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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Iraq PM-elect Al Sudani vows to curb corruption after $2.5bn embezzlement case
Ismaeel Naar and Sinan Mahmoud – The Nation: 16 October 2022

“We will not allow the money of the Iraqis to be stolen, as has happened with the funds of the General Authority for Taxes in the Rafidain Bank,” Mohammed Shia Al Sudani said.


WHO Syria boss accused of corruption, fraud, abuse, AP finds
Maria Cheng – The Associated Press: 20 October 2022

Staffers at the World Health Organization’s Syrian office have alleged that their boss plied government officials with gifts — including computers, gold coins and cars — and acted frivolously as COVID-19 swept the country.

https://apnews.com/article/WHO-syria-bce4ad6714a8b9e29b15c4db39f66720

For more on this theme:

Brazil’s slippage in corruption index clouds OECD membership, report says

‘Something we take very seriously: US on ‘corruption’ in Pakistan flood relief

Corruption and money laundering are destroying the planet
https://fcpablog.com/2022/10/10/corruption-and-money-laundering-are-destroying-the-planet/

Dekleptification — How USAID has fought corruption in Ukraine and elsewhere
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2022/10/06/dekleptification-how-usaid-has-fought-corruption-in-ukraine-and-elsewhere/

Investigative journalism is essential for Ukraine reconstruction and anti-corruption
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2022/10/06/investigative-journalism-is-essential-for-ukraine-reconstruction-and-anti-corruption/

Moldova’s Ex-President Dodon Indicted for Corruption, Illicit Enrichment
https://balkaninsight.com/2022/10/07/moldovas-ex-president-dodon-indicted-for-corruption-illicit-enrichment/

How corruption cripples business at Africa’s seaports

President of Peru Accused of Leading a Corruption Ring
DRUG TRAFFICKING

U.S. sanctions logistics allies of Mexico’s Sinaloa Cartel
Reuters: 19 October 2022

The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned people linked to the powerful drug cartel days after bilateral security talks aimed at cracking down on trafficking of fentanyl and other contraband.


Taliban Turns Blind Eye To Opium Production, Despite Official Ban
Mursaleen Arsala and Abubakar Siddique – Gandhara: 18 October 2022

In the spring, the Taliban announced a ban on the cultivation, trafficking and use of illicit narcotics in Afghanistan, the world’s biggest producer of opium. But as the fall planting season begins, the militant group appears to be turning a blind eye to the lucrative drugs trade.

https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-opium-production-taliban-farmers-drugs-trade/32089780.html

For more on this theme:

Six countries sign “anti-narco coalition” in Amsterdam
https://nltimes.nl/2022/10/07/six-countries-sign-anti-narco-coalition-amsterdam

Montenegrin sailors are involved in global drug trafficking schemes, damaging the reputation of Montenegro’s rich maritime tradition.
https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/see-obs-013/02-montenegrin-sailors-global-drug-trafficking.html

Afghan meth from Ephedra plant emerging as the drug of choice

Ecstasy Laced With Fentanyl: Georgia’s Growing Party Drug Problem
https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-fentanyl-ecstasy-drugs-clubs-opiods-deaths/32084524.html

Opium, revolts and the rise of Xi Jinping

Colombia Hits Historic Levels of Coca Cultivation and Cocaine Production
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Environmental crime: Profit can be higher than drug trade
Bettina Stehköper – Deutsche Welle: 16 October 2022

Environmental crime is the third-most lucrative criminal business in the world. Yet too often it is treated like a petty enterprise. Activists hope EU legislation may soon change that.

A fast-growing pipeline: The Amazon-to-Southeast Asia wildlife trade
Sharon Guynup – Mongabay: 18 October 2022

The legal and illegal wildlife trade continues to escalate in tandem with increasing Chinese investment in South America’s Amazon region, mirroring a similar trafficking trend that devastated elephants, rhinos and pangolins in Africa.

For more on this theme:
Amazonian river communities seek to boost hard-won land rights to fight loggers

Environmental Crime is World’s Third Most Lucrative Crime
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/environmental-crime-is-worlds-third-most-lucrative-crime/

‘Astonishing’: global demand for exotic pets is driving a massive trade in unprotected wildlife

Terrorists and poachers take aim at the Congo Basin’s guardians

After spate of gangster heists, Chile boosts security on copper trains

Vietnam’s virtual landscape for illicit wildlife trading: A snapshot of e-commerce and social media
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/vietnam-online-illicit-wildlife-trade/

Ghana: ‘Let’s Fight Money Laundering Through Illegal Wildlife Trade’
https://allafrica.com/stories/202210200235.html

The Rising Demand For Exotic Pets Could Lead To Species Extinction And Pandemics
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Global Internet Freedom Declines for 12th Straight Year, Says Freedom House
Tech Policy Press: 19 October 2022

This year, Freedom House—a nonprofit founded in 1941 to advance democracy and human rights—released a report on “The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule,” chronicling 16 years of aggregate decline in democracy across the world’s nations.

For more on this theme:

(India) Dynamic public discussion is Required to regulate internet communications

(Iran) Iran protests: Government uses internet ‘kill-switch’ as tech savvy youth continue to evade digital censorship

(China) China’s internet censors are attempting to shut out protesters in Beijing

CYBER STATECRAFT AND STRATEGY

Clarifying Responsible Cyber Power: Developing Views in the U.K. Regarding Non-intervention and Peacetime Cyber Operations
Russell Buchan and Joe Devanny – Lawfare: 13 October 2022

For more than a decade, the U.K. government has been developing a public narrative about its cyber strategy. Given that the lines between the domestic and the international are blurred online, the U.K. has addressed state behavior in cyberspace, the risks posed by nonstate actors, and the role of laws in contributing to strategic stability.

For more on this theme:

(Global) The Cyber Wild West
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column/line-print/the-cyber-wild-west

(Global) Why more lower-income nations are engaging in tech diplomacy

(Global) Enhancing Global Cybersecurity Cooperation: European and Indian Perspectives
https://www.orfonline.org/research/enhancing-global-cybersecurity-cooperation/
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Census website struck by a billion attempted cyber-attacks, Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals
Amy Remeikis – The Guardian: 19 October 2022
Revelation that ABS fended off attacks in 2021 comes as Australia reels from ransomware attacks on Medibank and Optus.

For more on this theme:
(Japan) Japan’s Police and FSA Publish a Joint Cyber Warning to Crypto Firms, Link Attacks to Lazarus Group

(Australia) Medibank admits personal data stolen in cyber attack

(Poland, Ukraine) Microsoft says Ukraine, Poland targeted with novel ransomware attack

(Bulgaria, Russia) Bulgaria hit by a cyber attack originating from Russia
https://securityaffairs.co/wordpress/137230/hacking/bulgaria-hit-cyber-attack-russia.html

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Digital industrial hubs are key to Africa’s economic transformation
Rob Floyd, Karishma Banga and Freda Yawson – Institute for Security Studies: 18 October 2022
Good policy and stable macroeconomics won’t drive industrial innovation — tech hubs, startups and manufacturers must be involved.
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/digital-industrial-hubs-are-key-to-africas-economic-transformation

For more on this theme:
(Global) What are the first steps to achieve an e-democracy?
https://atalayar.com/en/content/what-are-first-steps-achieve-e-democracy

(Nigeria, Global) ITU moves to drive internet access for rural connectivity in Nigeria

(U.S.) DOD Cyber Training Academy Aims to Arm Students With Essential Cybersecurity Tools
CYBERCRIME

Treat cyber crime as a ‘strategic threat’, UK businesses told
Alex Scroxton – Security Weekly: 19 October 2022

The government's new National Cyber Advisory Board aims to help elevate discussion and spur action in the business community.


For more on this theme:

(Global) INTERPOL-led Operation Takes Down ‘Black Axe’ Cyber Crime Organization
https://thehackernews.com/2022/10/interpol-led-operation-takes-down-black.html

(U.K.) #CyberMonth: Staying Cyber Secure in an Increasingly Hostile Digital Environment

(Global) The UN Cybercrime Treaty Has a Cybersecurity Problem In It
https://www.justsecurity.org/83582/the-un-cybercrime-treaty-has-a-cybersecurity-problem-in-it/

(India) Cyber crime sleuths retrieve money lost in online fraud

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Indian Energy Company Tata Power’s IT Infrastructure Hit By Cyber Attack
Ravie Lakshmanan – The Hacker News: 15 October 2022

India’s largest integrated power company confirmed it was targeted by a cyberattack.

https://thehackernews.com/2022/10/indian-energy-company-tata-powers-it.html

For more on this theme:

(U.S., China) NSA, CISA, FBI Reveal Top CVEs Exploited by Chinese State-Sponsored Actors

(U.S.) Securing the U.S. Electricity Grid from Cyberattacks
https://www.gao.gov/blog/securing-u.s.-electricity-grid-cyberattacks

(U.S.) 4 Critical Infrastructure Sectors to Get New Cyber Rules, Per White House Official

(Germany, Russia) German cybersecurity chief out amid reports of Russia ties
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

New details found in Syria on missing ISIS hostages: Rights group
Agence France-Presse: 13 October 2022

New details on the Islamic State group’s former detention centers for foreign hostages in Syria and on gravesites offer clues on where victims may be buried, a rights group said.
https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/10/13/New-details-found-in-Syria-on-missing-ISIS-hostages-Rights-group

Threat Of Radicalization In Syria's ISIS Prisons — Analysis
Saman Ayesha Kidwai – Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses: 19 October 2022

Tens of thousands of ISIS detainees are housed in temporary prison camps and detention centers in Syria and Iraq by U.S.-backed Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces. Charles Lister, the director of Syria and Countering Terrorism and Extremism Programs at the Middle East Institute, warned that the international community is “doing nothing to prevent the current generation of detainees from wanting to continue to fight if they get out, and creating a melting pot for the next generation.”

For more on this theme:
French company pleads guilty to paying millions to ISIS

ISIS infiltrated a refugee camp to recruit fighters. Inside the Biden admin’s plan to stop it.

ISIS-linked militants are threatening huge natural gas reserves the world needs badly right now

Video: Pentagon Press Secretary says ISIS threat not as big as 2014

Al Qaeda, Isis behind Mominpur violence: BJP’s Suvendu Adhikari

Down but not out: The Islamic State waits for an opportunity to resurge
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/down-not-out-islamic-state-resurgence

IS Relies on Extortion in Eastern Syria to Raise Funds
https://www.voanews.com/a/is-relies-on-extortion-in-eastern-syria-to-raise-funds-/6785658.html
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

The Use of Drones by Terrorist Organizations: A Constant Challenge to Counter-Terrorism Policies
European Eye on Radicalization: 14 October 2022

Drones have become rather prominent in recent wars. But in the past few years a new problem has arisen: the use of drones by terrorist organizations.
https://eeradicalization.com/the-use-of-drones-by-terrorist-organizations/

IntelBrief: Distracted by the Bright Shiny Object: Trends in Terrorism Financing
The Soufian Center: 13 October 2022

With the recent news that supporters of the so-called Islamic State group were trying to mint nonfungible tokens to finance their activities, there has been a significant focus on the nexus between terrorism financing and emerging technologies.

For more on this theme:
What drives Al-Shabaab in Somalia: foreign forces out, Sharia law in and overthrow the government

Indonesia’s response to terrorist threats has grown much stronger since Bali bombings

Al-Qaeda in Yemen: A 6-month outlook

Somalia’s intensifying fight against Al-Shabab
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/somalias-intensifying-fight-against-al-shabab

New Islamist Militant Outfit Emerges in Bangladesh

India warns of terror groups in Africa controlling political agenda

20 Years After the Bali Bombings, What Have We Learned?
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/12/bali-bombings-indonesia-20th-anniversary-terrorist-attack-jemaah-islamiyah/

Somalia orders media not to publish al-Shabab ‘propaganda’
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Bowing to Putin's nuclear blackmail will make nuclear war more likely
Andriy Zagorodnyuk – Atlantic Council: 18 October 2022

With his armies in retreat and his invasion of Ukraine rapidly unraveling, Russian President Vladimir Putin has recently resorted to nuclear saber-rattling. This has caused widespread international alarm and is fueling mounting calls for Ukraine to reach a compromise with the Kremlin to avert World War III.

https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/bowing-to-putins-nuclear-blackmail-will-make-nuclear-war-far-more-likely/

For more on this theme:

Putin, Ukraine, and NATO.
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/putin-ukraine-and-nato

Russian Attacks on Ukrainian Utility Infrastructure: Water and Power

Russian disinformation in Africa: What's sticking and what's not

IntelBrief: Middle East Leaders Engage with Putin

Ukraine has a Russia problem not a Putin problem

Ex-empires Iran and Russia forge new bonds as both blame their woes on the West

Putin’s blackout blitz: Russia aims to freeze Ukrainians into surrender

Russian War Report: Russia escalates war by targeting cities across Ukraine

Is Ukraine rejecting its natural allies?

Oil Cap Plans Will Open a New Front in Russia-West Conflict
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88211

What Does Russia Hope to Achieve by Bombing Ukrainian Cities?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88188

The Use of Drones in the Russia-Ukraine War
https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2022/10/13/the-use-of-drones-in-the-russia-ukraine-war/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

The Thaw on Russia’s Periphery Has Already Started

Extremist Ideologies and the Roots of Mass Atrocities: Lessons for Ukraine

Putin orders martial law in occupied Ukrainian areas as Kyiv’s forces gain ground
https://www.npr.org/2022/10/19/1129853677/an-occupied-region-of-ukraine-is-evacuating-residents-to-russia

How Moscow grabs Ukrainian kids and makes them Russians
https://apnews.com/article/ukrainian-children-russia-7493cb22c9086c6293c1ac7986d85ef6

Russia using rape as ‘military strategy’ in Ukraine: UN envoy

Russia-Ukraine international armed conflict: ICRC asks for immediate and unimpeded access to all prisoners of war

NATO begins nuclear exercises amid Russia war tensions
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-nato-95850790cb0387b06457d40ff97d767a

World Bank says Ukraine has tenfold increase in poverty due to war

How China’s Air Force Can Benefit from the Russia-Ukraine War

Russia-Ukraine War Could Spike Global Food Insecurity, Emissions

How Ukraine is winning the social media war

Ukraine Symposium — Russian Preliminary Objections at the ICJ: The Case Must Go On?
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/russian-preliminary-objections-icj-case-must-go-on/

Ukraine Symposium — The Complicity of Iran in Russia’s Aggression and War Crimes in Ukraine
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/complicity-iran-russia-aggression-war-crimes-ukraine/

Why the famed Russian Air Force failed in Ukraine and the vital lessons IAF can draw from it
https://theprint.in/defence/air-denial-over-dominance-democratised-technology-lessons-for-iaf-from-russia-ukraine-war/1167547/
For more on this theme:

**Global South again shows ambivalence on the Ukraine war**
https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/10/13/global-south-again-shows-ambivalence-on-the-ukraine-war/

**What Ukrainians learn from downed drones used by Russia**

**Russia is bruised as winter approaches. Can Ukraine land another blow?**

**After Kremlin’s Annexation Gambit Few Compromises Remain To End Russia’s War On Ukraine — Analysis**

**Hobbled Russia Cedes Influence to China**
https://cepa.org/article/hobbled-russia-cedes-influence-to-china/

**Russia’s Enfeeblement Sends Shudders Through Central Asia**

**Putin Says the Gloves Are Off — Believe Him**
https://cepa.org/article/putin-says-the-gloves-are-off-believe-him/

**Europe’s New Military Frontline**
https://cepa.org/article/europes-new-military-frontline/

**South Caucasus Inch Closer to Peace**
https://cepa.org/article/south-caucasus-inch-closer-to-peace/

**Whisper it — Russia Begins to Discuss Defeat**
https://cepa.org/article/whisper-it-russia-begins-to-discuss-defeat/

**FSB Seizes a Greater Role in Russia’s Shadow War**
https://cepa.org/article/fsb-seizes-a-greater-role-in-russias-shadow-war/

**Russia’s Prolonged Involvement In Ukraine War Suits China’s Strategic Blueprint**

**How Ukraine learned to cloak its drones from Russian surveillance**

**Ukraine’s Kuleba Tries To Change Africa’s Narrative On The War — Analysis**
https://www.eurasiareview.com/17102022-ukraines-kuleba-tries-to-change-africas-narrative-on-the-war-analysis/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Time Is Right For Genuine Peace Between Azerbaijan And Armenia — Analysis**  

**There Is an Alternative to Russo-Ukrainian War**  
https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/opinion/5672-there-is-an-alternative-to-russo-ukrainian-war

**Ukraine Lessons for Naval Intelligence's Next War**  
https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2022/october/ukraine-lessons-naval-intelligences-next-war

**Putin's Next Strike may not be Nuclear**  
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/putins-next-strike-may-not-be-nuclear

**Russia's Setback In Samarkand — Analysis**  

**What Does Russia's New Maritime Doctrine Signify in a Strategic Sense?**  

**What Lies Behind Russia's Increasingly Esoteric Anti-Western Rhetoric?**  
https://jamestown.org/program/what-lies-behind-russias-increasingly-esoteric-anti-west-rhetoric/

**Bravado or Strategic Helplessness: What Is Going on Behind the Façade in Minsk?**  
https://jamestown.org/program/bravado-or-strategic-helplessness-what-is-going-on-behind-the-facade-in-minsk/

**Walking on Thin Ice: Will Turkey's 'Compartmentalization' Work in Ukraine?**  
https://jamestown.org/program/walking-on-thin-ice-will-turkeys-compartmentalization-work-in-ukraine/

**The Future of Iranian-Ukrainian Relations**  
https://jamestown.org/program/the-future-of-iranian-ukrainian-relations/

**Russia Tries to Extend and Exploit a Pause in War**  
https://jamestown.org/program/russia-tries-to-extend-and-exploit-a-pause-in-war/

**Will Georgians Decide in Referendum to Fight Russia?**  
https://jamestown.org/program/will-georgians-decide-in-referendum-to-fight-russia/

**'It's Time To Ignore' The Traps: Disinformation Expert Says Kremlin's 'Empty Threats' Have Paralyzed West — Analysis**  

**Analysis: Why is Russia using 'kamikaze' drones in Ukraine?**  

**The U.N. Charter Is Working Better Than It Seems in Ukraine**  
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Researchers: Wikipedia a front in Russian propaganda war
https://therecord.media/researchers-wikipedia-a-front-in-russian-propaganda-war/

NSA Cybersecurity Director’s Six Takeaways From the War in Ukraine

The Battle for Control Over Ukraine’s Internet

#DTX2022: Cyber Needs to Redress the Defensive-Offensive Balance Following Russia-Ukraine