ammunition into the Hands of Paraguay’s Criminals
Scott Mistler-Ferguson – InSight Crime: 22 September 2022

Ammunition manufactured for Paraguay’s military is ending up in the hands of organized crime groups as a crippling lack of traceability ensures gangs can easily fill their arsenals.


For more on this theme:

The Troika of Money Laundering, Sanctions and Corruption — Ongoing Challenges for Internationally Operating Financial Institutions

Why Pakistan has become a hostage to corruption
https://www.globalvillagespace.com/why-pakistan-has-become-hostage-to-corruption/

Hungary presses forward with anti-corruption plan to secure EU cash

Leveraging AI for tackling corruption
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/leveraging-ai-for-tackling-corruption/article65907236.ece

North Korea installs more complaint boxes to tackle corruption

Panama charges two former presidents over corruption scandal
https://ticotimes.net/2022/09/17/panama-charges-two-former-presidents-over-corruption-scandal

Crossbench concerns over narrow scope of national anti-corruption body
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Kratom to Bath Salts — The Rare Psychoactive Drugs Entering Chile
Alessandro Ford – InSight Crime: 16 September 2022
Chilean authorities have seized new psychoactive substances rarely seen in Latin America, highlighting the increasingly diverse nature of the country’s drug markets.

The US Opioid Problem Is Also a China Problem
Jim Crotty – The Diplomat: 21 September 2022
China makes the bulk of fentanyl precursor chemicals and shows little interest in stopping the outflow.
https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/the-us-opioid-problem-is-also-a-china-problem/

For more on this theme:
Taliban Make Little Progress in Countering Drugs

Drugs, militias form explosive mix on Iraq-Iran border

Meth Is Turning Fiji From a Tropical Paradise Into a Narco’s Playground

Cocaine trade changes routes in West Africa to avoid armed conflict — report

Do Drug Traffickers Deserve Royalties from Narco-Series?

Thailand arrests Myanmar military-linked businessman suspected of drug trafficking

Multiple Drug Seizures Reveal an Alarming Rise in Trafficking From North-West Coast

On Jordan's streets, the captagon epidemic ruins lives
https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-captagon-epidemic-ruins-lives

How ‘tough times' push more Nigerians into drug trafficking

US designates Pakistan as major drug transit country
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

How U.S. Bombers Are Fighting Illegal Fishing in South America
Caleb Larson – The National Interest: 13 September 2022

The U.S. Air Force B-1 Lancer is being used to find and track illegal fishing in the Pacific near Ecuador's Galapagos Islands. This reportedly is not the first time the massive strategic bomber has been used in this role.

https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/how-us-bombers-are-fighting-illegal-fishing-south-america-204730

Chinese troops drive away fishing vessels from disputed waters
Radio Free Asia: 13 September 2022

Soldiers repelled a boat from an area also claimed by the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.


For more on this theme:

Rosewood Products and Consumption
https://www.traffic.org/publications/reports/rosewood-products-and-consumption/

China's Rosewood Market Survey
https://www.traffic.org/publications/reports/chinas-rosewood-market-survey/

India's wildlife super sniffer dog squad expands: Six young dogs begin training

A Devastating Burning Season for the Brazilian Amazon
https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/14/devastating-burning-season-brazilian-amazon

Ghana's efforts to employ young people and regrow forests could work better

Despite Living Atop A Gas Field, Romanian Villagers Are Still Burning Wood
https://www.rferl.org/a/romania-gas-villages-burning-wood/32030051.html

South Africa plans special police force to combat illegal miners

How gold mining in Ghana is threatening Swiss chocolate

Using ‘chemical fingerprinting’ to fight seafood fraud and illegal fishing

Thailand's contentious plan to curtail bottom trawling unfolds in slow motion
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

ICANN’s Accountability and Transparency – a Retrospective on the IANA Transition
Keith Drazek – CircleID: 19 September 2022

What were some of the key events that led to the successful transfer of Internet Assigned Numbers Authority responsibilities from the United States government to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers?


For more on this theme:

(EU) The Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity Nexus: Taking Stock of the European Union’s Approach

(India, Korea) Data Governance, Asian Alternatives: How India and Korea Are Creating New Models and Policies

(Russia) Understanding Russia’s Efforts at Technological Sovereignty
https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/09/understanding-russias-efforts-at-technological-sovereignty/

INTERNET FREEDOM

Taliban to ban TikTok, Pubg within next 3 months: Report
Hindustan Times: 20 September 2022

The interim government of Afghanistan led by the Taliban blocked more than 23 million websites for displaying what it considers immoral content in the year since the Taliban took power in the country.

https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/taliban-to-ban-tiktok-pubg-within-next-3-months-report-101663549393122.html

For more on this theme:

(Pakistan) The vast censorship laws in Pakistan, birth a much needed market for VPNs
https://pakobserver.net/surfshark-is-an-award-winning-vpn/

(Tanzania) Unfreedom Monitor report: Tanzania
https://globalvoices.org/2022/09/15/unfreedom-monitor-report-tanzania/

(Vietnam) U.S. business groups warn Vietnam data rules may threaten investment
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Weaponized cybercrime: Learning from the conflict in Ukraine
Serena Haththotuwa – Business Leader: 12 September 2022

Sergey Shykevich, Threat Intelligence Group manager at Check Point, explores how the war in Ukraine has affected cybersecurity and what organizations can learn from this threat.
https://www.businessleader.co.uk/weaponized-cybercrime-learning-from-the-conflict-in-ukraine/

For more on this theme:
(Russia, Ukraine) Russian Gamaredon Hackers Target Ukrainian Government Using Info-Stealing Malware
(U.S.) FBI and CISA Responded to a Cyber Attack and Ransomware Incident on Los Angeles School District (LAUSD)
(Australia) Cyber attack on Australia’s Optus puts addresses, passport info at risk

CYBER STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY

Albania Drops Diplomatic Ties With Iran in First-Ever Severance of Relations Due to a Cyber Attack
Scott Ikeda – CPO Magazine: 13 September 2022

A July cyberattack attributed to Iran has caused Albania to cut all diplomatic ties with that country, setting what the White House National Security Council calls a “troubling precedent for cyberspace.”

For more on this theme:
(Australia) Enhancing cyber capabilities through AUKUS
(Global) Cyber Conflict and the Erosion of Trust
https://www.cfr.org/blog/cyber-conflict-and-erosion-trust
(Russia) Untangling the Russian web: Spies, proxies, and spectrums of Russian cyber behavior
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/untangling-the-russian-web/
CYBERCRIME

Countering the Future Growth of Ransomware
Kyle Fendorf – Council on Foreign Relations: 19 September 2022

Ransomware has grown into a major threat to organizations globally. The United States and its partners should work through international institutions to prevent ransomware gangs from expanding into other countries.

https://www.cfr.org/blog/countering-future-growth-ransomware

For more on this theme:

(Global) Transnational cooperation vital in fighting borderless cyber scams: Faishal Ibrahim

(Russia, Global) Russia Slips from Center Stage as UN Cybercrime Treaty Negotiations Forge Ahead

(Cambodia) Cambodian police raid alleged cybercrime trafficking compounds

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

CISA Plans to Measure the Effect of Coming Standards on Industry’s Cybersecurity
Mariam Baksh – Nextgov: 19 September 2022

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency will spend the next three years measuring the success of the government’s effort to protect both publicly and privately controlled critical infrastructure from cyberattacks.


For more on this theme:

(EU) State of the Union: New EU cybersecurity rules ensure more secure hardware and software products

(Japan) Japan Needs a Cyber Ministry: Former JGSDF Major General

(Global) Severing Diplomatic Ties: A New Approach to Confronting State Cyber Aggression?
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Declassified report shows US predictions of IS group threat

U.S. intelligence officials predicted two years ago that the Islamic State group would likely regain much of its former strength and global influence, particularly if American and other Western forces reduced their role in countering the extremist movement, according to a newly declassified report.


For more on this theme:

Tribal spies in Syria help U.S. win drone war against Islamic State

Brussels 2016 ‘Islamic State’ terror attacks trial: Victims seek closure

The Restoration of the Next Islamic Caliphate Alhawal Camp
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/restoration-next-islamic-caliphate-alhawal-camp

Generation Jihad Ep. 79 — An update on the Islamic State

The Islamic State vs. Russia in Afghanistan

Mozambique’s jihadis spread into most populous province
https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-africa-religion-mozambique-3ea5ee77b3d6f7d19425cd-d7e1f1895

Media Jihad: Social Media Use Shows Islamic State’s Increasing Interest In Africa

ISKP’s China threats surge, become more nuanced
https://eurasianet.org/iskps-china-threats-surge-become-more-nuanced

ISKP Challenges Indian Interests in Afghanistan by Attacking Sikh Worshippers in Kabul
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Afghanistan sees sharp rise in deaths as Taliban struggle to take on ISIS, NRF
Shishir Gupta – Hindustan Times: 17 September 2022

With the principal challengers to the Taliban — the National Resistance Front and Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISIS-K) — intensifying operations, the security situation has deteriorated in Afghanistan. Despite the Taliban’s claims that ISIS-K does not exist in the country, the group claimed responsibility for deadly attacks on mosques, schools and cars.


For more on this theme:

Al-Shabaab’s Attack in Ethiopia: One-off Incursion or Persistent Threat?
https://jamestown.org/program/al-shabaabs-attack-in-ethiopia-one-off-incursion-or-persistent-threat/

Why Nigerian kidnap law banning families from paying ransoms may do more harm than good

Russia Brands Exiled Tajik Opposition Party a ‘Terrorist’ Organization

Afghanistan: China’s Challenging Relationship with the Taliban

An International Security Dilemma: Russia, Jihadism, and Afghanistan

In Somalia, al-Shabab’s courts win more converts

Boko Haram killed over 40% of teachers in North-East — Commission

Hamas leader Haniyeh visits Russia with high-level delegation

Iran-Hezbollah Intelligence Center May Help Hamas Target Israel

Women’s Rights: A Year After The Taliban Takeover
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-women-rights-taliban-freedoms/32024050.html

Under The Taliban, Public Employees Must Pass Test Of Faith
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-ministries-tests-islam/32024524.html
RADICALIZATION

**Terrorists’ use of tech in West Africa must be contained**
*Karen Allen – Institute for Security Studies: 15 September 2022*

With violent extremists skilfully exploiting digital platforms, Africa should pressure tech companies to deal with terrorism online.

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/terrorists-use-of-tech-in-west-africa-must-be-contained

*For more on this theme:*

- **How a driver's licence and marriage can help deradicalise extremists**

- **Understanding global right-wing extremism**
  https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/understanding-global-right-wing-extremism

- **Right-Wing Extremists’ Use of the Internet: Emerging Trends in the Empirical Literature**

- **Missing youths: Radicals out to swell ranks**

- **Poverty, Criminality, Extremism: The Interrelated Sources of Insecurity in Maldives**

- **The Role of User Agency in the Algorithmic Amplification of Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content**

- **Exploring Online Radicalization and How to Spot Extremist Content and What To Do About It: A British Case Study**

- **Big gaming companies get DHS help to keep players from becoming terrorists**
  https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2022/09/dhs-funds-700k-research-to-combat-radicalization-of-online-gamers/

- **How coastal West Africa can stem the jihadist wave**

- **Content Moderation Tools to Stop Extremism**
  https://www.lawfareblog.com/content-moderation-tools-stop-extremism
CONFLICT AND CRIME

Ukraine war: Grave sites prompt calls for tribunal over Russian killings
BBC: 19 September 2022

The call for a war crimes tribunal from the Czech Republic, which holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, comes after the discovery of mass graves in Izyum.

For more on this theme:

Trinidad and Tobago Struggling to Put Brakes on Rising Homicide Rate

Dominican Republic Takes Tentative Measures against Haiti Gangs
https://insightcrime.org/news/dominican-republic-issues-more-ineffective-measures-against-haiti-gangs%ef%bf%bc/

Assessing South Africa’s organized crime risk
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/assessing-south-africa-organized-crime-risk/

Is Russia Committing Genocide in Ukraine?

UN experts warn of potential for further atrocities amid resumption of conflict in Ethiopia

Ukraine prosecutor says it has documented 34,000 war crimes, including genocide
https://thehill.com/policy/international/3648652-ukraine-prosecutor-says-it-has-documented-34000-war-crimes-including-genocide/

Addressing the linkages between illicit arms, organized crime and armed conflict

No impunity for Russia’s crimes against Ukraine
https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/no-impunity-for-russian-aggression-against-ukraine

The Case for Creating an International Tribunal to Prosecute the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine

Weaponizing education: Russia targets schoolchildren in occupied Ukraine

Justice Demands the Arraignment of Russia’s Guilty Men
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Regime Preservation is Putin's Primary Concern
Mary Glantz – United States Institute of Peace: 22 September 2022
The Russian military’s poor performance in Ukraine does not present an existential threat to the Putin regime.
https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/09/regime-preservation-putins-primary-concern

For more on this theme:

The Russian-Ukrainian War Triggers an Energy Revolution
https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/09/the-russian-ukrainian-war-triggers-an-energy-revolution/

Ukraine’s Defense Industry and the Prospect of a Long War

Winter is coming, and Putin is failing

Western Support for Ukraine Will Withstand Russian Pressure
https://www.cfr.org/blog/western-support-ukraine-will-withstand-russian-pressure

Kharkiv Retreat: What Will Military Losses Mean for Russia’s Domestic Politics?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/87945

How Ukraine’s Counteroffensives Managed to Break the War’s Stalemate

Putin’s war in Ukraine

#NAFO: Ukraine’s info warriors battling Russian trolls

What Would a Russian Mobilization Look Like?

Russia’s Ukraine losses are Turkey’s gains
https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/9/15/russias-ukraine-losses-are-turkeys-gains

Russia makes moves to annex separatist regions in Ukraine
https://www.npr.org/2022/09/20/1124024476/russia-ukraine-referendum

How Is Southeast Asia’s Balancing Strategy on Ukraine Faring?

Military intel chief says Putin can’t achieve Ukraine goal
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-nato-national-security-487eb0cabb0d9a80c-c00ac8300b60822

Finding Out What Russians Think — Without Asking Them
https://www.lawfareblog.com/finding-out-what-russians-think%E2%80%94without-asking-them
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

IntelBrief: Azerbaijan Exploits Quagmire in Ukraine to Renew Hostilities Against Armenia

IntelBrief: Russian Setbacks Lead India to Reconsider its Relationship with Moscow
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2022-september-21/

IntelBrief: Ukrainian Counteroffensive Continues to Keep Russian Forces Off Balance

In an About-Face, Russia Announces Mobilization and ‘Referendums’ in Occupied Ukrainian Territories

Putin just escalated his war in Ukraine. Here's your expert guide to what's coming next.

As Putin escalates his war against Ukraine, the world faces a moment of maximum danger — and maximum opportunity
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/inflection-points/in-ukraines-maximum-peril-lies-an-opportunity-to-save-it-if-its-friends-seize-this-moment/

Putin’s nuclear ultimatum is a desperate bid to freeze a losing war

Most multinationals remain in Russia and fund Putin’s invasion of Ukraine

Putin’s Russian Empire is collapsing like its Soviet predecessor

Putin’s self-defeating invasion turns southern Ukrainians away from Russia

China Might Not Have Russia’s Back on Ukraine After All
https://www.military.com/daily-news/opinions/2022/09/16/china-might-not-have-russias-back-ukraine-after-all.html

Why Is Putin Upping the Ante in Ukraine?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/87974

Russia and India: A New Chapter
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Why Ukraine Must Win
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/87960

What Russia’s Elites Think of Putin Now
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/19/russia-ukraine-war-putin-elite-public-opinion/

Russia in the Balkans After Ukraine: A Troubling Actor
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/87959

Why Is Russia Jeopardizing the Ukraine Grain Deal?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/87930

Analysis: China’s Balancing Act on Russia’s War in Ukraine

Does Putin’s Gamble Make Russia’s War in Ukraine More Dangerous?
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/does-putins-gamble-make-russias-war-ukraine-more-dangerous

A war with recurring themes: Russian blunders, Ukrainian ingenuity
https://www.npr.org/2022/09/19/1123748472/a-war-with-recurring-themes-russian-blunders-ukrainian-ingenuity

Winter is fast approaching in Ukraine. Here’s what comes next for the conflict

Russia’s new threats on Ukraine could alienate Middle East – analysis
https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-717851

Amid Ukraine War, Armenia and Azerbaijan Fighting Risks Broader Conflict

Russia’s underperforming military capability may be key to its downfall
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/18/russia-military-underperforming-ukraine

Iran and Russia Seek New Sanctions Evasion Corridor

Russia’s Military Manpower Crunch Will Worsen
https://cepa.org/russias-military-manpower-crunch-will-worsen/

Putin’s Chef Seeks the Ingredients of Death

After Putin
https://cepa.org/after-putin-2/

Russian Power Wanes in the Borderlands
https://cepa.org/russian-power-wanes-in-the-borderlands/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

The Bewilderment of Kremlin Propagandists
https://cepa.org/the-bewilderment-of-kremlin-propagandists/

Putin's Options Dwindle Despite 'Coffin Money'
https://cepa.org/putins-options-dwindle-despite-coffin-money/

Chechen Leader Lambasts Russian Defense Ministry For Failures In Ukraine

The Impossible Mobilization
https://jamestown.org/program/the-impossible-mobilization/

Failure in Ukraine Increases Moscow's Repression and Citizens' Distrust

Chinese and Russian militaries share a potential weakness, new US report finds

Russia defeat in Ukraine may influence Iran proxies war on Israel – analysis
https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-717203

Ukraine And The Shifting Geopolitics Of The Heartland – Analysis

What Russia's Failed Coercion of Transnistria Means for the Annexation of Occupied Territory in Ukraine

The Past And The Furious: How Russia's Revisionism Threatens Bosnia – Analysis

Xi Might Finally Be Losing Patience With Putin
https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/china-russia-relations-ukraine-war/

How Putin's Overreach Undermined Russian Power
https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/commentary-and-analysis/podcasts/how-putins-overreach-undermined-russian-power

The word ‘war’ is off-limits in Russia, but some politicians are accusing Putin of treason
https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/russia-war-putin-treason-1.6585186
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

The Rise of the Rest: How Russia Views the Future World Order

Russia's Wagner boss: It's prisoners fighting in Ukraine, or your children

Is China Breaking With Russia Over Ukraine?

Ukraine war: with Russia bogged down on the battlefield, trouble has flared up again in the Caucasus

Time to Confront Russia’s Nuclear Recklessness in Ukraine