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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Reconstructing Ukraine: Context-tailored approaches to corruption
Katherine D. Wilkins – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: 30 October 2023
The misuse of government resources for personal benefit will remain a significant governance issue in Ukraine even after the war, hindering the country’s reconstruction.
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ukraine-conflict-reconstruction-corruption-risk/

France demands EU corruption-busting watchdog with teeth
Jakob Hanke Vela and Claudia Chiappa – Politico: 31 October 2023
France wants the European Union to create an independent watchdog to fight corruption in member institutions, which have been rattled by ongoing scandals.

For more on this theme:

PNG to investigate corruption claims in Australia-funded refugee program

Nigeria’s counsel cleared of corruption in mega-case

Sri Lanka’s sports minister accuses top cricket administrators of corruption

Poll: Besides war, Ukrainians most concerned about corruption
https://kyivindependent.com/poll-besides-war-ukrainians-most-concerned-about-corruption/

A Thankless Job: Exposing Official Corruption in Lebanon

More than 80% of Australians believe pork barrelling is a form of corruption

Ukraine’s top prosecutor vows to meet key EU membership conditions within months
https://www.politico.eu/article/andrii-kostyn-ukraine-top-prosecutor-vows-to-meet-key-eu-membership-conditions-within-months/

EFCC stampeded by politicians, emasculated by judiciary: How Nigeria’s losing corruption war

Iranian Man Faces Ordeal for Exposing Officials’ Corruption
DRUG TRAFFICKING

US government says it plans to go after legal goods tied to illegal fentanyl trade in new strategy

Julie Watson – The Associated Press: 26 October 2023

U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced a strategy that will target not only the synthetic opioid but also precursor materials used to make it.

https://apnews.com/article/fentanyl-drugs-china-mexico-california-border-protection-c6cc5a-768c7e273228639004805058e0

For more on this theme:

Marseille’s drug wars: Rival gangs behind recent flare-up in violence


Most in new poll see Mexico as partner in stopping drug trafficking, illegal border crossings


Like Escobar, Ecuador’s drug lords build ‘narco-zos’


Unraveling Covert Networks: Analysis of Mexican Cartel Alliances


Brazil: Cocaine Exports from Santos Port at All-Time High


San Francisco Drug Dealers Could Face Murder Charges for Overdose Deaths


Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy


Making A Killing: The Chinese Mafia Transforming the Global Drug Trade


How Drug Cartels Transformed Ecuador Into a ‘Narco State’


China Uses Fentanyl for War With US by Other Means

https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2023-10-26/china-sees-fentanyl-as-war-with-us-by-other-means

Coastal Waters Turning into ‘World’s Biggest Transnational Crime Scene’

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Wildlife trafficking, organised crime linked: Nonprofit’s report sheds new light
Himanshu Nitnaware – Down To Earth: 31 October 2023
A report by the Wildlife Justice Commission finds new evidence for the convergence of wildlife crime with other forms of illegal activity.

Q&A: How Sand Trafficking in Brazil Became a Highly Lucrative Crime
Chris Dalby – InSight Crime: 30 October 2023
Authorities have launched a series of operations targeting illegal sand extraction as part of a renewed commitment to fighting environmental crimes.

For more on this theme:
Illegal Harvesting Suspected in 75% of Exclusive Hardwood
Reclaiming Land Stolen In Heart Of Guatemalan Reserve
New satellite readings show full extent of mining in the Amazon Rainforest
Why Native Women’s Voices Are Crucial to Saving Brazil’s Forests
https://e360.yale.edu/features/cristiane-juliao-interview
NOAA Report Singles out China for Illegal Fishing
U.S. Coast Guard Sets Up Anti-Illlegal Fishing Center for Indo-Pacific
Trafficked wildlife find safe haven in US zoos
Successful detection rises in effort to stamp out wildlife smuggled in the mail
Hidden in plain sight: Counting the cost of environmental crime
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/hidden-in-plain-sight-environmental-crime/
China: Tree-Planting at Home, Logging Abroad?
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

African Digital Futures
NGPF African Futures: October 2023
These 11 stories offer different visions of tomorrow’s digital Africa.
https://digitalfutures.nextgenforesight.org/

For more on this theme:
(Global) Let the community work it out: A throwback to early internet days could fix social media’s crisis of legitimacy

(Africa) Digital pervasiveness and divisiveness: The role of African governments in enabling healthy digital futures

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

The impact of artificial intelligence on cyber offence and defence
Jason Healey – The Strategist: 18 October 2023
To make cyberspace more defensible – a goal championed by Columbia University and called for in the 2023 U.S. National Cybersecurity Strategy – innovations must not just strengthen defenses, but also give a sustained advantage to defenders relative to attackers.

For more on this theme:
(UK) TechScape: How the UK’s online safety bill aims to clean up the internet

(U.S.) How the US DOD Cyber Strategy changes national cyber defense

(Global) Podcast: How cyber diplomacy is protecting the world from online threats
CYBERATTACKS

Major Mexican airport confirms experts are working to address cyberattack
Jonathan Greig – The Record: 1 November 2023
Querétaro Intercontinental Airport officials said the attack was traced to an employee who downloaded a file containing malware.
https://therecord.media/queretaro-international-airport-mexico-cyberattack

For more on this theme:
(Global) Fighting Cyberattacks Requires Top-Down Approach
(Global) Intimidation, Cyberattacks, Challenges Will Not Stop International Criminal Court from Fulfilling Its Mandate, Says President, as General Assembly Takes Up Report
(Canada) Investigation ongoing, but no firm timeline for restoration, in cyberattack affecting 5 hospitals
(U.S.) Ace holed: Hardware store empire felled by cyberattack
https://www.theregister.com/2023/10/31/ace_hardware_cyberattack/

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

When digital infrastructure and digital literacy do not go hand in hand:
Bolivia’s digital divide
Roxana Baspineiro – Equal Times: 23 October 2023
For at least two-thirds of the world’s population, internet access remains out of reach, especially in countries in the Global South, according to the United Nations.
https://www.equaltimes.org/when-digital-infrastructure-and

For more on this theme:
(Canada) Inaction is perpetuating Canada’s digital divide
(Philippines) Philippine Military to Create ‘Cyber Command’ to Combat Online Attacks
https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/philippine-military-to-create-cyber-command-to-combat-online-attacks/
(Israel) AI-Powered Israeli ‘Cyber Dome’ Defense Operation Comes to Life

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CYBERCRIME
China crackdown on cyber scams in Southeast Asia nets thousands but leaves networks intact
Huizhong Wu – The Associated Press: 23 October 2023
When scam operations are shut down in one place they often resurface elsewhere.
https://apnews.com/article/china-southeast-asia-cyberscam-criminal-myanmar-4d749243d4c95d697060d8ce59cabb

For more on this theme:
(Global) Urgent Global Response Needed for “Insidious” Cybercrime
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/urgent-global-response-needed-for-insidious-cybercrime/
(U.S., Global) Cost of a data breach: The evolving role of law enforcement
(Global) It’s Time to Establish the NATO of Cybersecurity

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION
The generative AI wave is inevitable — what should critical information infrastructure owners do?
GovInside: 24 October 2023
Cybersecurity leaders will have to be at the forefront when organizations implement the use of models such as ChatGPT, said speakers at an event held in part by the Association for Information Security Professionals.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Feds: Beware AvosLocker ransomware attacks on critical infrastructure
(U.S.) Cybersecurity regulations for passenger and freight railroads renewed by TSA
https://therecord.media/tsa-renews-cybersecurity-regulations-passenger-freight-railroads
(Australia) Australia Focuses on Threat of Chinese Attack on Solar Power
https://www.bankinfosecurity.com/australia-focuses-on-threat-chinese-attack-on-solar-power-a-23395
(Africa, Global) Africa’s governments must help protect subsea cable infrastructure for better cyber defense
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Syria’s Ticking Time Bomb – The Kurds, Turkey and ISIS
Deutsche Welle: 31 October 2023
Is the world facing a resurgence of the Islamic State group?

For more on this theme:

Ugandan Soldiers Among Dead in IS-Backed Attack in DR Congo

Uganda army says it attacked rebels that murdered honeymooning tourists
https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/uganda-army-says-it-killed-rebels-that-murdered-honeymooning-tourists-2023-11-01/

Islamic State Claims Responsibility For Deadly Kabul Blast
https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-explosion-kabul-shiite-neighborhood-killed-injured/32655512.html

IS group-linked militants kill 17 in Nigeria for failing to pay ‘cattle tax’

Turkish police arrest 28 Daesh/ISIS terror suspects

Indonesia says arrests militants suspected of plotting to disrupt election

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria Is Why a Small Number of U.S. Troops Are in Iraq and Syria

Islamic State Mozambique (ISM)
https://acleddata.com/2023/10/30/actor-profile-islamic-state-mozambique-ism/

Gaza’s global narrative and int'l security
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Wray warns of increased terrorist threat, says U.S. is in a ‘dangerous period’
Ryan Lucas – NPR: 31 October 2023

FBI Director Christopher Wray says the war between Israel and Hamas has led to a spike in threats against the United States as terrorist groups look to leverage the conflict for their own causes.

https://www.npr.org/2023/10/31/1209699057/wray-warns-of-increased-terrorist-threat-says-u-s-is-in-a-dangerous-period

For more on this theme:

Six steps to disrupt Hamas and other terrorist groups’ finances

Europol director says Islamist terrorism remains the biggest terror threat to Western Europe

Lone wolf terrorists in Europe are not so lonely anymore — who is radicalising and recruiting them?

After Brussels attack, Swedes fear becoming a target for terrorists

FinCEN Targets Crypto Mixers in Fight against Terrorist Financing
https://www.financemagnates.com/cryptocurrency/fincen-targets-crypto-mixers-in-fight-against-terrorist-financing/

Morocco Warns of Link Between Terrorists, Criminal Groups and Separatists
https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2023/10/358600/morocco-warns-of-link-between-terrorists-criminal-groups-and-separatists

Locking Down Violence: The COVID-19 Pandemic’s Impact on Non-State Actor Violence
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/locking-down-violence-the-covid19-pandemics-impact-on-nonstate-actor-violence/19073EF1BC0873E1D614A34F6B-D1365C

Profiles of 15 Iranian-Backed Militias in the Middle East

Shabaab claims several al-Qaeda leaders present during infamous ‘Black Hawk Down’ incident
ISRAEL/HAMAS

Will the Israel-Hamas War Spiral into a Wider Conflict?
Mona Yacoubian – United States Institute of Peace: 26 October 2023

Iran’s direct involvement in the war is a nightmare scenario that would spawn a regional conflagration.

https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/10/will-israel-hamas-war-spiral-wider-conflict

For more on this theme:

Hezbollah’s Precision Threat to Israel
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/hezbollah-s-precision-threat-to-israel

Hamas global jihad – An impact in France?

What China Wants in the Middle East

Videos of Hamas attack suggest a chilling evolution of jihadist tactics

The Oct. 7 Massacre Revealed a New Hamas Social Media Strategy

Gaza and Global Jihad

What is Hezbollah and what’s its role in the Israel-Hamas conflict

What the World Gets Wrong About Hamas
https://time.com/6329776/hamas-isis-gaza/

How Hamas innovated with drones to operate like an army

Experts Skeptical of Macron-Proposed Global Coalition to Combat Hamas

Some Hamas killers were high on amphetamine, officials say
https://www.semafor.com/article/10/31/2023/hamas-killers-were-high-on-amphetamine-officials-say

How Qatar is at the centre of Israeli hostage talks

Between Swords of Iron and the Al Aqsa Deluge: The Regional Politics of the Israel-Hamas War
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Iran and the ‘Axis of Resistance’ Vastly Improved Hamas’s Operational Capabilities

The Hamas tunnel city beneath Gaza – a hidden frontline for Israel

Unraveling the Threads: The Palestine-Israel Conflict’s Influence on South Asia

Understanding Türkiye’s Attitude Towards the Israel-Hamas Conflict

What’s in It for Iran?
https://nationalinterest.org/feature/whats-it-for-iran-207055

Hamas's top leaders are worth billions. Here’s how they continue to grow rich

Judy Asks: Does the Hamas-Israel War Make Europe Vulnerable?
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/90849

Houthi launch third strike against Israel, threaten more attacks

The Hamas Propaganda War

IntelBrief: Dangerous Escalation in Gaza Imperils Civilians, Risks Global Ramifications
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-november-2/

IntelBrief: Hezbollah’s Choices Will Determine the Course of the Mideast Crisis
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-october-30/

Oil could soar to record high of $150 if Israel-Hamas war escalates further, World Bank says

What Russia Hopes to Gain From the Israel-Hamas Conflict

Iran does not want Israel-Hamas conflict to spread, foreign minister says
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

What China wants from Israel-Hamas war

How Houthi attacks affect both the Israel-Hamas conflict and Yemen’s own civil war – and could put pressure on US, Saudi Arabia

Qatar-Led Negotiations Between Israel, Hamas Ongoing, Source Says

“History repeating itself”: How the Israel-Hamas war is fueling hate against Muslims and Jews

Israel-Hamas 2023 Symposium – The IDF, Hamas, and the Duty to Warn
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/idf-hamas-duty-to-warn/

How violence in Syria is connected to the Israel-Hamas war

Where Britain, France and Germany stand on the Israel-Hamas war

Israel-Hamas war: Where does India stand?

What Canadians think about the Israel-Hamas war

How Telegram Became a Terrifying Weapon in the Israel-Hamas War
https://www.wired.com/story/telegram-hamas-israel-conflict/

Does Fatah stand to reap gains after Israel-Hamas war in Gaza?

Pay Attention to the Arab Public Response to the Israel-Hamas War

Japan’s Catch-22 Situation Over the Israel-Hamas War

Israel Hamas war: How the financial markets see the outcome of the crisis
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Israel’s Campaign Against Hamas in Gaza: War Aims and Operational Challenges
https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/israels-campaign-against-hamas-gaza-war-aims-and-operational-challenges

The Geopolitical Consequences of the Israel-Hamas War
https://bfpg.co.uk/2023/10/geopolitics-of-israel-hamas-war/

Evolving Cyber Dynamics Amidst the Israel-Hamas Conflict

The Israel-Hamas war is a distraction from Ukraine, but Russia isn’t necessarily benefiting

Israel Conflict Rekindles Russian Antisemitism
https://cepa.org/article/israel-conflict-rekindles-russian-antisemitism/

The Five Global Dangers from the Gaza War
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/five-global-dangers-gaza-war

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Russia seeks benefit from the Gaza conflict
Ian Hill – The Interpreter, 3 November 2023
Moscow hopes the Middle East will distract the West from supporting Ukraine — but old troubles at home could stir again.
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/russia-seeks-benefit-gaza-conflict

For more on this theme:

How Does the Israel-Hamas War Impact Russia and Ukraine?

For Ukraine Democracy: Reforms Now, Elections When Possible

Ukraine: 2024 headwinds
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/ukraine-2024-headwinds

A Marshall Plan for Ukraine?
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/marshall-plan-ukraine

Ukraine holds peace formula talks in Malta, Russia absent

Evidence mounts of North Korean arms to Russia in threat for Ukraine
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**How the West can help Ukraine win its economic war with Russia**

**Putin Ally Warns EU Against Seizing Russian Assets for Ukraine’s Reconstruction**

**Russia to ease investment for ‘friendly’ countries**

**Surging falsehoods seek to dent Western aid to Ukraine**

**Ukraine hints Putin contriving second front as Hamas visits Moscow**

**Deepfakes in warfare: new concerns emerge from their use around the Russian invasion of Ukraine**

**Russia Likely Coercing Ukrainian POWs to Fight in Russian Military: ISW**

**Is Russia recruiting Muslim migrants to fight its war in Ukraine?**

**Second front: Ukraine should take the fight to Russia in Africa**

**Russia’s Crimea Conscription Plan Is Failing: Ukraine**
https://www.newsweek.com/russia-moscow-crimea-conscription-failing-1838794

**Turkey faces competing pressures from Russia and the West to end its ‘middleman strategy’ and pick a side on the war in Ukraine**

**As Politics Returns to Ukraine, the Fight for Russian-Speakers’ Votes Begins**
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90890

**Ukrainian hackers disrupt internet providers in Russia-occupied territories**
https://therecord.media/ukranian-hackers-disrupt-internet-providers-crimea

**Satellite Images Suggest Russia Is Ramping Up Production Capacity For Its War Against Ukraine**
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ramping-up-war-production/32658857.html
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Can G7 make Russia pay for reconstruction of Ukraine?
https://euobserver.com/opinion/157633

The China-Russia Relationship: Implications for the Current Wars and Beyond

The War Tax in Russia
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/war-tax-russia

Denmark's Support in Restoring Mykolaiv Is a Model for Ukraine's Postwar Recovery
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/denmarks-support-restoring-mykolaiv-model-ukraines-postwar-recovery

A Vision of Russian Defeat
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/vision-russian-defeat

‘Cultural Expropriation': Russia Steps Up Seizures Of Artifacts In Occupied Ukraine
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-cultural-appropriation-artifacts-looted-war/32657653.html

Russia halts Ukrainian offensive and goes on the attack

An anti-Jewish riot in Russia's Dagestan region shows the risks of Putin's balancing act on Hamas

Ukraine Military Situation: Military In State Of Transition – Analysis

North Korea-Russia Alliance Revives Cold War Divisions – Analysis

A 'festering' powder keg in Europe is lurking in the shadow of the Israel-Hamas war

How to bridge the Ukrainian government's wartime funding gap
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainalert/how-to-bridge-the-ukrainian-governments-wartime-funding-gap/

Debacle: Getting Russia Wrong
https://cepa.org/article/debacle-getting-russia-wrong/

Behind the Lines: The Race to Rescue Ukraine's Stolen Children