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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Why South Africa's president stands on solid ground in the fight against corruption
Steven Friedman – The Conversation: 18 November 2020
The corruption charges against Ace Magashule, the secretary-general of South Africa’s governing African National Congress, signal not only that politicians are subject to the law, but that prosecutors can treat senior politicians like any other citizen and not face political consequences. That’s a victory for South Africa’s president.

Tackling corruption in governments' COVID-19 health responses
Corruption in the health sector during COVID-19 not only prevents resources from reaching beneficiaries who need them most but could affect public trust in government institutions, systems and mechanisms. Although there is no one-size-fits-all solution, measures to tackle corruption in governments' COVID-19 responses need to be built on the principles of transparency, accountability and openness.

For more on this theme:
The Power To End Systemic Corruption Is In The Hands Of Africa's New Wave Of Entrepreneurs

Saudi crown prince says no let up in fight against corruption

Mexican president faces corruption allegations of his inner circle

Corruption Taints Anti-Malaria Program as Sickness Spreads
https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/zimbabwe/corruption-taints-anti-malaria-spraying-program-cases-rise/

Corruption critic shot dead in Libya's Benghazi

Kyrgyzstan's Latest Anti-Corruption Campaign: Is It Real Or Just For Show?

Hungary's fight against corruption 'globally unsatisfactory'
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

China’s new wildlife law doesn’t go far enough to stop another pandemic
Aron White – CNN: 17 November 2020

A new draft of China’s wildlife law has been published, but it doesn’t hold muster in the courts of public and expert opinions. Without banning the use of wild animals in traditional medicine, the law does little to deter further pandemics.

RoboCop Sets Sail
Vanessa Minke-Martin – Hakai Magazine: 18 November 2020

A design challenge has tech companies racing to build a robot boat that can police illegal fishing in protected marine areas.

For more on this theme:
Slaves rescued from illegal gold mine run by blacklisted Brazilian

Coronavirus pandemic sparks surge in firewood use in rural Kenya
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-health-forests-energy-feature-t-idUSKBN27R0XZ

China wildlife crime prosecutions up sharply after COVID-19 outbreak

To stop illegal trade in wild animals, we must support justice systems in countries like Kenya and Botswana
https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/illegal-wildlife-trade-animals-crime-traffickers-pandemics-b1721804.html

Nigeria now listed as ‘country of concern’ on international wildlife trafficking
https://www.icirngigeria.org/nigeria-now-listed-as-country-of-concern-on-international-wildlife-trafficking/

USAID Wildlife Project Reduces Poaching By 80%

Demand in China Is Helping Wipe Out Senegal’s Last Rosewood Forests
https://science.thewire.in/environment/senegal-rosewood-forests-china-demand/
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Strengthening Anti-Human Trafficking Mechanisms in the Bay of Bengal Region
Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury – Observer Research Foundation: 9 November 2020

This brief gives an overview of human trafficking in the Bay of Bengal region, particularly around the contiguous zone of India, Nepal and Bangladesh, which has become a hub of this organized transnational crime. The brief offers recommendations to arrest human trafficking in the region.


For more on this theme:

The EU Migration Pact: Why Effective Returns are Necessary
https://www.cgdev.org/blog/eu-migration-pact-why-effective-asylum-returns-are-necessary

Interview: ‘North Korean Refugees in China Are Not Protected by Anyone,’ Says Refugee-Turned-Lawmaker in South

In a first, Bangladesh seeks Interpol's help to arrest trafficking kingpins
https://news.trust.org/item/20201110163349-i9y1r/

The global health crisis and human trafficking are correlated – but how?

DRUG TRAFFICKING

‘We Are Shipping To The U.S.’: Inside China’s Online Synthetic Drug Networks
Emily Feng – National Public Radio: 17 November 2020

Under international pressure, China’s government banned the production and sale of fentanyl and many of its variants in May 2019. But more than a year later, Chinese vendors have tapped into online networks to brazenly market fentanyl analogs and the chemicals used to make fentanyl and ship them directly to customers.


For more on this theme:

Narco-Terror
https://satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-19-No-21#assessment1

DCI intensifies anti-narcotics watch as drug trade linked to terror financing

Former Mexican cop extradited to San Diego from Italy on drug-trafficking charges
ORGANIZED CRIME

COVID-19 crime: INTERPOL issues new guidelines for law enforcement
Interpol: 17 November 2020

As the world awaits a coronavirus vaccine, Interpol warns of its possible weaponization and misuse and predicts that criminal networks will target storage facilities and distribution networks as soon as vaccines move closer to delivery. “High demand combined with a limited supply will make COVID-19 vaccines the equivalent of liquid gold to organized crime networks as soon as one is available,” said Jürgen Stock, Interpol secretary general.


For more on this theme:

Far-Right, Mafias In Italy Fuel Some Violent Anti-Lockdown Protests

< When Life Gives You Lemons...Start The Mafia?
https://www.npr.org/transcripts/931795250

The Impacts of Authoritarianism on Organized Crime in Turkey

Peru’s Multidimensional Challenge – Part 2: the economic crisis, public insecurity, and organized crime
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Secretary-General’s video message to the closing of the 15th Annual Internet Governance Forum: Internet Governance in the Age of Uncertainty

The United Nations’ secretary-general closed the Internet Governance Forum with a call for the forum to be a place where governments, companies, technical experts and civil society from all parts of the world come together, share ideas, debate solutions, and agree on common standards and principles.


For more on this theme:

(Global) ICANN Doubles Down on Technical Internet Governance Label: What Are the Implications?

(Global) Who controls the internet?

(Africa) Opinion - The need for youth voices in internet governance
https://neweralive.na/posts/opinion-the-need-for-youth-voices-in-internet-governance

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Companies could face hefty fines under new Canadian privacy law
Catharine Tunney – CBC News: 17 November 2020

A new privacy bill in Canada promises greater control for consumers and stiff fines for companies that violate privacy rules. The proposed legislation would provide for administrative monetary penalties of up to 3% of global revenue.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Senate passes bill to secure internet-connected devices against cyber vulnerabilities

(Global) Apple defends decision to delay privacy feature, slams Facebook

(U.S.) Digital Identity and Privacy Challenges
https://www.afcea.org/content/digital-identity-and-privacy-challenges
CYBER STATECRAFT

**Massive, China-state-funded hack hits companies around the world, report says**  
*Dan Goodin – Ars Technica: 18 November 2020*

A Chinese government-linked hacking group whose operatives have been indicted by the U.S. and sanctioned by the European Union is suspected in a yearlong effort to steal sensitive data from companies around the world.


*For more on this theme:*

**(Switzerland) Coherent foreign policy in the digital space**  

**(Canada, Russia, China) Canada names China, Russia as main cyber-crime threats; sees risk to power supply**  

**(U.S., Global) Tackling the Cyber Threat as a Global Community**  

**CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES**

**Lazarus malware strikes South Korean supply chains**  
*Charlie Osborne – ZDNet: 16 November 2020*

North Korean hackers are suspected of carrying out a supply chain attack that targeted South Korean businesses, including financial firms, by using stolen digital certificates, according to researchers with security firm ESET.


*For more on this theme:*

**(Global) Ransomware attack forces web hosting provider Managed.com to take servers offline**  

**(U.S.) Software vendor says data breach exposed nearly 28 million Texas driver's license records**  

**(China) More than 200 systems infected by new Chinese APT ‘FunnyDream’**  
CYBER CRIME

The UK’s new offensive cyber unit takes on organised crime and hostile states
Steve Ranger – ZDNet: 19 November 2020

The United Kingdom’s National Cyber Force is made up of spies, cyber experts and members of the military. The relatively new force will act offensively and counter threats from terrorists, criminals and hostile states.


For more on this theme:

(Vanatu) Vanuatu set to adopt new cyber crime law

(U.S.) DHS Partnership Fights Cyber Crime With Innovative Digital Tools

(North Korea, China) Why Is North Korea So Good at Cybercrime?

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

‘Significant consequences’: Growing fears of cyber attack on Australia’s energy grid
Anthony Galloway – The Sydney Morning Herald: 18 November 2020

Australian business leaders are bracing for cyber attacks over the next year, including state-sponsored hack attacks on the nation’s critical infrastructure that could shut down vital services such as hospitals.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) DoE unveils new initiative to improve cybersecurity for critical infrastructure

(Australia) Future of cybersecurity and critical infrastructure in Australia

(Global) Artificial intelligence can protect all companies in the energy transition from cyberattacks
CYBER EXERCISES AND TRAINING

Nato announces start of Cyber Coalition exercise
Army Technology: 17 November 2020

Cyber Coalition, NATO’s biggest cyber defense exercise, trains participants to defend NATO and national networks while testing decision-making processes and procedures.

For more on this theme:

(Japan/U.S.) Japan and U.S. begin major military exercise as concern about China grows

(U.S.) US Cyber Command-sponsored cyber exercise will focus on critical infrastructure

(U.S.) US Air Force prepares for its first information warfare exercise
ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

An Islamist insurgency in Mozambique is gaining ground — and showing a strong allegiance to the Islamic State
Cris Chinaka, Lesley Wroughton and Joby Warrick – The Washington Post: 13 November 2020

Al-Shabab, which also goes by the name Ahlu-Sunnah Wa-Jama, is considered the Mozambique affiliate of ISIS. The group is seeking to establish an Islamic emirate in northeastern Mozambique. What once was a locally rooted insurgency now shows a clear intention of aligning itself — ideologically and tactically — with ISIS’ main branch.


The Head of ISIS Is a Hypocrite and a Traitor
Haroro J. Ingram and Omar Mohammed – Foreign Policy: 19 November 2020

Exposing the ISIS so-called caliph as a snitch and a hypocrite has the potential, if harnessed effectively and synchronized with broader influence efforts, to undermine not only his perceived authority but also the credibility of the movement he leads.


For more on this theme:

A Year After al-Baghdadi’s Death, ISIS Is Alive — and Growing

European Attacks and the Uproar Over Hate Speech as ISIS Virtual Caliphate Continues to Reign

Islamic State claims responsibility for Jeddah attack

Linear Relationships Between Islamic State’s Extent of Territorial Control and Its Visual Messaging Campaign

Lockdown Has Increased Terrorist Risk to Kosovo, Experts Warn

Niger kidnapping signals Salafi-jihadis’ growing influence in West Africa
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al Qaeda is battered, but don’t rejoice yet
Kabir Taneja – Hindustan Times: 18 November 2020

The killing of al-Qaida leaders has sparked a debate over what the future holds for the terror group. Some argue that an imminent disintegration of al-Qaida may be in the cards after the yet-uncorroborated claim that the terror group’s chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has died. Others have more radical ideas, such as a potential merger with ISIS. Either way, it would be a mistake to write off al-Qaida just yet.

https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/al-qaeda-is-battered-but-don-t-rejoice-yet/story-jbNi1bNAE0v5YqyRWzibK.html

Financing Boko Haram
John Campbell – Council on Foreign Relations: 18 November 2020

There has long been speculation about how Boko Haram and other terrorist organizations are funded. Tracking Boko Haram’s finances is difficult at best, especially given the misinformation on the subject.

https://www.cfr.org/blog/financing-boko-haram

For more on this theme:
France says it has killed senior al-Qaeda North Africa operative in Mali
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-france-idUSKBN27T007

Afghan Government Says Taliban Maintaining Ties With Al-Qaida

The Death of Ayman Al-Zawahri and the Future of Al-Qaida

Iran's Khamenei funds terrorism over COVID-19 aid workers

Northwest Nigeria Potential Jihadi Linchpin in West Africa
https://www.cfr.org/blog/northwest-nigeria-potential-jihadi-linchpin-west-africa

How Technology Is Helping Terror Tactics Evolve
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/how-technology-is-helping-terror-tactics-evolve/

Boko Haram Violence against Civilians Spiking in Northern Cameroon

EU interior ministers step up efforts to combat terrorism
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Is there a way to stop jihadis in Europe?
Matthias von Hein – Deutsche Welle: 13 November 2020

What drives young men into the arms of Islamist extremists — and how can they be reintegrated into society? Five years after the deadly attacks in Paris, these urgent questions remain.
https://www.dw.com/en/is-there-a-way-to-stop-jihadis-in-europe/a-55584314

For more on this theme:
EU’s Michel wants school for imams to combat terrorism and radicalization

Germany’s imams seen as key in combating radicalization

Covid pandemic may be hiding signs of radical terrorism, expert warns

Kenya: Nakuru Youth Lead War on Extremism and Drugs
https://allafrica.com/stories/202011090122.html

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES

With Iran’s Help, These Iraqi Militias Are Acquiring Deadlier Rockets
Paul Iddon – Forbes: 19 November 2020

While Iran-backed proxy groups may exaggerate their capabilities, these proxy militias in Iraq have undoubtedly built up significant Iran-supplied stockpiles of increasingly sophisticated rockets and possibly even short-range ballistic missiles.

For more on this theme:
Proxy Wars: How Turkey and Iran Employ Militias Abroad
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/proxy-wars-how-turkey-and-iran-employ-militias-abroad-171816

CENTCOM: Iraq Drawdown Coincides With Increased Capability of Local Forces
IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Taiwan to shut down China-friendly tycoon’s news channel
Reuters: 18 November 2020

Taiwanese authorities announced they will not renew the broadcast license of a prominent pro-Beijing news channel for interference, triggering pushback from its operator as a violation of press freedoms.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-media-china-idUSKBN27Y0YA

For more on this theme:

Combatting Russian Active Measures
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/combatting-russian-active-measures

China’s Evolving Approach to Media Influence: The Case of Czechia

Britain's GCHQ to wage cyber war on anti-vaccine propaganda: The Times
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-gchq-cyber-idUSKBN27O0X9

Game ‘pre-bunks’ political misinformation by letting players undermine democracy

Ethiopia’s Tigray conflict sparks spread of misinformation