CONTENTS

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)
- Corruption
- Drug Trafficking
- Trafficking in Scarce or Protected Resources

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)
- Internet Governance
- Internet Freedom
- Cyber Strategy and Risks
- Cyberattacks
- Cybercrime
- Critical Infrastructure Protection

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
- ISIS and Foreign Fighters
- Terrorism Around the World
- Israel/Hamas
- Russia/Ukraine

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

As corruption costs lives on battlefield, Ukrainians demand change
For many Ukrainians, the war involves two foes. One is Russia; the other is chronic corruption. But Kyiv is making headway against it.

Whistleblower claims Australian funds for asylum seeker welfare in PNG ‘gone missing’
Ben Doherty – The Guardian: 23 October 2023
Papua New Guinea’s chief migration officer denies there’s any evidence of financial wrongdoing.

For more on this theme:

Albanian prosecutors charge former Prime Minister Sali Berisha in corruption probe

US Sanctions Bosnian Serb Leader’s Children and ‘Corruption Network’

Ex-Papua Governor Lukas Enembe Sentenced to 8 Years for Corruption
https://jakartaglobe.id/news/expapua-governor-lukas-enembe-sentenced-to-8-years-for-corruption

Pakistan’s ex-PM Nawaz Sharif gets bail in corruption cases – lawyer

China’s Anti-Corruption Efforts Gain Momentum in Finance and Healthcare

Labour is right: billions were lost to Covid fraud, and the public deserve a reckoning

High-Profile Kazakhs Linked To Road-Project Corruption Escaping Prosecution, Investigation Finds
https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-road-project-corruption-investigation-nazarbaev/32624823.html

Climate Change, Conflict, and Corruption: Reflecting on Libya’s Catastrophic Floods
https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90695

Yellen tells Ukraine’s Zelenskiy: anti-corruption fight is key to future
https://www.reuters.com/world/yellen-tells-ukraines-zelenskiy-anti-corruption-fight-is-key-future-2023-10-11/
DRUG TRAFFICKING

EU Enhances Fight Against Drug Trafficking via European Ports
Mike Schuler – gCaptain: 18 October 2023

The European Commission has adopted a comprehensive EU Roadmap to intensify efforts to combat criminal networks.

For more on this theme:
British Columbia proposes sweeping ban on public use of illegal drugs

Joaquín ‘El Chapo’ Guzmán: What you need to know about the Mexican drug kingpin

Narco-Drones: The Use of Drones by Drug Cartels

The Gambia redoubles efforts to scupper maritime drug trafficking

How Canada’s auto theft explosion is a fuelling a global trade in weapons and drugs

Commission sets out new EU Roadmap of priority measures to fight organised crime and drug-trafficking

EU Drug Market: Amphetamine — Trafficking and supply

OFAC Designates Chinese Network Responsible for Tons of Trafficked Drugs

Narco-Submarines Guide: The Underwater World of Drug Trafficking

Is Captagon going to halt the Arab normalization deal with Syria? An expert weighs-in
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/captagon-arab-normalization-syria-caroline-rose/

Drug Trafficking in the US and Why It’s So Hard to Control

America’s Fentanyl Epidemic: The China Connection
https://www.cfr.org/podcasts/americas-fentanyl-epidemic-china-connection
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Southern Africa’s security hinges on actioning its organised crime strategy
Isel Ras and Willem Els – Defence Web: 23 October 2023

Porous borders, weak governance and development deficits make the Southern African Development Community vulnerable to drug, human and wildlife trafficking, arms smuggling and financial crimes.

Chinese listed firms used endangered animal parts as ingredients – report
Andrew Silver and Selena Li – Reuters: 23 October 2023

Three drugmakers, whose investors include or use some of the world’s biggest banks, used the animal parts as ingredients in their products, an environmental group said in a report.

For more on this theme:

TRAFFIC enhances anti-money laundering expertise in China to detect wildlife crime

In biodiverse Nepal, wildlife crime fighters are underpowered but undeterred

Kenyan environmental court halts lifting of logging ban

Guinea: Illegal Mangrove Logging Devastates Wildlife

New resources set to improve laws and regulations on illegal wildlife seizures

10-year action plan to combat illegal wildlife trade in Sabah

The EU ban that spurred a crackdown on illegal fishing
https://www.fairplanet.org/story/eu-ban-illegal-fishing-chinese-trawlers-cameroon/

Chinese-owned timber giant exported more than $5 million of illegal timber from Democratic Republic of the Congo in just six months
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The Importance of the Internet Governance Forum
Konstantinos Komaitis – Council on Foreign Relations: 23 October 2023
The U.N. has put its weight behind the multilateral Global Digital Compact to govern the internet, but the world would be better off supporting the long-running Internet Governance Forum.
https://www.cfr.org/blog/importance-internet-governance-forum

For more on this theme:
(Global) Larry Magid: UN Internet Governance Forum focuses on AI
https://www.mercurynews.com/2023/10/19/un-internet-governance-forum-focuses-on-ai/
(China, U.S.) China vs US Approaches to AI Governance
https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/china-vs-us-approaches-to-ai-governance/
(Global) ICANN Celebrates 25 Years of Multistakeholder Governance at ICANN78 in Hamburg

INTERNET FREEDOM

Accountability Lab decry internet shutdown across Africa
Matthew Ogune – The Guardian: 26 October 2023
A group under the auspices of the lab has expressed dissatisfaction over the rising spate of internet shutdowns.

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Celebrating Free Speech Week: Why America must lead in protecting internet freedom
(China) Book critical of Ming emperor recalled after prompting online comparisons with Xi
(Venezuela) Internet censorship obstacle delays vote count in Venezuelan opposition’s primary
CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

What the Defense Department’s Cyber Strategy Says About Cyber Conflict
Jelena Vićić and Gregory H. Winger – Lawfare: 19 October 2023

Experience is refining U.S. approaches to key issues like cyber campaigning, escalation and public-private relations in cybersecurity.


For more on this theme:

(EU) EU digital strategy: Setting new standards for the digital age

(Global) Shaping the Rules of Cyber Risk and Resilience at Singapore Cyber Week

(Canada, China) Covert CCP social media accounts bolster China’s united front work in Canada

CYBERATTACKS

War crimes tribunal says September cyberattack was spying attempt
Stephanie van den Berg and Toby Sterling – Reuters: 20 October 2023

The International Criminal Court said a cybersecurity incident it detected in September was espionage and that the incursion can be “interpreted as a serious attempt to undermine the Court’s mandate.”

https://www.reuters.com/world/war-crimes-tribunal-says-september-cyberattack-was-spying-attempt-2023-10-20/

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Cyberattack hits 2 New York hospitals, forces ambulance diversions

(Canada) Canada Says Firm That Arranges Military Movements Hit by Cyberattack

(Czech Republic, Russia) Pro-Russia group behind today’s mass cyberattack against Czech institutions

(Russia, Ukraine) Ukraine Sees Russian Cyberattacks Growing More Sophisticated
CYBERCRIME

Hacking against humanity: Are Red Cross cyber rules credible?
Christopher Whyte – CSO: 23 October 2023

Civilian hacking during conflicts can be dangerous for the people caught in them, but new hacking rules provide hope.

https://www.csoonline.com/article/656452/__trashed-16.html

For more on this theme:

(U.S., Global) Countering the Ransomware Threat
https://www.cfr.org/event/countering-ransomware-threat

(India) How Punjab, Haryana and Himachal are tackling cybercrime

(EU) Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence: Council of Europe HELP course for EU judges, prosecutors and lawyers

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

How resilient is UK Critical National Infrastructure to cyber-attack?
UK Parliament: 24 October 2023

The U.K. is the third-most targeted country in the world for cyberattacks, after the United States and Ukraine.


For more on this theme:

(U.K.) AI-generated cyber attacks pose new threat to key UK infrastructure, experts warn
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ai-cyber-attacks-key-infrastructure-b2407823.html

(EU) Maritime security: Council approves revised EU strategy and action plan

(U.S., China) Mandiant Intelligence Chief Raises Alarm Over China’s ‘Volt Typhoon’ Hackers in US Critical Infrastructure
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Pro-Islamic State Supporters’ Responses to the Israel-Hamas Conflict
Meili Criezis – Global Network on Extremism & Technology: 19 October 2023

Should we care what ISIS supporters say about the conflict?
https://gnet-research.org/2023/10/19/pro-islamic-state-supporters-responses-to-the-israel-hamas-conflict/

Al-Qaida/Taliban-linked media campaign frames Islamic State Khurasan as foreign, Tajik group
Lucas Webber and Riccardo Valle – Eurasianet: 18 October 2023

The Tajik government is described as having created conditions ideal for the success of the Islamic State group.
https://eurasianet.org/al-qaidataliban-linked-media-campaign-frames-islamic-state-khurasan-as-foreign-tajik-group

For more on this theme:

Three ISIS-supporting teens were arrested for planning to attack the Israeli embassy in Paris

Turkish police arrest 33 Daesh/ISIS terror suspects

ISIS-linked rebels kill at least 26 in Congolese city
https://www.foxnews.com/world/isis-linked-rebels-kill-26-congolese-city

Two ISIS suspects killed in Kirkuk

Daesh launches attack on al-Assad positions in Syria

Morocco dismantles a new Daesh terrorist command

Opinion: End of Hamas? Israel’s Gaza response, learnings from US campaign against ISIS

Kyrgyzstan repatriates over 80 from ISIS-linked Syria camps
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/221020231
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Non-State Armed Groups and Illicit Economies in West Africa: Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)

Relief Web: 18 October 2023

A report analyzes the structure of the al-Qaida-affiliated group in the Sahel region, focusing on its engagement with illicit economies and tactical use of economic warfare.


For more on this theme:

Rohan Gunaratna on the Roots of Sri Lanka’s Deadly Easter Sunday Attacks


Pathologized Grievance as the Linchpin to Radicalization and Recruitment


Disturbing trend of women’s radicalization


Amid horror of Israel-Hamas war, al-Qaeda, Islamic State call for global attacks

https://www.wionews.com/world/is-israel-hamas-war-spreading-al-qaeda-and-is-call-on-followers-to-attack-jewish-and-us-targets-650184

As African Union Mission in Somalia Draws Down, Al-Shabaab Remains Threat to Country, Region, Special Representative Tells Security Council


Somalia: Al-Shabaab Strikes Back at Local Administrators


U.S. watchdog says the Taliban are benefiting from international aid through ‘fraudulent’ NGOs

https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/u-s-watchdog-says-the-taliban-are-benefiting-from-international-aid-through-fraudulent-ngos

Taliban Tout Islamic Rule, Claim ‘General Amnesty’ Reunited Afghans


The Taliban’s Quest for Foreign Funding Starts With China

https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/the-talibans-quest-for-foreign-funding-starts-with-china/

Taliban says plans to formally join China’s Belt and Road Initiative

ISRAEL/HAMAS

Israel aims to defeat Hamas, then leave Gaza. Who would fill vacuum?
Howard LaFranchi – The Christian Science Monitor: 23 October 2023

As Israel prepares to launch a ground invasion of Gaza, its challenge is more than military. A long, costly battle could both remove Hamas and pave an ideological path for its return.


For more on this theme:

What Is Hamas And Who Supports It? – Analysis

Why Did Hamas Conduct a Terrorist Attack on Israel and Why Now?

Israel misread Iran’s way of war. A proper understanding could help predict Hezbollah’s next moves.
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/israel-hamas-hezbollah-gaza-war-iran/

Hand on the Trigger: Iranian Proxies Threaten to Escalate the Conflict with Israel
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-october-19/

IntelBrief: What Follows Hamas in Gaza?
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-october-24/

How drone warfare in Israel could dramatically change if Hezbollah joins the fight

Why Russia and Hamas Are Growing Closer
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90841

Perspective – Playing with Fire in the Middle East: Who are the Winners and Losers of Hamas’s Terrorist Attacks?

Israel is acting proportionately against a terrorist enemy

Emojis of Terror: Telegram’s Role in Perpetuating Extremism in the October 2023 Hamas-Israel War

Technology and its Pivotal Role in Hamas’s Successful Attacks on Israel
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Urban Warfare, Sieges, and Israel’s Looming Invasion of Gaza

Turkey, the United States, and the Israel-Hamas War
https://www.cfr.org/article/turkey-united-states-and-israel-hamas-war

Iran’s quandary: How to stay out of Israel’s war on Hamas

Doctrine of Hamas
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/doctrine-hamas

Doctrine of Hezbollah
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/doctrine-hezbollah

France’s Macron wants international coalition against Hamas

Hezbollah official says his group already ‘is in the heart’ of Israel-Hamas war
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2395531/middle-east

Doctors report outbreaks of disease among Gaza’s displaced

What International Law Has to Say About the Israel-Hamas War
https://www.cfr.org/article/what-international-law-has-say-about-israel-hamas-war

Economists fear major disruption if the Israel-Hamas conflict is not contained

How the Gaza-Israel war could impact Iraq

Israel-Hamas Conflict Reality Check For India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor

Israel-Hamas war fuels debate and nationalist sentiment on Chinese social media

After Hamas, Then What? Israel’s Undefined Endgame in Gaza

Misinformation and Disinformation — What They Mean for the Israel-Hamas War
https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/israel-hamas-war-misinformation/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Qatar becomes a key intermediary in Israel-Hamas war amid tense hostage negotiations
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/qatar-becomes-a-key-intermediary-in-israel-hamas-war-amid-tense-hostage-negotiations

Hezbollah alone will decide whether Lebanon — already on the brink of collapse — gets dragged into Israel-Hamas war

Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad chiefs discuss route to ‘victory’ on Israel

Where Does Russia Stand on the Israel-Hamas War?
https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/19/israel-palestine-hamas-gaza-war-russia-iran-putin/

China’s Xi seeks swift end to Israel-Hamas conflict, calls for two-state solution

How the Israel-Hamas War Impacts Regional Relations

Israel’s Ground War Against Hamas: What to Know
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/israels-ground-war-against-hamas-what-know

Torn apart: How the Israel-Hamas war is dividing French society
https://ecfr.eu/article/torn-apart-how-the-israel-hamas-war-is-dividing-french-society/

Bracing for a broader conflict: How the Israel-Hamas war could escalate
https://ecfr.eu/article/bracing-for-a-broader-conflict-how-the-israel-hamas-war-could-escalate/

Israel-Hamas war: where do surrounding countries stand?

Israel-Hamas war sends shock waves through scientific community
https://www.science.org/content/article/israel-hamas-war-sends-shock-waves-through-scientific-community

Tensions are high in Europe amid anger over Israel-Hamas war

A Conflict Resolution Expert on Peace and the Israel-Hamas War

Israel–Hamas 2023 Symposium – Iran’s Responsibility for the Attack on Israel
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/irans-responsibility-attack-israel/

Israel-Hamas war cuts deep into Germany’s soul
https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-hamas-war-germany-germany-berlin/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

History and domestic dynamics: How ASEAN members see the Hamas-Israeli conflict
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/history-domestic-dynamics-how-asean-members-see-hamas-israeli-conflict

Will War Between Israel And Hamas End Hopes For Two-State Solution?
https://www.npr.org/2023/10/19/1198908688/will-war-between-israel-and-hamas-end-hopes-for-two-state-solution

Analysis: China and Russia find common cause in Israel-Hamas crisis

The Gaza war will be the final straw for Netanyahu’s long political career
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/gaza-hamas-netanyahu-political-career-israel/

Hamas’ October Attacks and the Israeli War on Gaza: Reflections from Palestinians
https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90836

Is Israel Prepared to Take Gaza?
https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/90851

Will Lebanon Be Safe or Sorry?
https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/90843

Iran’s Stakes in the Hamas-Israel Conflict
https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90847

How the Israel-Gaza War Could Disrupt the Middle East’s Climate Progress

Hamas-linked app offers window into cyber infrastructure, possible links to Iran
https://cyberscoop.com/hamas-app-telegram-iran/

How the Israel-Hamas War Could Pull in Arab Nations
https://time.com/6324687/israel-hamas-war-egypt-lebanon-arab/

Hezbollah’s Record on War & Politics
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/hezbollahs-record-war-politics

Hamas: Words and Deeds …
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/hamas-words-and-deeds

Digital Deception: Disinformation’s Impact in the Israel-Hamas War

Russia Joins the Anti-Israel Fray
https://cepa.org/article/russia-joins-the-anti-israel-fray/

How the Israel-Hamas War Impacts Regional Relations
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

In the ultimate irony, Russia’s obsession with Ukraine may have weakened its power over its other neighbors
Holly Ellyatt – CNBC: 26 October 2023

With the invasion being its geopolitical priority for at least the past 19 months, Moscow has not had much time or opportunity to hold as much power and influence over its other neighbors.

For more on this theme:
A bitter truth of the war in Ukraine is that Russia’s invading troops have allies
https://www.npr.org/2023/10/20/1207367362/a-bitter-truth-of-the-war-in-ukraine-is-that-russia-s-invading-troops-have-allie

Zelenskiy says Ukraine will hit back if Russia launches winter bombing campaign

Ukrainian hackers and intel officers partner up in apparent hack of a top Russian bank

UN probe finds new evidence Russia committed war crimes and ‘indiscriminate attacks’ in Ukraine

Putin Is Getting What He Wants

Ukraine’s Accession Poses a Unique Conundrum for the EU
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/10/24/ukraine-s-accession-poses-unique-conundrum-for-eu-pub-90838

Russia’s Other War: The Administrators Versus the Revisionists
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90814

Russia’s Capital Controls Are Designed to Aid Putin’s 2024 Re-Election
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90804

Kennan Cable No. 84: A Survey of Russian Grassroots Anti-War Resistance

Russia’s plan to relocate its Black Sea naval base from Crimea is priceless for Ukraine’s morale

Ukraine and Turkey Discuss Peace Plan to End Russian Invasion
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

- **Pragmatic China Evades Russia’s Bear Hug**
  https://cepa.org/article/pragmatic-china-evades-russias-bear-hug/
- **Are the Russian Opposition Ukraine’s Friends?**
  https://cepa.org/article/are-the-russian-opposition-ukraines-friends/
- **Russian Victory Would Bring Darkness to the Heart of Europe**
  https://cepa.org/article/russian-victory-would-bring-darkness-to-the-heart-of-europe/
- **Russia Experiencing a New ‘Afghan Syndrome’ With Soldiers Returning From Ukraine**
- **The Kremlin Resumes Nuclear Testing in Escalation of Conflict With Ukraine and the West (Part One)**
- **Putin and Xi Meet as Hidden Differences Mount**
- **A Weakening Russia Becomes a Dangerous Paradox**
  https://jamestown.org/program/a-weakening-russia-becomes-a-dangerous-paradox/
- **Deportation of Ukrainian Children Amidst Russia’s War of Aggression: How to Ensure Accountability and Children’s Return**
- **Exclusive: How a defend-forward operation gave Ukraine’s SBU an edge over Russia**
  https://therecord.media/illia-vitiuk-interview-ukraine-sbu-defend-forward
- **Drug use rife among Russian soldiers in Ukraine**
- **Ukraine: what’s the global economic impact of Russia’s invasion?**
- **Russia, Ukraine Intensify Offensives Ahead of Looming Winter**
- **Ukraine’s EU membership bid set to receive big boost in November**
- **Ukraine needs electoral reform now for resilient postwar elections**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

History Knows How Russia’s Assault on Ukraine Will End
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/history-knows-how-russias-assault-ukraine-will-end-207024

The Persian-Russian Connection
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-persian-russian-connection

Security Guarantees for Ukraine: Reshaping Russia’s Incentives
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column/opinion/security-guarantees-for-ukraine-reshaping-russias-incentives