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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Navalny Urges Associates Who Have Fled Russia To Continue Anti-Corruption Work From Abroad
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: 14 October 2021

Imprisoned Kremlin critic Aleksei Navalny says his supporters who have left Russia in the face of growing repression can continue their efforts to oppose the Russian government from abroad.
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-navalny-zhdanov-volkov-putin-/31508184.html

Pandora Papers Unravel Imran Khan’s ‘Anti-Corruption’ Narrative
Kunwar Khuldune Shahid – The Diplomat: 9 October 2021

The Panama Papers took down Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan’s predecessor. How will his government weather the latest revelations of offshore wealth?

For more on this theme:

USAID commits additional funds to N. Macedonia for anti-corruption, economic competitiveness initiatives

Australian state leader quits over corruption investigation

Austria’s Kurz under suspicion for bribery and embezzlement in corruption probe
https://www.politico.eu/article/kurz-austria-corruption-vienna/

Chinese ex-official on trial for corruption as Xi Jinping’s purge continues
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/01/chinese-ex-official-on-trial-for-corruption-as-xi-jinpings-purge-continues

Protesters Denounce Bosnian Serb Leaders, Claim Corruption
https://apnews.com/article/europe-milorad-dodik-f18336cc45cf1dfecefebff053f21960a

As a NSW premier falls and SA guts its anti-corruption commission, what are the lessons for integrity bodies in Australia?

Graft, drug trafficking threaten Albania’s chances of joining EU

Austria’s Kurz announces resignation amid corruption investigation
DRUG TRAFFICKING

In Mexico, children as young as 10 recruited by drug cartels
Mark Stevenson – The Associated Press: 14 October 2021

Kids are frequently recruited to Mexico’s cartels by other children their own age. Drug use is one way to recruit them, but the cartels also use religious beliefs and a sense of belonging that kids can’t get elsewhere. Combinations of poverty, abusive homes and unresponsive schools and social agencies play a role.

https://apnews.com/article/caribbean-mexico-city-mexico-drug-cartels-6f73f0a2277ea91e-b5a39a098238ae6b

Himachal Pradesh Police devises new strategy to track drug traffickers
Gaurav Bisht – Hindustan Times: 12 October 2021

With illicit drug trade on the rise, Himachal Pradesh Police in India are revising their strategy to catch smugglers and keep track of addicts.


For more on this theme:

Making a Hash of the Drug Laws in Slovakia

How Western Balkans organised crime makes Europe’s cocaine trade possible

Opium trade thrives in Afghanistan drug bazaars as Taliban delay ban

US Sanctions Reveal CJNG’s Grip on Mexico Port To Move Fentanyl

Hezbollah’s role in the global drugs trade — the West Africa connection
https://www.arabnews.com/node/1944626

Germany sees rise in cannabis and cocaine use

Boats, cars, couriers: Drugs arrive on Cape Breton in multiple ways, police say

Drugs Funded The Taliban Insurgency, But Money For Afghan Rehab Centers Has Dried Up
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-drug-addiction-heroin-opium/31505610.html

Now in power, Taliban sets sights on Afghan drug underworld
https://apnews.com/article/business-only-on-ap-taliban-kabul-afghanistan-312374ad26aa5741394b2308bfd99487
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Tracking white-bellied pangolins in Nigeria, the new global trafficking hub
Gianluca Cerullo – Mongabay: 7 October 2021

Nigeria has in recent years become a major transit point for the illegal trade in pangolins, the scaly anteater known for being the most trafficked mammal in the world.

Myanmar’s Forests Under Pressure From Illegal Logging, Smuggling
Dan Southerland – Radio Free Asia: 11 October 2021

Criminal gangs, with a long history of involvement in illegal logging in Myanmar and across Asia, have become better organized and efficient in harvesting and exporting illegal timber.
https://www.rfa.org/english/commentaries/forests-myanmar-10112021104031.html

For more on this theme:
Emerging Marine Monitoring Technologies Enable More Effective Management of Protected Areas

Tourism said to fuel Southeast Asia’s illegal wildlife trade

Illegal logging threatens rare Cameroonian hardwood with extinction

Protecting indigenous people key to saving Amazon, say environmentalists

EXPLAINER: Indonesia’s forests in danger as ban on new palm oil plantations expires
https://news.trust.org/item/20210930102252-fpr3e

Small Aircraft Feed Illegal Mining Operations in Brazil’s Amazon

New Report On Illegal Fishing Released

Illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade is affecting all of us – what can we do about it?
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/10/211013104605.htm

To spot wild-caught birds in pet trade, researchers zoom into isotopic detail

Yacu Kallpa: Illegal Timber and Impunity in Peru
ORGANIZED CRIME AND MONEY LAUNDERING

UAE’s New Executive Office of AML/CFT and Dubai’s New Specialized Money Laundering Court
The National Law Review: 11 October 2021

On August 22, 2021, the United Arab Emirates announced establishment of a specialized court to focus on combating money laundering.


Report shows some weakness in SA’s anti-money laundering systems
South African Government News Agency: 8 October 2021

A Financial Action Task Force report has identified significant weaknesses in parts of the anti-money laundering, countering of terrorism and countering of South African proliferation systems.


For more on this theme:
How organized crime bleeds the Middle East dry
https://www.arabnews.com/node/1944661

South Africa is a global hotspot for these types of crimes

Regulatory compliance alone won’t stop financial crime

Cattle Rustling: A New Form Of Deadly Organized Crime in The Horn of Africa

In the Riviera Maya, Cartel Extortion Schemes Know No Limits

The Digital Gold Rush - 5 Ways Bitcoin Helps Organized Crime

Middle East and North Africa Top Organized Crime Report

Nordic Mob? Why Organized Crime Is Exploding In Sweden
https://worldcrunch.com/culture-society/sweden-crime-mafia

Estonia’s New Anti-Money Laundering Chief Wants to Revoke All Crypto Licenses
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Russia building a sovereign Internet — with help from Apple, Google

William Partlett – The Conversation: 4 October 2021

In the past, large tech companies have generally ignored censorship requests from the Russian government. So why did the U.S. tech giants finally cave in to pressure? The answer provides a glimpse into how Russia, a sophisticated cyber superpower, is building its sovereign internet. It is preserving control, but without isolating itself from the broader internet.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Enter the 'splinternet': How competing visions for the internet could shape cyberspace

https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2021/10/04/four-internets-regulation

(Africa) Africa internet riches plundered, contested by China broker

https://apnews.com/article/technology-africa-china-uganda-pornography-89cf353a0bf0ed-1ba135a6c694b382b7

INTERNET FREEDOM

“The capacity for internet control has increased dramatically” — Interview with the Asia Centre

Say Mony – The Voice of America: 7 October 2021

Cambodia’s descent into de facto one-party rule since 2017 has been marked by a shrinking civic space. According to a recent report by the Asia Centre, this has included a sharp reduction in online freedom of expression and increased surveillance of the country’s rapidly growing number of internet users.


For more on this theme:

(Turkey, South Caucasus) Global internet freedom trends in Turkey and South Caucasus, new report


(Africa) Africa’s open internet is at risk — its leaders must act to save it

https://african.business/2021/10/technology-information/africas-open-internet-is-at-risk-its-leaders-must-act-to-save-it/

(China) China cracks down on pop culture in a bid to intensify ‘ideological control’

SECURITY

**Why today’s cybersecurity threats are more dangerous**  
Cynthia Brumfield – CSO: 4 October 2021

Greater complexity and interdependence among systems gives cyberattackers more opportunity for widespread, global damage, say government and industry experts.


*For more on this theme:*

- **(Global) Five Cybersecurity Misconceptions Putting Organizations At Risk**  
  https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/10/04/five-cybersecurity-misconceptions-putting-organizations-at-risk/?sh=746c37ee73cc

- **(ASEAN) How ASEAN is driving global cyber security efforts**  
  https://www.channelasia.tech/article/691880/how-asean-driving-global-cybersecurity-efforts/

- **(Global) Applying The Power Of Deep Learning To Cybersecurity**  

- **(Global) How weak computer passwords can threaten national security**  
  https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/2021/10/13/this-is-how-a-few-weak-computer-passwords-can-compromise-national-security/

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

**CISA to Create Career Pathways for Young Women in Cybersecurity and Technology**  
Lisbeth Perez – MeriTalk: 30 September 2021

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has partnered with Girls Who Code to develop pathways for young women to pursue careers in cybersecurity and technology, the agency announced.


*For more on this theme:*

- **(Africa) Who will benefit if we make internet access a reality for everyone in Africa?**  
  https://qz.com/africa/2069725/who-benefits-when-all-africans-have-internet-access/

- **(Nigeria) We’re working to make internet less expensive — Pantami**  
  https://www.sunnewsonline.com/we-are-working-to-make-internet-less-expensive-pantami/

- **(Azerbaijan) ICT Agency to speed up digital transformation in Azerbaijan — deputy minister**  
  https://www.azernews.az/business/184318.html
CYBERCRIME

Hackers Attack When Communities Are Most Vulnerable
Doug Howard – Government Technology: 30 September 2021

Natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires are increasingly followed by ransomware attacks. Full-scale drills will help states be prepared to fight back when hackers take advantage.
https://www.govtech.com/security/hackers-attack-when-communities-are-at-their-most-vulnerable

For more on this theme:
(Global) Exposed ransomware negotiations shed light on cybercrime, but complicate things for victims
(U.K., Europe) NCA and Europol Formalize Cooperation on Cybercrime
(Global) US plans 30-nation meeting to address growing cyber crime threat
https://www.itpro.co.uk/security.cyber-security/361098/us-30-country-meeting-cyber-crime-threat
(Australia) Australia’s new ransomware plan to create ransomware offences and reporting regime

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

India prepares guidelines to prevent cyber attack in power sector
The Statesman: 8 October 2021
For the first time, India’s Central Electricity Authority has formulated comprehensive guidelines to bring uniformity in cybersecurity preparedness across various utilities.

For more on this theme:
(Australia) Critical infrastructure legislation should also set the parameters of cognitive security
(U.S.) DOE Announces Clean Energy Cybersecurity Accelerator Program to Modernize the Grid
https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-announces-clean-energy-cybersecurity-accelerator-program-modernize-grid
(Global) Critical infrastructure is now in cyber criminals’ crosshairs
https://www.itweb.co.za/content/O2rQGMAnl6bqd1ea
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

EXPLAINER: Can the Taliban suppress the potent IS threat?
Samya Kullab – The Associated Press: 12 October 2021
The Taliban have promised to keep ISIS in check, but recent deadly attacks are raising questions about the new Afghan government’s ability to maintain peace.

In Afghanistan, ISIS-K is Infiltrating the Taliban
Trevor Filseth – The National Interest: 13 October 2021
The Taliban’s leadership ordered the group’s commanders to investigate their soldiers’ backgrounds, hoping to weed out members of other extremist groups hiding among the Taliban’s ranks.
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/afghanistan-isis-k-infiltrating-taliban-195046

For more on this theme:
Tajik Woman Gets Lengthy Prison Term For Allegedly Fighting With Islamic State In Afghanistan
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/tajik-woman-islamic-state-afghanistan/31486198.html
Syria: Could a European court force France to bring home families of IS fighters?
Al-Shabaab deploying child soldiers in Mozambique, says HRW
ISIS finance chief captured by Iraqi forces, Iraq PM says
Keep Your Eyes on Afghanistan’s ISIS-K
https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2021/10/keep-your-eyes-afghanistans-isis-k/186031/

PERSPECTIVE: Who Is Accused ISIS Propagandist Mohammed Khalifa?
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/perspective-who-is-accused-isis-propagandist-mohammed-khalifa/

The wives of suspected ISIS militants are permitted to return home because some European governments have taken pity on their children

Recording ISIS’s Iraqi crimes - book review
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Extremists target African village leaders in wave of assassinations
Edward McAllister and Lena Masri – Reuters: 8 October 2021

Groups affiliated with ISIS and al-Qaeda are killing and kidnapping elder statesmen and their families in villages across Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The violence mimics their tactics in other parts of the world where they have seized control.


Lake Chad Basin Joint Task Force: Thousands of Boko Haram Militants Surrender
Moki Edwin Kindzeka – Voice of America: 11 October 2021

The commander of multinational troops fighting Boko Haram said at least 3,600 of the militants have surrendered since August.


For more on this theme:

Sirajuddin Haqqani’s Ministry of Interior has begun issuing Afghan passports

Taliban has no interest in cutting its terror ties
https://asiatimes.com/2021/10/taliban-has-no-interest-in-cutting-its-terror-ties/

Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Restrict Media

Tensions Rise Between Tajikistan and the Taliban

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan could reshape counterinsurgencies in Africa, experts say

Al Qaeda successfully played ‘long game’ in Afghanistan, FBI and UN officials say

Hamas is increasing its activity in Lebanon and angering Hezbollah

Two Decades After Start Of U.S. War On Terror, Al-Qaeda Is Down But Not Out
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/twenty-years-al-qaeda-taliban/31497846.html

Tensions Rising in Mali: Soldiers Attacked by Al Qaeda Insurgents
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/tensions-rising-mali-soldiers-attacked-al-qaeda-insurgents-194978
RADICALIZATION

Forgiveness messaging increases willingness to accept former Boko Haram fighters returning home
Innovations for Poverty Action – Phys.org: 11 October 2021

Demobilized Boko Haram militants facing reintegration might be helped by supportive messaging from religious leaders, according to a recent study.

For more on this theme:
Can radicalisation be defeated? Yes, if we understand that it happens when people's bonds are broken
https://theconversation.com/can-radicalisation-be-defeated-yes-if-we-understand-that-it-happens-when-peoples-bonds-are-broken-168399

Nigeria has a plan to de-radicalise and reintegrate ex-terrorists. But it’s flawed and needs fixing

Far right and extremist groups are targeting military veterans for recruitment. Does the ADF owe them a duty of care?

World in Progress: How Niger is fighting radicalization with education

Trends of Online Radicalization in Bangladesh: Security Implications

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

Chinese Cyber Operations Scoop Up Data for Political, Economic Aims
Michelle Quinn – Voice of America: 8 October 2021

“What you are seeing now is this realization that Chinese espionage never disappeared and has become more technologically sophisticated,” said Josephine WolH, an associate professor of cybersecurity policy at Tufts University.

For more on this theme:
Twitter’s China Problem Rears Its Head
IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

Analysis: Iraqi voters spurn Iran’s allies, but Tehran could still fight for clout
John Davison and Ahmed Rasheed – Reuters: 12 October 2021

Iraqi voters delivered a sharp rebuke to Iran’s allies in an election this month, but loosening the grip of Shiite militia from control of the state will still be a politically delicate goal, with the threat of violence always in the background.


For more on this theme:
Pentagon Warns Against Deal Bringing Russian Mercenaries to Mali

How Iran has given its proxies unprecedented drone capabilities
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/iran-has-given-its-proxies-unprecedented-drone-capabilities

Libya’s Warring Sides, Including Russian Mercenaries, May Be Guilty Of War Crimes — UN
https://theowp.org/libyas-warring-sides-including-russian-mercenaries-may-be-guilty-of-war-crimes-un/

IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Singapore particularly vulnerable yet resilient to Chinese influence operations: French report
Justin Ong — The Straits Times: 2 October 2021

A study by the Institute for Strategic Research at France’s military college observed that Singapore has been able to resist and defend against Chinese influence “skillfully,” with the counternarrative of a single national identity.


For more on this theme:
Nakasone Now Sees Ransomware, Influence Ops As ‘National Security’ Threats

Domestic Disinformation on the Rise in Africa

China is exploiting search engines to push propaganda about origins of covid-19, study finds
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/10/05/china-is-exploiting-search-engines-push-propaganda-about-origins-covid-19-study-finds/