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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

EU to end corruption monitoring scheme in Bulgaria, but not Romania
Carmen Paun – Politico: 22 October 2019
The European Commission criticized Romania for backsliding on judicial reforms and fighting corruption and won’t let the country leave a monitoring program put in place when the country joined the European Union in 2017. However, Bulgaria has made sufficient progress on reform and may now leave the monitoring program.

Billions Worth Of Private Jets, Superyachts, And Mansions Have Been Bought With Corrupt Wealth
Ollie Williams – Forbes: 24 October 2019
Billions of dollars of suspicious wealth have flowed through the United Kingdom, according to a new report. Anti-corruption group Transparency International analyzed over 400 corruption cases and identified 86 financial institutions, 81 law firms and 62 accountancy firms that have "unwittingly or otherwise" helped individuals move corrupt funds through the U.K.
Full report:
At Your Service
https://www.transparency.org.uk/publications/at-your-service/

For more on this theme:
U.S. Treasury Moves Against South Africa’s Corrupt Gupta Family
https://www.cfr.org/blog/us-treasury-moves-against-south-africas-corrupt-gupta-family
A Swiss Bank Keeps Cropping Up in Venezuelan Corruption Cases
Plundering the future: Why the IMF must quantify grand corruption
Guatemala shut down its anti-corruption commission. Now its people worry about impunity.
First of Najib’s Trials Hinge on Whether He Knew of 1MDB Sum
Time to end EU golden visas for corrupt elites
https://euobserver.com/opinion/146385
DRUG TRAFFICKING

What Doctors Can Learn From the Dark Web
Doug Johnson and Undark – The Atlantic: 20 October 2019
To tackle drug use, researchers and harm-reduction advocates are turning to online drug forums for help.

Asian Insider Podcast: Can South-east Asia’s billion dollar meth trade be stopped?
The Straits Times: 18 October 2019
Tse Chi Lopis, known as Asia’s “El Chapo,” is the subject of an international manhunt. Nirmal Ghosh of The Straits Times speaks to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime officials and Indochina correspondent Tan Hui Yee about the booming drug trade in Southeast Asia.

For more on this theme:

Addiction fuels drug violence, Mexican officials say

‘They call it ice’: North Korean defector details the country’s massive drug problem

Drug Cartel Control Is Not Peace

Hondurans call for president to step down after drug verdict
https://www.apnews.com/dab043b287e94c23b0d7824ed47313a1

Increase in Violence Leads to More Forced Displacements in Colombia
https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/increase-violence-forces-massive-displacements-colombia/

The man accused of running Asia’s biggest drug trafficking syndicate has been revealed. Here’s what needs to happen next

The Drug Trade Isn’t Just Killing People, It’s Killing the Planet

Booming ‘dark web’ marketplaces known as the ‘eBay for drugs’ are being exploited by Australian dealers - and it’s proving impossible to catch them

Mexico’s drug war is Australia’s problem too
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

AI In Wildlife Conservation
Synched: 19 October 2019
Wildlife conservationists are using artificial intelligence through image recognition technology to track and count endangered species to better understand how to preserve these populations.

Japan Has an Illegal Seafood Problem
Jess Mackie – Hakai Magazine: 18 October 2019
Japan is the world’s largest consumer of high-value fish, but its loose fisheries laws make it an attractive destination for illegal, unreported and unregulated seafood.

For more on this theme:
Illegal wildlife trade goes high-tech
Defence completes mission to combat illegal fishing
50,000 Chinese are engaged in illegal mining in Ghana - FORIG-CSIR
‘There’s a lot of money down there’: the deadly cities of gold beneath Johannesburg
Romania forest murder as battle over logging turns violent
First-ever survey on threatened wildlife species launched
Global pet trade in amphibians is bigger than we thought
Texas Game Wardens Begin Exchange Program with South African National Parks Game Rangers
India, Nepal, Bhutan plan trans-border conservation area
India gets protocol to assess Snow Leopard population
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

China-UK people trafficking often driven by debt, experts say
Diane Taylor and Lily Kuo – The Guardian: 24 October 2019

The death of 39 Chinese nationals in a semitrailer in Essex, England, has people wondering why immigrants would risk so much to enter the United Kingdom. Many are apparently trying to pay off gambling debts.

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/24/china-uk-people-trafficking-often-driven-by-debt-experts-say

Despite dangers, majority of irregular migrants from Africa to Europe would still travel: UNDP report
United Nations Development Program (UNDP): 21 October 2019

A landmark UNDP migration study shows that 93% of Africans making the journey to European countries along irregular routes would do it again, despite facing often life-threatening danger. Frustration about the lack of opportunities in Africa, rather than poverty, is behind irregular migration from Africa to Europe, according to the survey.


Full report:
Scaling Fences: Voices of Irregular African Migrants to Europe
https://scalingfences.undp.org/en

For more on this theme:
Using analytics to break up human trafficking

All at sea: Europe’s crisis of solidarity on migration

Beaten and Tortured for a Ransom, Lured by the Promise of a Livelihood
http://www.ipnsnews.net/2019/10/beaten-tortured-ransom-lured-promise-livelihood/

How violent extremist groups profit from the trafficking of girls
https://thehill.com/opinion/international/465408-how-violent-extremist-groups-profit-from-the-trafficking-of-girls

Human traffickers flout 99% of court orders to compensate their victims

Meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs

The secret slaves of Scotland: Experts warn rising epidemic of human trafficking now scars every village, town and city
MONEY LAUNDERING

Trade War With China Opens Doors For Mexican Drug Cartels, Federal Prosecutors Say
Conrad Wilson – Oregon Public Broadcasting: 18 October 2019

Federal officials in Oregon say Mexican drug profits from sales in the U.S. are being converted into pesos using Chinese citizens who crave U.S. dollars.


For more on this theme:

How a Financial Intelligence Unit is trailblazing anti-corruption enforcement

Is There a Link Between the Dollarization of Venezuela and Organized Crime?

International task force agrees to target money laundering in illegal wildlife trade

Anti-Money Laundering Laws Apply to Crypto Too, Says FinCEN Chief

The global war on money laundering is a failed experiment
https://theconversation.com/the-global-war-on-money-laundering-is-a-failed-experiment-125143

Germany Warns of Privacy Token Usage in Money Laundering and Terrorism
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Russia Will Test Its Ability to Disconnect from the Internet
Patrick Tucker – Defense One: 24 October 2019

Russia is reportedly testing its internal internet to see if the country can function without the global internet. The government said RuNet tests will begin after November 1.


For more on this theme:

(Global) ICC mobilises business at IGF 2019 to make technology work for all

(Global) Mutually Assured Diplomacy: Governance, ‘unpeace’ and diplomacy in cyberspace

(Global) How the cyberspace narrative shapes governance and security

INTERNET FREEDOM

China's youth are shaping internet culture at home and abroad amid censorship
Cissy Zhou – South China Morning Post: 21 October 2019

Despite living in a highly censored country, Chinese youth are building their own online culture that China is looking to export across the globe.


For more on this theme:

(Ethiopia) Digital rights in Ethiopia: Change in government spurs hopes for cybercrime law review

(China) Zuckerberg on Chinese censorship: Is that the internet we want?
https://techcrunch.com/2019/10/17/zuckerberg-speech/

(Sudan) Internet censorship in Sudan: Rethinking laws and tactics that served an authoritarian regime
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The Internet of Things pose privacy challenges
Jinoy Jose P – The Hindu: 24 October 2019

India must fine-tune its policies to accommodate emerging challenges, and companies must bring in better security to internet of things products.

For more on this theme:

(Global) We’re Surrounded by Billions of Internet-connected Devices. Can We Trust Them?

(Switzerland) Switzerland- Self-censorship increases online amid data privacy concerns

(Global) Privacy Is Dead -- Long Live Privacy
https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2019/10/21/privacy-is-dead-long-live-privacy/#11b8f29e6d54

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

The Complexities of Kazakhstan’s Cybersecurity Landscape: Facing the Challenges
Olzhas Satiyev – CPO Magazine: 16 October 2019

Kazakhstan has been working to improve its cyber security infrastructure. The country has increased its Global Cybersecurity Index from 100th to 40th place over the past several years and is determined to reach the top 20 within the next five years.

For more on this theme:

(U.S., India) Digital crossroads: Unlocking the potential of India-US cooperation in cyberspace

(U.K.) NCSC outlines new projects in Active Cyber Defence programme

(FVEY) Will Canada weaken encryption with backdoors?
https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/will-canada-weaken-encryption-with-backdoors/
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Cyber Security Experts Working With Defence Industry Amid Threat From ‘Hostile Nation States’
Forces Network: 23 October 2019

The United Kingdoms’ National Cyber Security Centre is working closely with the defense industry to protect some of the nation’s top-secret information.

For more on this theme:
(Europe, Global) Europol Report on Organized Cybercrime Highlights Crypto Ransomware As Top Threat

(U.S.) Here’s where U.S. cyber warriors are working to protect against election threats

(Russia, Iran, Global) Russian hackers disguised cyber attacks using Iranian spying gang
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2019/10/21/russian-hackers-disguised-cyber-attacks-using-iranian-spying/

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

How can critical national infrastructure be protected from cyber threats?
Patrick Kennedy – Open Access Government: 24 October 2019

Patrick Kennedy, security evangelist at Claroty, discusses how to protect critical national infrastructure in the digital age.
https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/critical-national-infrastructure/76565/

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Protecting Critical Infrastructure From Cybersecurity Threats

(India) Enhancing Cyber Security for Infrastructure through IoT

(EU, U.S.) EU Cybersecurity Certification Schemes Will Surprise U.S. Businesses
https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodywestby/2019/10/21/eu-cybersecurity-certification-schemes-will-surprise-us-businesses/#2f5edbcf3802

(Global) New Alliance Aims to Scupper Cyber-attacks on Operational Technology
COMBATING TERRORISM AND CYBER CRIME

This easy-to-use information-stealing trojan malware is quickly gaining popularity among cyber criminals
Danny Palmer – ZDNET: 24 October 2019

Raccoon Stealer, a new kind of trojan malware, provides a simple means of stealing passwords, credit card data and even cryptocurrency, and its usage is growing among cyber thieves.

For more on this theme:

(Global) Cyber-criminals are the new entrepreneurs in an age of the “feral” Internet of Things
https://diginomica.com/cyber-criminals-are-new-entrepreneurs-age-feral-internet-things

(U.K.) Charities at increasing risk of cyber-crime

(U.K.) Police database flagged 9,000 cybercrime reports as ‘security risk’

NOTEWORTHY PODCASTS

The ability to fundamentally deceive someone.
The Cyberwire: 24 October 2019

This podcast includes the story of a convincing scammer who makes an innocent woman doubt herself; an online utility that helps users delete unwanted user accounts and also rates the difficulty of doing so; and a request for help in an investment scam. Also, Henry Ajder of Deeptrace Labs speaks about research on deep fakes.

For more on this theme:

(Global) The CyberWire Daily Podcast – Episode 956

(Global) Cyber Security Today – NordVPN hacked, Alexa and Google Home vulnerabilities, and update these antivirus apps

(Global) Privacy is shaping the future of cybersecurity careers: Are you ready?
TRAINING AND EXERCISES

What the Army learned about multidomain operations at Cyber Blitz
Mark Pomerleau – C4ISRNET: 23 October 2019

The U.S. Army’s Cyber Blitz experiment was the first opportunity for a newly created Intelligence, Information, Cyber, Electronic Warfare and Space detachment to test equipment and concepts for multidomain battle.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Silicon Valley Lawmaker Proposes Cyber Training for Every Federal Employee

(U.S.) Exploradio: Training a New Generation of Cyber Warriors

(U.S.) Organizations Are Embracing Cyber Security Awareness Training as the First Line of Defense Against Hackers
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ISIS is staging attacks in symbolically important places to send a message:
We're back
Ellen Ioanes – Business Insider; 24 October 2019
According to counterterrorism experts, ISIS’ recent attacks are meant to show the world that the group is making a comeback and that everyone should take notice.

Islamic State Affiliate Seeks to Expand in Afghanistan
Andrew Mines, Amira Jadoon – Lawfare; 23 October 2019
The reported capture of a deputy leader of ISIS in an Afghan city over 1,000 kilometers west of the group’s stronghold likely indicates the continued attempts by ISIS to expand within the country.
https://www.lawfareblog.com/islamic-state-affiliate-seeks-expand-afghanistan

For more on this theme:

Britain now considers prosecuting ISIS militants known as the Beatles

Effort To Return ISIS Families To Their Countries Of Origin Meets Stiff Resistance

‘We Will Bring Back a New Caliphate’: Wives of ISIS Fighters Speak

Britain makes move to bring home children of Isis suspects from Syria

Denmark approves stripping IS fighters of citizenship

Belgium to evacuate Isis suspects from Syria detention camps

Syrian Unrest Breaths Life into Islamic State Militant Group

Concerns Persist About Fate of Captured Islamic State
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al-Qaeda-Linked Group HUJI-B Attempts to Regroup in Bangladesh

Animesh Roul – The Jamestown Foundation: 23 October 2019

Bangladesh’s Islamist landscape unexpectedly expanded with a reported resurgence of al-Qaida-linked Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami-Bangladesh terrorist group, which has been dormant for over a decade.

https://jamestown.org/program/al-qaeda-linked-group-huji-b-attempts-to-regroup-in-bangladesh/

For more on this theme:

Al-Shabaab’s strengthening capabilities require urgent International attention


Predicting Terror Activity Before It Happens

https://www.eurasiareview.com/13102019-predicting-terror-activity-before-it-happens/

Maritime terrorism in Asia: An assessment


In Nigeria, the Islamic State West African Province Gains Steam


Borno Governor Launches State-Level Initiatives to Fight Boko Haram

https://www.cfr.org/blog/borno-governor-launches-state-level-initiatives-fight-boko-haram

Concerns Mount over Rising Foreign Funding for Boko Haram


Hezbollah pushes for normal ties with Syria


Al Qaeda leader reported killed in Tunisia


Terror funding: Kenya warns of informal money sources


Death of AQIS Emir Asim Umar has Serious Implications for Al-Qaeda

https://jamestown.org/program/death-of-aqis-emir-asim-umar-has-serious-implications-for-al-qaeda/

Why Hezbollah Wants To Save Lebanon’s Government And Sectarian Politics?


Are Manmade Viruses the Next Big Terrorist Threat?


Wolf Hunting: Unique Challenges and Solutions to Lone-Wolf Terrorism

https://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/wolf-hunting/
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

At a School for Suicide Bombers’ Children, Dancing, Drawing and Deradicalization

Hannah Beech and Muktita Suhartono – The New York Times: 18 October 2019

Amid fears of an ISIS renewal, Indonesia is trying to keep extremism from being passed to the next generation.


For more on this theme:

Former neo-Nazi leader joins al Qaeda recruiter to fight extremism


Can you really “deradicalize” a terrorist?

https://www.technologyreview.com/s/614569/deradicalize-terrorist-boko-haram/

Addressing radicalisation in prisons and fighting violent extremism in the Western Balkans with EU and Council of Europe support


IRREGULAR WARFARE

Iran Is Losing the Middle East, Protests in Lebanon and Iraq Show

Hanin Ghaddar – Foreign Policy: 22 October 2019

Tehran may be good at winning influence, but it is bad at ruling after that.


For more on this theme:

Uganda to sign new pact with Russia


Russian soft power on display at Africa summit


Chinese soft power is a carrot being undermined by a stick


Africa’s ‘Civil Wars’ Are Regional Nightmares

https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/22/africas-civil-wars-are-regional-nightmares/
TERRORISM AND THE INTERNET

TikTok removes two dozen accounts used for ISIS propaganda
William Feuer – CNBC: 21 October 2019

TikTok removed about two dozen accounts for posting extremist propaganda on the app.

YouTube’s algorithm may not be radicalizing people, it’s just made it easier for people with far-right views to find a community, a new study suggests
Mary Meisenzahl – Business Insider: 25 October 2019

In a new report, Penn State political scientists say that YouTube makes uploading content and forming communities around shared ideas easier than on other platforms, and that’s why many groups gather there.

For more on this theme:

Police footage of firearms training is helping Facebook detect terrorism live streams
https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/terrorism-live-stream-facebook-video-17140872

Analyzing online posts could help spot future mass shooters and terrorists

Special police unit to monitor online hate speech
https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/98212/special_police_unit_to_monitor_online_hate_speech#.XbK4wUxFw2w

Ex-YouTube engineer: Extreme content? No, it's algorithms that radicalize people

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES

Africa needs a continental strategy on foreign terrorist fighters
Shewit Woldemichael – Institute for Security Studies: 23 October 2019

The problem of returning ex-combatants is aggravated by terror groups' links to other forms of transnational crime.
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africa-needs-a-continental-strategy-on-foreign-terrorist-fighters

For more on this theme:

US can reduce force in Afghanistan without hurting counterterrorism efforts:
Mark Esper
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