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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

How much progress has Ukraine's government made against corruption?
Joanna Kakissis – NPR: 10 October 2023

As Ukraine tries to expel Russian forces from its territory, it’s fighting a second war — on corruption — as it seeks to join the European Union and NATO and keep U.S. funds flowing.


For more on this theme:

Indonesia’s agriculture minister resigns amid a corruption investigation

Burundi: Central Bank governor prosecuted for corruption

Head of Moldova’s National Anti-corruption Centre Resigns

Claudia Escobar Mejía: Marshall-Plan Like Effort Needed to Eliminate Corruption in Central America

Combating corruption ‘pandemic’ is Iraq’s top priority, Prime Minister tells UNGA

Pakistan anti-corruption body revives cases against former prime ministers

Corruption: Tanzania on the Road to Recovery?
https://thegeopolitics.com/corruption-tanzania-on-the-road-to-recovery/

Major anti-corruption crackdown in Saudi Arabia: Defence, Public Security officers among detained

Europe’s anti-corruption group says Cyprus must hold politicians more accountable amid distrust

Corruption and Russia’s war against Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Cocaine Trafficking from Latin America to Europe on the Rise
Juan Delgado – Diálogo: 11 October 2023

Europe is suffering a flood of cocaine shipments into its ports, while seizures by security authorities are reaching record levels, reported InSight Crime, an organization dedicated to the study of organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean.
https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/cocaine-trafficking-from-latin-america-to-europe-on-the-rise/

The soaring threat of drug drones from Syria
Haid Haid – Middle East Institute: 11 October 2023

Drones slip under the radar, evading detection and interception. This introduces a whole new frontier of security challenges that Jordan cannot afford to ignore.
https://www.mei.edu/publications/soaring-threat-drug-drones-syria

For more on this theme:

Illegal drugs loom over Luxembourg’s election
https://www.politico.eu/article/drugs-luxembourg-election-xavier-bettel/

Colombia’s Petro launches new anti-drug plan with focus on opportunity

Jordan accuses Syria of causing increase in kingdom’s drug cases

Heroin, cocaine and tik: How SA’s drug trade is fuelling (and fuelled by) organised crime groups

‘Kids whose insides are destroyed’: The return of drug abuse to Mauritius

Murders, disappearances and drug trafficking: the criminal nightmare of Zacatecas, Mexico

US takes aim at China companies, executives over fentanyl supply chain

How Google helps people sell cocaine online
https://www.businessinsider.com/google-loophole-buying-drugs-online-hijack-website-2023-9

Fentanyl Isn’t Just Smuggled In From Mexico. It Also Arrives Duty Free By Mail
https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2023/10/01/fentanyl-isnt-just-smuggled-in-from-mexico-it-also-arrives-duty-free-by-mail/?sh=5e6912397dee
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

The orchid obsession: How science and smuggling meet in a global trade
Elizabeth Beattie – The Japan Times: 8 October 2023

Orchids have long enraptured hobbyists and scientists. Hunting out their varied forms — an estimated 31,000 species — has even turned some into thieves.
https://www.japantimes.co.jp/environment/2023/10/08/sustainability/orchids-illegal-trade-science/

Guinea: Illegal Mangrove Logging Devastates Wildlife
Annika Hammerschlag – Voice of America: 11 October 2023

Guinea’s mangrove forests are a vital sanctuary for endangered species — from the colobus monkey to the African manatee. But illegal logging further threatens the habitats of these animals.

For more on this theme:
A Look Inside Wildlife Crime Scene Investigators

There’s a thriving global market in turtles, and much of that trade is illegal

Amphibian crisis: 41% of species deemed threatened with extinction

Assam: Where have all the smuggled wildlife gone?

Deforestation: Fuel for climate change

‘Operation Mercury’ Curbed Illegal Gold Mining in Peru

Flood damage highlights ‘uncontrolled’ sand mining in northern India

Chennai has become India’s illegal animal farm

Communities track a path of destruction through a Cambodian wildlife sanctuary
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Secretary-General's video message to the Internet Governance Forum
United Nations: 9 October 2023

For nearly two decades, cooperation on internet governance has proven remarkably productive and remarkably resilient in the face of growing geopolitical tensions, proliferating crises and widening divisions.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Why should businesses care about Internet governance?

(Global) Fighting online hate: Global internet governance through shared values

(Global) Effective AI governance requires global awareness of local problems

INTERNET FREEDOM

Vietnam Cites Child Safety in Calls for Greater Social Media Censorship Used to Stifle Dissent
Koh Ewe – Time: 12 October 2023

Vietnamese authorities say that a monthslong investigation into TikTok found the social media platform failed to filter out content that violates Vietnamese laws.


For more on this theme:

(Russia) Russia VPN services to be banned in yet another censorship crusade

(Taiwan) Q&A: Taiwan's Digital Minister Audrey Tang on AI and Censorship

(Iran) Iran's Internet Freedom Under Siege: A Global Perspective
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

When the Rubber Meets the Road: Cybersecurity and Kenya’s Digital Superhighway
Nanjira Sambuli – Carnegie: 12 October 2023

A series of cyberattacks devastated Kenya’s digital infrastructure in July. Now, with major new digital initiatives underway, the country must find a way to restore the public’s confidence.

For more on this theme:

(Latin America) Current Panorama of Cyber Security in Latin America: Threats and Possibilities

(Europe) Scaling up Europe’s cybersecurity calls for a practical blueprint
https://www.euractiv.com/section/cybersecurity/opinion/scaling-up-europes-cybersecurity-calls-for-a-practical-blueprint/

(EU) Cyber experts urge EU to rethink vulnerability disclosure plans

CYBERATTACKS

Cyberattacks Targeting Israel Are Rising After Hamas Assault
Ryan Gallagher and Jordan Robertson – Bloomberg: 10 October 2023

Hacking groups, including some tied to Russia, are attacking Israeli government and media websites, allying themselves with Hamas after it launched a series of deadly strikes on the country.
https://time.com/6322175/israel-hamas-cyberattacks-hackers/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Cyber Attack Compromised the International Criminal Court’s Information Systems

(Iran, Saudi Arabia) Iran-Linked APT34 Spy Campaign Targets Saudis
https://www.darkreading.com/dr-global/iran-linked-apt34-spy-campaign-targets-saudis

(India, Canada) ‘Indian’ hackers take down Canada Army website amid soaring diplomatic tensions: Report
CYBERCRIME

Southeast Asian Casinos Emerge as Major Enablers of Global Cybercrime
Cezary Podkul – ProPublica: 5 October 2023

A growing number of casinos in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are engaging in large-scale money laundering, facilitating cyber fraud that is costing victims in the U.S. and abroad billions, according to new research by the United Nations.

https://www.propublica.org/article/casinos-cambodia-myanmar-laos-southeast-asia-fraud-cybercrime

For more on this theme:

(Global) Prolific cybercrime group reemerges following FBI takedown

(Global) Cybercrime gangs now deploying ransomware within 24 hours of hacking victims
https://therecord.media/ransomware-deployment-dwell-time-decreasing

(Southeast Asia) Online scams in Southeast Asia create double victims: those targeted and those forced to carry them out

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

ASEAN, EU should work more closely tackling maritime cybercrime
Rahul Mishra and Syanneza Shaharizal – Asia Times: 6 October 2023

The European Union has an outstanding reputation for maintaining and contributing to maritime security in Asia.

https://asiatimes.com/2023/10/asean-eu-should-work-more-closely-tackling-maritime-cybercrime/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Digital Piracy Returns to Sea: Protecting Autonomous Ships from Online Attacks

(U.S., Global) Defending critical infrastructure on the cyber battlefield

(Global) Legions of Critical Infrastructure Devices Subject to Cyber Targeting

(Global) How is cyber innovation disrupting the energy sector and critical infrastructure?
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ISIS as a Narrative Phenomenon
Ajit Maan and Suha Hassen – Homeland Security Today: 7 October 2023
The most effective way to shape a foundational cultural narrative is to insert a manipulative story. Those working to undermine the ability of extremists to recruit understand the power of narrative in that process.
https://www.hstoday.us/featured/isis-as-a-narrative-phenomenon/

The ISKP Challenge: Threatening Taliban Control In Afghanistan – OpEd
Zafar Iqbal Yousatzai – Eurasia Review: 6 October 2023
The Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate has emerged as a significant security concern, challenging the control and stability of the Taliban regime.

For more on this theme:

Video: Allegations extremist ideology motivated two brothers to plan deadly bushfires in Victoria
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-10/allegations-extremist-ideology-motivated-two/102958878

ISIS official at Lebanon’s Ain Al Hilweh camp jailed for 160 years

How popular music videos drove the fight against the Islamic State

Charity Urges Court to Force Australia to Repatriate Detainees in Syrian Refugee Camp

Islamic State rising in Balochistan. Pakistan doesn't have the resources to win this fight
https://theprint.in/opinion/security-code/islamic-state-rising-in-balochistan-pakistan-doesn't-have-the-resources-to-win-this-fight/1789534/

Even Before the Latest Bombing, Mastung Was a Hotbed for Violent Insurgency
https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/even-before-the-latest-bombing-mastung-was-a-hotbed-for-violent-insurgency/

A Brief Biography of Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State’s Third Caliph
Bullets and Biodiversity: African National Parks as a Key Counterterrorism Strategy
Gitanjali Reddy – Lawfare: 6 October 2023

How can African governments and the international community respond to the threats posed by armed groups in national parks?
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/bullets-and-biodiversity-african-national-parks-as-a-key-counterterrorism-strategy

Online game could deter people from being radicalised into terrorism
Clare Wilson – New Scientist: 8 October 2023

People in Iraq who used to live under the control of the Islamic State group were better at spotting signs of others being manipulated into joining such groups after playing MindFort.
https://www.newscientist.com/article/2396400-online-game-could-deter-people-from-being-radicalised-into-terrorism/

For more on this theme:
Iran Seeks to Spread Its Radical Ideology in Latin America

Far-right terrorism growing threat in Europe, warns EU commissioner

The New Online Radicals: The Third Generation of Online Radicalisation
https://gnet-research.org/2023/10/04/the-new-online-radicals-the-third-generation-of-online-radicalisation/

Terrorism: Med-Or report, jihadism silent but not dead

Brief: New Jihadist Group Wahdat al-Muslimin Aims to Unite JNIM and ISGS in the Sahel

Were Jamaat Ansarullo’s Incursions into Tajikistan Real or Staged?
https://jamestown.org/program/were-jamaat-ansarullos-incursions-into-tajikistan-real-or-staged/

Sahel: Jihadist Insurgencies On The Rise

A Crucial Step Towards Eliminating al-Shabaab’s Terrorism in Somalia

Pakistan’s Never-ending Battle Against Terrorism
Israel’s War on Hamas: What to Know
Bruce Hoffman – Council on Foreign Relations: 9 October 2023

Israel will seek to eliminate the threat posed by the Palestinian militant group for good, but its campaign in Gaza could draw in other adversaries, including Hezbollah and al-Qaeda.

https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/israels-war-hamas-what-know

For more on this theme:

What is Hamas? What to know about its origins, leaders and funding
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/what-is-hamas-what-to-know-about-its-origins-leaders-and-funding

How Israel and Hamas reached this point — and what comes next

Who is Mohammed Deif, the Hamas commander behind the attack on Israel?

US Calls Hamas Attack ‘ISIS-Level Savagery’

The War Hamas Always Wanted
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/war-hamas-always-wanted

Judy Asks: Does Anyone Benefit From the Israel-Hamas War?
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/90762

Initial Thoughts on Hamas’s War
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/initial-thoughts-on-hamas-s-war

An Intelligence Failure in Israel, but What Kind?

An Israeli Gap in Drone Defenses
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/an-israeli-gap-in-drone-defenses

What Happens If Hamas Starts Killing American Hostages?
https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/what-happens-if-hamas-starts-killing-american-hostages/

Hamas And Israel: Iran’s Role
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/hamas-and-israels-irans-role

A Bird’s-Eye View of the Hamas-Israel War and Its Impact on Regional Relations

Iran, Hamas & Palestinian Islamic Jihad
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/iran-hamas-and-palestinian-islamic-jihad
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Israel May Decimate Hamas, but Can It “Win” This War?
https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/israel-may-decimate-hamas-but-can-it-win-this-war

How big is this going to get? What to watch for in the Israel-Hamas battle.

Hamas is now what Al-Qaeda became after 9/11

Hamas is only one of four Iranian fronts against Israel
https://www.stimson.org/2023/hamas-is-only-one-of-four-iranian-fronts-against-israel/

Ideological and Religious Extremism Underlie the War Between Israel and Hamas

Israel’s 9/11? How Hamas Terrorist Attacks Will Change the Middle East

The coming Gaza hostage crisis
https://www.politico.eu/article/hamas-gaza-israel-palestine-hostages-war-executions/

Dispatch from Jerusalem: How does this end?
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/dispatch-from-jerusalem-how-does-this-end/

‘Israel Is Going to Have to Make Some Tough Calls’: There’s No Clear Way Out of the Hostage Crisis

Hamas and Iran are longtime allies. Did Tehran help with its attack on Israel?

Israel-Hamas conflict: Key questions for a “long and difficult war”
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/israel-hamas-conflict-key-questions-long-difficult-war

What will Hezbollah do next? Here’s how the Hamas-Israel conflict could engulf the region.

Fighting with Israel signals coordination between Hamas and Hezbollah, analysts say
https://www.npr.org/2023/10/10/1204789074/israel-hamas-hezbollah-iran

The Hamas Attack Changes Everything
https://www.nationalreview.com/2023/10/the-hamas-attack-changes-everything/

Surprise Palestinian Attack Spawns Fears of Wider Mideast War
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/surprise-palestinian-attack-spawns-fears-wider-mideast-war
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

An Israeli Dilemma
https://www.cfr.org/article/israeli-dilemma

Lebanon’s Hezbollah on war footing but moves carefully as conflict widens

Hamas’s attack on Israel was straight out of Hezbollah’s playbook
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/hamass-attack-on-israel-was-straight-out-of-hezbollahs-playbook/

Israel-Hamas war likely to result in increased cyber-attacks, Australia told

EU urges Big Tech to tackle terrorist content after Hamas attack
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-expands-warning-over-pro-hamas-content-social-media-2023-10-11/

Without evidence, it's unwise to assume Iran is Hamas's puppeteer

'They're opportunistic and adaptive': How Hamas is using cryptocurrency to raise funds

Russia Asks: How to Benefit From the Gaza War?
https://cepa.org/article/russia-asks-how-to-benefit-from-the-gaza-war/

Russians Divide Over Terrorist Attack on Israel
https://cepa.org/article/russians-divide-over-terrorist-attack-on-israel/

How the Israel-Hamas conflict might bring Russia unexpected gains in Ukraine war

War in Ukraine: How Russia could use the Israel-Hamas war for its benefit
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Russia’s 2024 Budget Shows It’s Planning for a Long War in Ukraine
Pavel Luzin and Alexandra Prokopenko – Carnegie: 11 October 2023

By staking everything on rising military expenditure, the Kremlin is forcing the economy into the snare of perpetual war.
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90753

For more on this theme:

Putin steps abroad, even as an international warrant hangs over his head
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/putin-steps-abroad-even-international-warrant-hangs-over-his-head

Russia’s Fuel Export Ban Reveals Systemic Problems, Wartime Stresses
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90745

Jobs in Occupied Ukraine Are a Poisoned Chalice for Russian Officials
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90710

The REPO Act: Confiscating Russian State Assets Consistent With U.S. and International Law

From Ruins to Resilience: The Path Toward Recovery in Ukraine

Russian Opposition in Exile Attempts to Influence Situation Back Home

The Kremlin Uses Registered Cossacks as a Means of Stealth Mobilization

How Doing Justice to Ukraine Can Help Win the Battle for the Future of Nuclear Security

Russia’s Politics of Free Grains to Poorest African Countries
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/10/12/russias-politics-of-free-grains-to-poorest-african-countries/

‘They miscalculated’: Ukraine turns the tables on Russia’s Black Sea Fleet

Putin repeats assertion that Russia did not start war in Ukraine
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-repeats-assertion-that-russia-did-not-start-war-ukraine-2023-10-05/

Zelenskiy tells Europe: Russia will attack others if Ukraine loses
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/european-leaders-expected-rally-around-zelenskiy-spain-summit-2023-10-05/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

- What Ukraine’s operation against Russian-occupied Crimea means for the war

- Interpreting Xi Jinping’s Shifting Strategy on the Russia-Ukraine War

- Russia wields ‘silent weapon’ of grain exports to weaken Ukraine

- How Ukraine Is ‘Neutralizing’ Russia’s Biggest Advantage
  https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-kyiv-russian-advantage-neutralize-1832628

- Russian imperialism shapes public support for the war against Ukraine

- Ukraine freezes assets of three Russian tycoons worth $464 million, prosecutors say

- Britain: Invasion Forcing Russia to Partner With ‘Previously Less Desirable’ Entities
  https://www.voanews.com/a/zelensky-ukrainians-sensitive-to-attacks-on-israel-/7301608.html

- Ukraine cyber-conflict: Hacking gangs vow to de-escalate

- Russia Escalates Nuclear Rhetoric to Influence Ukraine Support

- Opinion | We Need to Reframe the Debate Over Ukraine

- Estonia discussed sending offensive cyber tools to Ukraine after Russia invaded

- New Poll Reveals How Ukrainians Feel About War, Future

- The War in Ukraine Is Fraying the Global Security Order
  https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/russia-war-ukraine-security/

- UN concerned over lack of system to return Ukrainian children from Russia

- Russia imprisons scores of Ukrainian officials
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Hubris’ Downfall: The Hard Road Ahead for the Russia-Ukraine War

Why Putin — Battered, Not Broken — Retains Power For Now – Analysis

Russia Is Gearing Up for a Standoff With NATO in the Arctic
https://www.newsweek.com/russia-nato-finland-baltic-states-war-1833010

Russia’s Bloodied Navy Remains a Threat
https://cepa.org/article/russias-bloodied-navy-remains-a-threat/

Why Was Kim Jong-In In Russia? – Analysis

How the Ukraine military’s rigorous resilience program helps prepare soldiers for the psychological challenges of war

How Russia’s GRU Set Up A Fake Private Military Company For Its War In Ukraine

The Case for Rebuilding Ukraine
https://www.cfr.org/podcasts/case-rebuilding-ukraine

Russia’s Defense Ministry Wants To Change The Law To Permit Drafting Prisoners

‘Unprecedented’ rail traffic between North Korea and Russia suggests military transfers

Ukrainian civil defence is integral to the response to Russia’s invasion