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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Taking the Climate Crisis Seriously Requires Ambitious Anti-Corruption Solutions
Ian J. Lynch and Maja Groff – The Diplomat: 5 November 2021

The climate change movement should recognize the threat to its goals that grand corruption poses.

Controversial Legal Reforms in Honduras Continue Country’s Anti-Corruption Legacy
Kai Bernier-Chen – InSight Crime: 5 November 2021

A package of controversial legislative reforms has become law in Honduras, further sinking any lingering efforts to combat corruption in the country.

For more on this theme:

Serbia’s Vucic Dismisses Critical Congressional Letter About Corruption, Media Freedom
https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-vucic-congressional-letter-corruption/31550057.html

China targets financial sector in new anti-corruption drive

South Korea: Presidential race marred by corruption allegations and mudslinging

The Sound Of Corruption: Kyrgyz Bard Turns Journalistic Investigations Into Songs
https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-corruption-bard/31547826.html

Ending the ‘rule of thieves’: Maia Sandu and the fight against corruption in Moldova

U.S. issues Cambodia corruption advisory, sanctions officials over navy base

Myanmar court sentences two leaders of Suu Kyi’s party to 75-90 years for corruption

United Nations Kicks off Hackathon Championship to Fight Corruption
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Is the MS13 in Honduras Expanding its Role in the Regional Drug Trade?
Parker Asmann – InSight Crime: 5 November 2021

U.S. prosecutors have charged an alleged MS13 leader in Honduras and his associate with international cocaine trafficking, raising fresh questions about the gang’s role in the regional drug trade.


Official: A dozen drug gangs fighting for Mexico’s Caribbean

The shooting of two suspected drug dealers at a resort on Mexico’s Caribbean coast is part of a fight among about a dozen gangs to carve up the lucrative market of selling drugs to tourists and locals, an official said.

https://apnews.com/article/mexico-shootings-caribbean-california-23c7d2fe88de19c5d1866aa-c8a238e9d

For more on this theme:

Pakistani Court Overturns Drug Trafficking Prison Sentence For Czech Model

Myanmar must do more to stop drug trafficking

The Demise of White House Market Will Shake Up the Dark Web
https://www.wired.com/story/white-house-market-dark-web-drugs-goes-down/

Nigerian Mafia Use Venezuelan Drug Mules to Reach Europe

3 Reasons Why Coca Crops Are Through the Roof in Peru

LatAm Synthetic Drug Trade Booming: UNODC Report

Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan: The World’s Next Narco-State?

One in five 13-14-year-olds have seen drugs being sold on social media
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/drugs-young-people-social-media-b1949196.html

Nexus of Northeast Insurgents and Drug Traffickers Spreading Narco-terrorism in India, Says Assam Police
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Mozambique’s illicit gemstone trade: Downward spiral of corruption
Henry Pope – Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: 10 November 2021

Mozambique’s illicit mining industry has siphoned millions from the country’s economy, trapped its workers in a perpetual state of poverty and has become a significant source of government and police corruption, according to a Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime report.


Overhaul of counter-wildlife trafficking efforts at DHS as audit reveals significant gaps
Kylie Bielby – Homeland Security Today: 5 November 2021

Transnational criminal gangs are exploiting the increasingly interconnected air-transport system to traffic wildlife, and the illicit activity has become an international crisis that threatens security, undermines laws and may lead to the spread of viruses.

https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/transportation/overhaul-of-counter-wildlife-trafficking-efforts-at-dhs-as-audit-reveals-significant-gaps/

For more on this theme:

Gabon gambles on sustainable logging to prevent deforestation

Vietnamese authorities teamed up with TRAFFIC to tackle destructive illegal trade of African timber species

Imported deforestation: How Europe contributes to tree loss worldwide

Deforestation soars in Nigeria’s gorilla habitat: ‘We are running out of time’

China Threatens South American Oceans
https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/china-threatens-south-american-oceans/

Kenya: Chinese vessels fishing illegally while ‘torturing’ crew in horn waters
https://allafrica.com/stories/202111010253.html

Wildfires, logging turn protected forests into carbon emitters: Study

‘Lungs of Europe’: Romania under severe illegal logging threat
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppPbUACv728
MONEY LaunderING

Widespread money laundering in property locking out Australians from owning homes, Senate told
Christopher Knaus – The Guardian: 9 November 2021

Criminals pumping nefarious earnings into the housing market could be contributing to high prices across Australia, locking people out of owning a home.


For more on this theme:

Mexico’s anti-money laundering chief resigns amid scandal
https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-mexico-caribbean-money-laundering-mexico-city-6941aa45677e3dab81ef6c7f676bd2dc

Bangladesh’s former chief justice found guilty of money laundering

Money Laundering Whistleblowers Can Maximize Their Bounties

Art market money laundering crackdown spreads from UK to the US, but what impact is it having and are businesses taking it seriously?

Cabinet approves draft amendment to anti-money laundering law

Money Laundering: The Key to Cryptocurrency Crime

Thai Businessman Suspected of Funding Insurgents Nabbed for Money Laundering

Kazakhstan Passes Law to Monitor Crypto Services for Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing

DeFi — the ‘Wild West’ of crypto — is next on regulators’ hit list
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Initiative Persistence and the Consequence for Cyber Norms
Michael P. Fischerkeller – Lawfare: 8 November 2021

In a useful thought experiment considering the implications of other cyber powers adopting the approach of “defend forward” and “persistent engagement,” cyber policy expert Herb Lin focuses on the potential impact on cyber norms.


For more on this theme:

(China) China’s top market regulator to classify internet platforms, improve risk management
https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202111/1237655.shtml

(Tanzania) Tanzania: New Forum to Boost Proper Internet Use Among Youth
https://allafrica.com/stories/202111021007.html

(China) China’s Efforts For ‘Civilised Internet’ For Reshaping Online Behaviour
https://thelogicalindian.com/trending/civilised-internet-31549

INTERNET FREEDOM

Data scientists aim to detect internet censorship in real time
Rob Mitchum – Uchicago News: 9 November 2021

Artificial intelligence could help flag totalitarian governments trying to cut off information flow.


For more on this theme:

(China) Yahoo to exit China, citing commitment to “free and open” internet

(Turkey) Turkey: new report highlights the extent of censorship online

(Singapore) Singapore’s new law against ‘foreign interference’ threatens to undermine free speech
https://advox.globalvoices.org/2021/11/01/singapores-new-law-against-foreign-interference-threatens-to-undermine-free-speech/

(Indonesia) Indonesian court allows internet blocking amid social unrest
PRIVACY

Ignore China’s New Data Privacy Law at Your Peril
Matt Burgess – Wired: 5 November 2021

China’s Personal Information Protection Law gives authorities the power to impose huge fines and blacklist companies. But the biggest impact may be felt outside the country.
https://www.wired.com/story/china-personal-data-law-pipl/

For more on this theme:
(U.K.) Top UK court blocks legal action against Google over internet tracking
https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/nov/10/top-uk-court-blocks-legal-action-against-google-over-internet-tracking

(Global) Decentralization may be key to protecting our digital identities
https://venturebeat.com/2021/11/06/decentralization-may-be-key-to-protecting-our-digital-identities/

(Global) Facebook whistleblower says metaverse adds more privacy concerns
https://www.csmonitor.com/Technology/2021/1109/Facebook-whistleblower-says-metaverse-adds-more-privacy-concerns

CYBERCRIME

The AP Interview: Justice Dept. conducting cyber crackdown

The U.S. Justice Department said it is committed to fighting back against ransomware attacks — which have risen significantly in the past year — by using extraditions and monetary seizures.
https://apnews.com/article/technology-russia-crime-arrests-hacking-f0adf6f0765b-0f079a20a95c85c5334

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Tackling next generation cyber hacking the focus of new training lab

(Global) Budapest Convention on Cybercrime born 20 years ago this month
https://www.itworldcanada.com/article/budapest-convention-on-cybercrime-born-20-years-ago-this-month/464434

(Global) The world against cybercrime, a battle at the price of gold: 10.5 trillion dollars in 2025
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Robinhood says information on millions of customers stolen in data breach
Maggie Miller – The Hill: 9 November 2021

Trading platform Robinhood disclosed that an “unauthorized party” had stolen the data of more than 7 million customers as part of a major data breach.


For more on this theme:
(Australia) Queensland water supplier Sunwater targeted by hackers in months-long undetected cyber security breach

(Global) If healthcare doesn't strengthen its cybersecurity, it could soon be in critical condition
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/11/healthcare-cybersecurity/

(Global) Humanizing hackers: Entering the minds of those behind the attacks

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

83% of Critical Infrastructure Organizations Suffered Breaches, 2021 Cybersecurity Research Reveals
Dark Reading: 9 November 2021

A new study by Skybox Security found that 83% of organizations had suffered an operational technology cybersecurity breach in the prior 36 months. The research also uncovered that organizations underestimate the risk of a cyberattack, with 73% of chief information officers and chief information security officers “highly confident” their organizations will not suffer a breach in the next year.


Full report:
Cybersecurity risk underestimated by operational technology organizations

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) CISA Begins Program to Identify Critical Infrastructure

(U.S.) US water and wastewater systems targeted by cybercrime
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Taliban Emir Warns of ISIS-K Infiltration
Trevor Filseth – The National Interest: 5 November 2021
The Taliban ominously warned that those who attempt to infiltrate the group will be caught and dealt with in an unspecified manner.
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/taliban-emir-warns-isis-k-infiltration-195836

IS Shows Signs of Strengthening in Syria, Iraq
Jeff Seldin – Voice of America: 5 November 2021
As much of the Western world focuses on the growing threat from the Islamic State group’s affiliate in Afghanistan, new intelligence suggests there is reason again to worry about the terror group’s core in Syria and Iraq.

For more on this theme:
The Secret Life of an Iraqi Town That Actually Fought – and Won Against – the Islamic State

Islamic State, Al-Qaeda have increased online propaganda, warns FATF
https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/fatf-expresses-grave-concern-says-islamic-state-al-qaeda-have-increased-online-propaganda-101634879981297.html

Women Reportedly Linked to IS Set Syria Camp on Fire
https://www.voanews.com/a/women-reportedly-linked-to-is-set-syria-camp-on-fire/6280350.html

Taliban Wages Deadly Crackdown On Afghan Salafists As War With IS-K Intensifies
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/taliban-crackdown-salafis-islamic-state-khorasan/31524687.html

IS-K Attacks On Afghan Shi’a Are Crimes Against Humanity, Says HRW
https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghan-shia-crimes-against-humanity/31527982.html

Taliban Size Up Threat From Tenacious Islamic State-Khorasan

Islamic State Militants Stepping Up Attacks in Eastern, Central Syria

ISIS Poses a Growing Threat to New Taliban Government in Afghanistan
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Physical Attacks on Electricity Infrastructure: Extremist Messaging, Plots, and Action
Bridget Johnson – Homeland Security Today: 5 November 2021

Domestic extremists, Islamist terror groups and accelerationists eye the energy sector as officials warn of hard-to-intercept attack methods, such as drones.
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/physical-attacks-on-electricity-infrastructure-extremist-messaging-plots-and-action/

Uganda terror attacks point to deeper Jihadi coordination
Peter Fabricius – Institute for Security Studies: 5 November 2021

Some analysts and officials think the Islamic State-affiliated Allied Democratic Forces and al-Shabaab are collaborating.
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/uganda-terror-attacks-point-to-deeper-jihadi-coordination

For more on this theme:

Afghanistan: Victims' families decry glorification of suicide bombers

Taliban Supreme Leader Makes First Public Appearance

SOCOM Head On Global Terrorism: ‘I Think It’s Spread’

Taliban ban use of foreign currency in Afghanistan -spokesman
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taliban-ban-use-foreign-currency-afghanistan-spokesman-2021-11-02/

The Taliban’s secretive war against IS

Bumpy Road Ahead for Talibanomics: DRI Experts

Counterterrorism Successes Against Foreign Fighters
https://www.lawfareblog.com/counterterrorism-successes-against-foreign-fighters

‘The Arc of Jihad’: The Ecosystem of Militancy in East, Central and Southern Africa

Iranian-supplied arms smuggled from Yemen into Somalia, study says

Gold Mining in Burkina Faso Becomes Increasingly Dangerous
IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

Weapons Tracing Study Implicates Russia in Ukraine Conflict
Andrew Kramer – The New York Times: 3 November 2021

One of the most comprehensive studies to date of weaponry in the war in Ukraine shows a panoply of Russian-supplied arms that has helped fuel the war.

Full report:
Weapons of the War in Ukraine
https://www.conflicarm.com/reports/weapons-of-the-war-in-ukraine/

For more on this theme:

Russian encroachment in French Africa has Paris struggling for solutions

Iranian Drones Cast Intimidating Shadow Over Iraq
https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/iranian-drones-cast-intimidating-shadow-over-iraq

Kataib Hezbollah dismisses suggestions that Iraqi groups behind attack on PM
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/kataib-hezbollah-dismisses-suggestions-that-iraqi-groups-behind-attack-pm-2021-11-07/

IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Iran's Middle East influence may actually be declining
Saeid Jafari – Atlantic Council: 5 November 2021

The foreign policy of Iran is going through tough times. Growing global dissatisfaction with Tehran’s approach to its nuclear program and delays in returning to the negotiations, as well as developments in Iran’s backyard, are undermining Iranian claims to successful “resistance” and rising influence.
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/irans-middle-east-influence-may-actually-be-declining/

For more on this theme:

China has invested deeply in Africa. We checked to see whether that is undermining democracy.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/10/29/china-has-invested-deeply-africa-we-checked-see-whether-that-is-undermining-democracy/

Russia using gas to bully Moldova, says EU

Moscow Tells Central Asia — Don't Host NATO or U.S. Forces
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/moscow-tells-central-asia%E2%80%94dont-host-nato-or-us-forces-195664

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER
U.S. Offers Reward For Information On Russia-Linked DarkSide Cybercrime Group
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: 4 November 2021

The United States has announced a reward of up to $10 million for information leading to the identification or location of anyone holding a “key leadership” position in DarkSide, a cybercrime group thought to be tied to Russia.

https://www.rferl.org/a/ransomware-darkside-reward-cybercrime/31546367.html

For more on this theme:

The cyber battlefield against China and Russia is constantly shifting. Here’s how the NSA is trying to stay on top.


U.S. Security Hacks Linked to Chinese Cyber-Espionage Group

Is Iran behind cyberattacks on Israeli hospitals?

North Korean Lazarus Hacking Group Leverages Supply Chain Attacks To Distribute Malware for Cyber Espionage