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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Ukraine approves bill to boost independence of anti-corruption bureau
Natalia Zinets – Reuters: 19 October 2021
Ukraine’s parliament has passed legislation to strengthen the independence of the Western-backed national anti-corruption bureau, a requirement for Kyiv to secure more loans from the International Monetary Fund under a $5 billion loan deal.

Kazakhstan’s Light Rail Corruption Case Drags on
Paolo Sorbello – The Diplomat: 16 October 2021
The capital’s light rail might never be built, and the corrupt officials who stole public funds might never be convicted.

For more on this theme:

Pandora papers: as ordinary Lebanese suffer, elite secretly drain off billions

Doctors come out of their shells, demand end to corruption, incompetence in COVID handling

China’s anti-corruption watchdog finds public hospitals vulnerable to graft and bribery

Majority of Portuguese consider corruption increased over last year
https://www.portugalresident.com/majority-of-portuguese-consider-corruption-increased-over-last-year/

U.S., EU ‘Very Disappointed’ As Ukraine Delays Appointing Anti-Corruption Head
https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-anti-corruption-office/31501183.html

Odesa Mayor Charged With Corruption, In Latest Criminal Case
https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-odesa-mayor-corruption/31497418.html

Could Indigenous demonstrations against corruption lead to lasting change in Guatemala?
https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2021/10/08/indigenous-demonstrations-corruption-authoritarianism-guatemala

Chile corruption probe after president cited in Pandora Papers
DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Intimate Relationship Between Cocaine and Illegal Timber in Brazil's Amazon
Ciro Barros – InSight Crime: 14 October 2021

For some time, research has highlighted the significant volume of illegal logging in the Brazilian timber market and its relationship to deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. What’s new, however, is the growing overlap between the routes used by drug trafficking groups and illegal logging groups.


Ecuador president declares state of emergency over drug violence
Agence France-Presse: 19 October 2021

President Guillermo Lasso has decreed a state of emergency to confront drug trafficking and other crimes in Ecuador, saying the military and police will take to the streets to provide security.


For more on this theme:

Pandemic creates ‘perfect storm’ for opioid crisis

Afghan drug menace might worsen as Taliban indicate legalising poppy

The Village That Ditched the Drug Trade for Tourism

Drug trade fuelled western NSW virus spike

Snapchat rolls out safety features to cut down on sales of illegal drugs after string of fentanyl deaths

Through the haze: Detecting drug traffickers along the border

How Mexico's Cartels Use Video Games to Recruit Children

West Africa: A growing drug-trafficking hub

Mexico's powerful Jalisco cartel is flexing its muscles at opposite ends of Latin America
https://www.businessinsider.com/mexicos-powerful-jalisco-cartel-is-expanding-through-latin-america-2021-10
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Private businesses could transform global fight against wildlife crime
Michael Pflanz – Independent: 14 October 2021

New initiatives in transport and shipping show the value of collaboration between the private and public sectors in the fight against wildlife trafficking.
https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/giantsclub/wildlife-crime-global-fight-b1938199.html

Malaysia’s Indigenous Penan block roads to stop logging in Borneo
Rachel Donald – Mongabay: 14 October 2021

In an attempt to block logging operations by timber company Samling, Penan indigenous tribespeople have erected two separate blockades in Malaysian Borneo’s Baram region.

For more on this theme:
China’s wildlife food ban is vital for public health and threatened species — our research reveals what must happen next

Bangladesh Takes Major Step To Protect Threatened Sharks And Rays

FOREST Act bill would hold global suppliers accountable for illegal deforestation

Facebook Addresses Illegal Sales of Amazon Rainforest Lands on Its Platform

Ecuador Counters Illegal Fishing with Help from Canada, US

Tracking The Dark Fleet of Illegal Fisheries

How Kenya coast guards are confronting illegal fishing on Lake Naivasha

Attack on Romanian Film Crew Reveals Dangers of Environmental Beat

A taste for pangolin meat and the fall of an African wildlife cartel
ORGANIZED CRIME AND MONEY LAUNDERING

Albanian Organised Crime Crackdown Found Wanting
Klodiana Lala – Balkan Insight: 20 October 2021

Albania’s government vowed to use the full “force of the law” in confiscating the ill-gotten gains of organized crime. The results were underwhelming.

https://balkaninsight.com/2021/10/20/albanian-organised-crime-crackdown-found-wanting/

For more on this theme:

Yakuza death sentence won’t stop organized crime

Contraband Chinese Cigarettes Take Latin America by Storm

In Mexico, Majority of Violent Crimes Go Unpunished
https://thecrimereport.org/2021/10/12/in-mexico-majority-of-violent-crimes-go-unpunished/

US Department of Justice creates cryptocurrency enforcement unit
https://www.theverge.com/2021/10/7/22714241/us-justice-department-cryptocurrency-enforce-

ment-unit

Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism Financing: A new package to overhaul the European regulatory framework
https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=cc4e9307-70c1-4d2a-af3f-04792a967187

As Japan’s yakuza mob weakens, former gangsters struggle to find a role outside crime
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/japan-yakuza-crime-gang-

sters/2021/10/17/556a255c-2b0a-11ec-baf4-d7a4e075eb90_story.html

A Ukrainian Oligarch Bought a Midwestern Factory and Let it Rot. What Was Really Going On?
https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/10/17/ukrainian-oligarch-midwestern-facto-

ry-town-dirty-money-american-heartland-michel-kleptocracy-515948
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Considerations On Governance Of Cyberspace: Does It Require A Different Form?
Deniz Lizge Oksuz and Av. Yigit Yildiz – Neziroglu Law Firm: 7 October 2021
Discussions on whether we need a different form of internet governance have become necessary because of the rapid development of technology.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Moves at UN Signal That the Search for a New Tech Envoy May Be Underway
https://www.passblue.com/2021/10/20/moves-at-un-signal-that-the-search-for-a-new-tech-envoy-may-be-underway/
(India, Global) Sovereignty in a ‘Datafied’ World
https://www.orfonline.org/research/sovereignty-in-a-datafied-world/

INTERNET FREEDOM

On Internet Freedom, China and Taiwan Are Worlds Apart
Sarah Cook and Allie Funk – The Diplomat: 12 October 2021
One is ranked as the most oppressive digital environment. The other is among the freest.
https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/on-internet-freedom-china-and-taiwan-are-worlds-apart/

For more on this theme:
(China) China plans to ban non-Communist media outlets in a further blow to free speech
(Swaziland) Eswatini government shuts down internet
(Burma, Global) Facebook Objects to Releasing Private Posts About Myanmar’s Rohingya Campaign
(Cambodia) Cambodia’s Internet Gateway Ushers in Silence, Media Say
PRIVACY

The COVID-19 pandemic has made us reliant on digital technologies, eroding our privacy
Brice Armel Simeu – The Conversation: 13 October 2021

By the end of 2020, 71% of workers in the United States had switched in whole or in part to teleworking. Our lives have “telemigrated” to online spaces and platforms.


For more on this theme:

(Canada) To protect our privacy and free speech, Canada needs to overhaul its approach to regulating online harms

(India, China) India exploring regulation to test Chinese smartphones for snooping, data security concerns

(U.K.) ICO to step in after schools use facial recognition to speed up lunch queue

CYBERCRIME

Russian Corruption Makes It Harder to Crack Down on Ransomware
Patrick Tucker – Defense One: 20 October 2021

Hackers who learned skills in government service are branching out “for their own personal enrichment,” Pentagon cyber leader says.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Hackers Incorporated: How Cybercrime Is Moving From The Basement To A Booming Industry

(Global) Cyber-attack Response Takes More than Two Working Days

(Global) US allies vow cooperation on cybercrime
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Acer Taiwan falls victim to cyber attack
Sabina Weston – ITPro: 18 October 2021
Hackers obtained employee data three days after they breached Acer India servers.
https://www.itpro.co.uk/security/hacking/361274/acer-taiwan-falls-victim-to-cyber-attack

For more on this theme:
(Israel) Criminal Gang Blamed for Cyber Attack on Hospital
https://hamodia.com/2021/10/18/criminal-gang-blamed-for-cyber-attack-on-hospital/
(Japan) Olympus suffers second cyberattack in 2021
(U.S., Russia) Major Russian hacking group linked to ransomware attack on Sinclair: report

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Australia’s essential services could be forced to report when they are under cyber-attack
Daniel Hurst – The Guardian: 19 October 2021
The Morrison government hopes to push through laws allowing the Australian Signals Directorate to provide direct assistance to industry as a “last resort.”

For more on this theme:
(GLOBAL) How Utilities Should Conduct Cybersecurity Training
https://biztechmagazine.com/article/2021/10/how-utilities-should-conduct-cybersecurity-training
(U.S.) Shoring up cybersecurity in critical infrastructure and the nation’s defense supply chain
(U.S.) Industry panel: U.S. space systems need protection against cyber attacks
https://spacenews.com/industry-panel-u-s-space-systems-need-protection-against-cyber-attacks/
(U.S.) Agencies Warn of Ongoing Cyber Threats to Water Treatment Facilities
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Will US Drawdown in Iraq Reboot Islamic State Militants?
Heather Murdock – Voice of America: 14 October 2021

Some Iraqis fear a U.S. withdrawal could help ISIS to rise again; others are more optimistic.

Islamic State Fighters Now Chasing Boko Haram To North-West Region — Governor El-Rufai
Sahara Reporters: 14 October 2021

Nigeria’s Kaduna state governor admits that his biggest fear is that Boko Haram insurgents are relocating to the northwest region after being displaced in the war-torn northeast by ISIS West Africa Province.

For more on this theme:
Netherlands to soon bring back more ISIS-affiliated women to stand trial
https://nltimes.nl/2021/10/11/netherlands-soon-bring-back-isis-affiliated-women-stand-trial

Sudan reports crackdown on suspected Islamic State cells in Khartoum

The children of IS: ‘It’s a disaster we cannot deal with’

Intensifying Violence Between Taliban, IS-K Heralds New War In Afghanistan
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/taliban-islamic-state-khorasan/31507469.html

Defeats of Al-Shabaab insurgents in Mozambique forces them into new areas

Who finances Mozambique’s insurgency?
https://mg.co.za/africa/2021-10-13-who-finances-mozambiques-insurgency/

Afghanistan’s war is over, but the Taliban faces a new hurdle: Enforcing the law — and protecting Afghans from ISIS
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/taliban-policing-isis-afghanistan/2021/10/18/7e3dce46-26a7-11ec-8739-5cb6aba30a30_story.html

Officials: Iraq arrests mastermind of deadly 2016 bombing
https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-arrests-iraq-bombings-baghdad-5765685b3816fe6e658509304e885815
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Are terror attacks increasing in Europe? — Analysis  
Seth J. Frantzman – The Jerusalem Post: 16 October 2021

After attacks in the U.K. and Norway, questions are being asked about whether a new wave of extremism could be bubbling to the surface.

https://www.jpost.com/international/after-uk-and-norway-are-terror-attacks-increasing-in-europe-682165

Taliban promise cash, land, to families of suicide bombers  
Samya Kullab – The Associated Press: 19 October 2021

The Taliban have promised plots of land to relatives of suicide bombers who attacked U.S. and Afghan soldiers. The provocative gesture seems to run counter to their efforts to court international support.

https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-kabul-taliban-f5a69b1c2676f9345b8dce490798d4ee

For more on this theme:

Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) consolidates power in tribal areas

Malhama Tactical: Now Jihadists for Hire
https://idsa.in/idsacomments/malhama-tactical-now-jihadists-for-hire-sa-kidwai-141021

Mali Contemplates Negotiating With Al Qaeda
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/mali-contemplates-negotiating-al-qaeda-195249

Hezbollah leader declares his group has 100,000 fighters
https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-lebanon-beirut-civil-wars-hassan-nasrallah-a3c10d99ca2ef-1c3d58daee135297025

RADICALIZATION

‘De-radicalisation’ offers Moroccan prisoners route to freedom  
Ismail Bellaouali – Agence France-Presse: 16 October 2021

A program, launched in 2017 and led by Morocco’s prison service with several partner organizations, aims to help terror detainees who are willing to question their beliefs.


For more on this theme:

Universities must be proactive in tackling radicalization
https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/126597972/universities-must-be-proactive-in-tackling-radicalisation

Council of Europe recommends measures to protect children against radicalization
IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Russia is the world’s leading exporter of instability
Iuliia Mendel – Atlantic Council: 19 October 2021

Russia has emerged over the past two decades as the world’s leading exporter of instability. This has become a central pillar of Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy, allowing Moscow to undermine potential opponents from within while enabling the Kremlin to punch well above its true geopolitical weight.
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russia-is-the-worlds-leading-exporter-of-instability/

For more on this theme:

War still rages in Syrian border town at heart of Iran’s regional ambition

Repackaging Pandora: How Russia’s information apparatus is handling a massive leak of data on offshore finance
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/10/08/repackaging-pandora-how-russias-information-apparatus-is-handling-a-massive-leak-of-data-on-offshore-finance/

Russia’s Energy Influence In Europe Is Growing

Countering China’s Gray Zone Strategy
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/countering-chinas-gray-zone-strategy

Hybrid Warfare and Active Measures
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hybrid-warfare-and-active-measures

U.S. bets on Latin America to counter China’s influence
https://ticotimes.net/2021/10/13/u-s-bets-on-latin-america-to-counter-chinas-influence

Win Some, Lose Some: China’s Campaign for Global Media Influence
https://jamestown.org/program/win-some-lose-some-chinas-campaign-for-global-media-influence/

Chinese Regime’s Widespread Influence Operations in Canada Documented in French Report

Russia Tries to Boost Asia Ties to Counter Indo-Pacific Alliances

How Russia used Duma elections to increase its influence in occupied territories
IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

Losses for Iran's Proxies in Iraqi Election Reflect Broader Challenges To Iranian Influence
Lewis Palmer – The Media Express: 14 October 2021

It has been widely reported that political candidates representing Iran-backed Shiite militias suffered substantial losses in Iraq’s recent parliamentary elections. The outcome has been vigorously rejected by Iran’s proxies and by the Islamic Republic itself.


For more on this theme:

Terrorists, Cocaine, And Power: A War Within Venezuela

The Golan Heights Could Blow Up as Iran Becomes More Aggressive While Israel Issues Warnings

Russia's shadow army looks to the Sahel
https://marketresearchtelecast.com/russias-shadow-army-looks-to-the-sahel-international/174790/

Russian Mercenaries’ Potential Advent to Mali
https://jamestown.org/program/russian-mercenaries-potential-advent-to-mali/

Libya: UN lauds mercenary withdrawal plan on 'path towards peace and democracy'