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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Top EU official impressed with Ukraine’s effort to fight corruption
*Reuters*: 27 November 2023

The European Commission’s vice president praised Ukraine’s fight against corruption, but said additional efforts were needed in the country that hopes to join the European Union.


Political corruption in Europe: A threat to more than public funds
*Transparency International*: 27 November 2023

Undue influence on both national and European Union politicians is a danger to vital services, public safety and democracy.


For more on this theme:

*Indonesia anti-corruption chief Firli Bahuri suspected of extortion*

*Second top Ukrainian cyber official arrested amid corruption probe*
https://therecord.media/second-cyber-official-detained-zhora

*Corruption case reopened against Argentina’s Vice President Fernández, adding to her legal woes*
https://apnews.com/article/argentina-cristina-fernandez-kirchner-db0ff8b0e514af431e4dca256d44a85d

*Portugal’s corruption scandal spells trouble for EU's critical minerals hunt*

*UK must work with Central Asia to combat corruption and sanctions evasion*

*Tackling corruption in land sector is critical for Uganda*
https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/tackling-corruption-in-land-sector-is-critical-for-uganda-4431030

*Ukraine unveils corruption probes into reconstruction schemes*

*Another top executive is being investigated by China’s corruption watchdog*

*Niger’s junta chief sets up anti-corruption body*
DRUG TRAFFICKING

A new opening in America’s drug war | Editorial
Tampa Bay Times: 22 November 2023
Agreements with China, Mexico could help stem flow of fentanyl.

Ecuador’s New President Strengthens Rules on Illegal Drugs
The Associated Press: 26 November 2023
Less than 48 hours into his term, Ecuador President Daniel Noboa repealed controversial guidelines established by the country’s left a decade ago that eliminated penalties for people found carrying illegal drugs under certain amounts.

For more on this theme:
Drug trafficker ‘bought’ Venezuelan officials, US prosecutor says at trial

‘El Mago,’ drug trafficker linked to son of Sinaloa cartel kingpin, gunned down in L.A.

In some Latin American drug cartels, women are the violent new overlords

Drug smugglers find new route via Mizoram, evade clashes-hit Manipur

Assad’s drug empire is funding Iranian-backed militias and fueling Hamas

Fentanyl is pouring across US borders. Biden’s deal with China can help stop it.

Fentanyl Seizures on US-Mexico Border at Record High Amid Production Ban

Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Continues Progress on Fight Against Global Illicit Drug Trafficking

Griselda Blanco, alias ‘La Madrina’
https://insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/griselda-blanco-alias-la-madrina/
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

CITES: 29 November 2023
The new technologies have become an integral part of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
https://cites.org/eng/node/138561

The EU Overhauls Its Law Covering Environmental Crimes, Banning Specific Acts and Increasing Penalties
Katie Surma – Inside Climate News: 23 November 2023
The European Parliament is expected to approve the new directive early next year. It’s not clear whether the emission of greenhouse gases at certain levels could constitute crimes.

For more on this theme:
Illegal gold miners buried after Suriname mine tunnel collapses

Only 21% of land used for gold mining in Colombia has permits: UN
https://colombiareports.com/only-21-of-land-used-for-gold-mining-in-colombia-has-permits-un/

Compliance with wildlife trade rules dominates first CITES Standing Committee meeting following CoP19
https://cites.org/eng/node/138532

Illegal mining on Beas riverbed threat to water supply schemes

Unearthing a crisis: South Africa’s battle against illegal mining

Govt says it will regulate illegal mining businesses. But is it protecting it?

Video: Illegal Fishing: Fighting illegal fishing in Australia’s remote northern waters

Half of the caviar from sturgeon in the EU comes from illegal sources

China’s ‘Predatory’ Trawler Fleet and the Fishing Industry’s Dirty Secret
https://www.newsweek.com/china-fishing-fleet-industry-environment-forced-labor-1844620
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Belarus Internet Governance Forum: No Civil Society Dialogue from Behind Bars
Anastasiya Zhymon – Tech Policy Press: 29 November 2023

The forum took place in Minsk under the tagline of “open dialogue on the development of Bynet.” Bynet is Belarus’ “national internet” — and the use of the term was the conference’s first major red flag.


For more on this theme:

(Global) United Nations creates advisory body to address AI governance
https://www.reuters.com/technology/united-nations-creates-advisory-body-address-ai-governance-2023-10-26/

(Global) The Chaos at OpenAI is a Death Knell for AI Self-Regulation
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-chaos-at-openai-is-a-death-knell-for-ai-self-regulation

(Global) The AI Governance Challenge

INTERNET FREEDOM

Be Alert — Russia May Be Coming to Get You
Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan – CEPA: 29 November 2023

Russian internet censorship took a significant step by putting Meta spokesperson Andy Stone on a wanted list for alleged extremism.

https://cepa.org/article/be-alert-russia-may-be-coming-to-get-you/

For more on this theme:

(Global) New Digital Dilemmas: Resisting Autocrats, Navigating Geopolitics, Confronting Platforms

(EU, Iran) Upholding Internet Freedom as Part of the EU’s Iran Policy

(Russia) How one Russian nonprofit is trying to crack through the Kremlin’s censorship wall
https://therecord.media/roskomsvoboda-russia-internet-freedom-censorship
CYBERATTACKS

LockBit claims cyberattack on India’s national aerospace lab
Jagmeet Singh – TechCrunch: 28 November 2023
The notorious ransomware gang LockBit has claimed responsibility for a cyberattack targeting India’s state-owned aerospace research lab. 

For more on this theme:
(Canada) Personal info of Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP stolen in cyberattack
https://therecord.media/canadian-govt-armed-forces-rcmp-cyber
(Global) Shadowy Hack-for-Hire Group Behind Sprawling Web of Global Cyberattacks
https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/hack-for-hire-group-sprawling-web-global-cyberattacks
(Australia) Australia Unveils Cybersecurity Ramp Up After Port Cyberattack

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Evolving China-based cyberwarfare demands greater regional resilience
Tim Wellsmore – The Strategist: 30 November 2023
In a speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese set out a balanced approach to handling China’s aggressive regional expansion: “Australia’s goal is not to prepare for war,” he said, “but to prevent it through deterrence and reassurance and building resilience in the region.”

For more on this theme:
(Brazil) Brazil’s Bridges to the Future: How the Country Is Building Digital Infrastructure
(Australia) New cyber policy to harden defences against our ‘fastest growing threat’
(Global) Partnering with the Pacific to strengthen cyber resilience
(Australia) Australia’s new cybersecurity strategy tackles the tough issues
CYBERCRIME

Stemming the tide of cybercrime
Derek Manky – ITWorld Canada: 22 November 2023

Technology continues to play a significant role in accelerating cyberattacks and increasing their effectiveness, reflecting a global trend of cybercriminals growing in number and sophistication.

https://www.itworldcanada.com/sponsored/stemming-the-tide-of-cybercrime

For more on this theme:

(Burma, China) Myanmar Rebel Offensive Helps China’s Cybercrime Crackdown

(Uganda) Uganda Takes Proactive Measures Against Escalating Cybercrime Threats
https://allafrica.com/stories/202311210103.html

(India) Rising cyber crime prompts surge in cybersecurity careers

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Europe’s grid is under a cyberattack deluge, industry warns
Victor Jack – Politico: 23 November 2023

“The crooks are becoming better by the day, so we need to become better by the day,” says Leonhard Birnbaum, head of E.ON, which is one of the largest European utilities.

https://www.politico.eu/article/energy-power-europe-grid-is-under-a-cyberattack-deluge-industry-warns/

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) North American grid regulator tests physical, cyber security preparedness

(Japan) Japan space agency hit with cyberattack, rocket and satellite info not accessed

(U.S.) Cyberattack on Pennsylvania Water Authority Disrupts OT Gear

(U.S.) North Texas Municipal Water District suffers cyberattack
https://statescoop.com/north-texas-municipal-water-district-suffers-cyberattack/

(Slovenia) Cyberattack hits Slovenia’s largest power utility
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Reevaluating the Threat: Terrorism in Latin America
Benjamin Jaimes – Global Americans: 24 November 2023

From money laundering to drug trafficking to Iran-sponsored propaganda, Latin American governments should be aware of the presence of supporters of political extremism and terrorism now more than ever.


From Expeditionary to Inspired: Situating External Operations within the Islamic State’s Insurgency Method
Haroro J. Ingram and Andrew Mines – ICCT: 23 November 2023

Recent assessments of the global jihadist milieu have identified the Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate as the most concerning one for engaging in transnational external operations.


For more on this theme:

Hostage crisis in Gaza draws attention to scourge of kidnappings in Africa’s Sahel
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2413601/world

US will be forced to curtail crypto if industry fails to act on illicit finance threats – official

Analysts warn that Pakistan’s anti-migrant crackdown risks radicalizing deported Afghans
https://apnews.com/article/pakistan-afghanistan-deportation-migrants-radicalisation-ebc5a62fd-8d38a127ef46d60dcb1baee

This New Tool Aims to Keep Terrorism Content Off the Internet

EU Authorities Step Up Efforts to Combat Terrorism through Information Sharing
https://complyadvantage.com/insights/eu-authorities-step-up-efforts-to-combat-terrorism-through-information-sharing/

Here’s How Violent Extremists Are Exploiting Generative AI Tools
https://www.wired.com/story/generative-ai-terrorism-content/

New report shines a light on the scope and scale of teenage terrorism offenders for the first time
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

For more on this theme:

Ortega Gives Refuge to Narcotraffickers, Terrorists

Perspective – Send in the Robots: Counter-Terrorism Response and Emerging Drone Technology

Brief: Window of Opportunity for Peace Between ISGS and JNIM Closes

Iraq’s Kataeb Hezbollah says attacks aim to ‘drain’ US, sanctions ‘ridiculous’

The Gangster and the Bride: The Framing of Femininity and Masculinity in News Coverage of Jihadist Terrorism

Why cheap drones pose a significant chemical terrorism threat

Binance Was Used to Funnel Money to Hamas, Other Militant Groups

EU Tightening Border Controls To Curb Terrorism & Migration

Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation in the CT and P/CVE field

Gender Dynamics and Online Spaces: The Case of the Islamic State

The Wagner Group is Entering Its Terrorism Era
https://gnet-research.org/2023/11/22/the-wagner-group-is-entering-its-terrorism-era/

Regional Security Analysts Say Africa at Risk of Drone Terrorism

Mapping the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan’s Resurgence
https://capsindia.org/mapping-the-tehreek-e-taliban-pakistan-resurgence/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

Why a “Day After” Plan in the Israel-Hamas War Is Unlikely
David Ottaway – Wilson Center: 28 November 2023

Uncertainty surrounds the resumption of peace talks, with elections in Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United States potentially affecting the situation. The question of who rules Gaza and who speaks for the Palestinians may remain unanswered for years.

https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/why-day-after-plan-israel-hamas-war-unlikely

For more on this theme:

The Beginning of a New Wave? The Hamas-Israel War and the Terror Threat in the West

Texts or Praxes: How Do We Best Understand Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad After October 7?

The Gaza War and the Rest of the World

The Israel-Hamas war has upended the terrorist threat matrix

The false choice between Palestinian and Jewish liberation

Amid Israel-Hamas conflict, ‘information war’ plays out on social media, experts say

The secretive, shadowy Hamas leader who is Israel’s top target in Gaza

Israel-Hamas war opens up German debate over meaning of ‘Never again’
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/22/israel-hamas-war-opens-up-german-debate-over-meaning-of-never-again

Israel-Hamas 2023 Symposium – Cyberspace – the Hidden Aspect of the Conflict
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/cyberspace-hidden-aspect-conflict/

Israel-Hamas 2023 Symposium – The Law of Truce
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/law-of-truce/

Saudi Arabia Offers Iran Investment to Blunt Gaza War
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Gaza’s economy is in ruins as Israel-Hamas war sets development back decades

Ceasefire isn’t the answer: Palestinian peace activist weighs in on the Israel-Hamas war

Why is Latin America so pro-Palestine?
https://www.newarab.com/analysis/why-latin-america-so-pro-palestine

The controversial phrase “from the river to sea,” explained

Israel must act ‘in accordance with the laws of war’, Blinken says in Tel Aviv

Why Asian Countries Are Keeping a Low Profile in the Israel-Hamas War

Former State Dept. official on what's next in Israel-Hamas conflict
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/former-state-dept-official-on-whats-next-in-israel-hamas-conflict

The path to peace in Gaza lies in defeating Hamas

Focus: New crypto front emerges in Israel’s militant financing fight

Iran’s top diplomat discusses Israel’s war in Gaza with Hezbollah leader

Russia’s Wagner to Offer Air Defense to Hezbollah or Iran: US

Unit 910: Hezbollah’s Covert Action Unit
https://greydynamics.com/unit-910-hezbollahs-covert-action-unit/

Hamas's position is stronger than many think
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/hamas-s-position-stronger-many-think

A former CIA Officer’s take on War in the Middle East and the Growing Global Challenge
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/a-former-cia-officers-take-on-war-in-the-middle-east-and-the-growing-global-challenge

The Road to October 7: Hamas’ Long Game, Clarified
https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-road-to-october-7-hamas-long-game-clarified/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

**How to End the Civil War in Israel-Palestine**
https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/how-to-end-the-civil-war-in-israel-palestine

**Corrupt, discredited: could a reformed Palestinian Authority run Gaza?**

**Gazans’ Pre-War Views of Hamas**
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/gazans-pre-war-views-hamas

**Narrative warfare: How disinformation shapes the Israeli-Hamas conflict — and millions of minds**

**Hezbollah politician hopes truce will continue**

**Feature – Gaza’s tech ‘window to the world’ shattered by Israel-Hamas war**

**Next phase of Gaza war risks unprecedented humanitarian crisis**

**On GPS: How will the Israel-Hamas war end?**

**How Hamas built a force to attack Israel on 7 October**

**Netanyahu’s two-front war against Hamas and for his own political survival**
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/netanyahu-two-front-war-against-hamas-his-own-political-survival-2023-11-27/

**Gaza has become a moonscape in war. When the battles stop, many fear it will remain uninhabitable**
https://apnews.com/article/palestinians-gaza-israel-bombing-destruction-hamas-reconstruction-f299a-28410b700e05d764df97d8d3a0

**What Was Hamas Thinking?**

**The war in Gaza and China’s pivot to the Middle East**
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

**Drastic Increase In Anti-Semitism In The World – Analysis**

**Hamas: The Origins And Rise Of The Radical Palestinian Movement (Part I) – Analysis**

**Israel likens Hamas to the Islamic State group. But the comparison misses the mark in key ways**
https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-gaza-war-islamic-state-group-29e59446a42d077323a3a216127c4978

**Israel-Hamas conflict is the West's war too**
https://www.politico.eu/article/this-is-the-wests-war-too/

**Gaza war increases risk of Islamist attacks in Europe, security officials say**

**Israel-Gaza war: The Red Cross's delicate role in hostage crises**

**Will Houthi-Israel tensions threaten security in Yemen and the Red Sea?**
https://www.newarab.com/analysis/will-houthi-israel-tensions-threaten-red-sea-security

**The Islamic World’s Dilemma on Palestine**
https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-islamic-worlds-dilemma-on-palestine/

**Israel’s Gaza Ground Invasion and the Return of “Strategic Depth”**

**IntelBrief: How Does the European Union View the Israel-Hamas Conflict?**
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-november-27/

**Hamas’s Main Source of Funding Might Surprise You**
https://newrepublic.com/article/176962/hamas-finances-funding-sources-palestinian-authority

**Gaza First: How a Palestinian State Could Emerge from the Rubble**

**Russia and Terrorism — An Old Alliance**
https://cepa.org/article/russia-and-terrorism-an-old-alliance/

**Russian Influence Diminished in Remaking the Middle East**
https://jamestown.org/program/russian-influence-diminished-in-remaking-the-middle-east/

**IntelBrief: What is Russia's Role in the Mideast Crisis?**
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-november-28/
ISRAEL/HAMAS

For more on this theme:

Israel-Hamas War Gives Putin a Chance

NATO’s Stoltenberg says Ukraine, Gaza are very different wars
https://www.reuters.com/world/natos-stoltenberg-says-ukraine-gaza-are-very-different-wars-2023-11-28/

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

IntelBrief: Pre-Conflict Trends in Middle East Likely to Endure After Israel-Hamas War
Soufan Center: 29 November 2023

Many global diplomats and strategists have assessed that the war might produce profound and lasting changes to the region, including derailing the trend toward de-escalation that prevailed prior to the conflict.
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-november-29/

For more on this theme:

Moscow Seeks Solutions to Growing Domestic Discontent Over War Effort
https://jamestown.org/program/moscow-seeks-solutions-to-growing-domestic-discontent-over-war-effort/

Moscow’s Search for Foreign Recruits Reveals Its Growing Desperation

Behind the Lines: Propaganda Poisoning
https://cepa.org/article/behind-the-lines-propaganda-poisoning/

A New Vision for the Transatlantic Alliance: The Future of European Security, the United States, and the World Order after Russia’s War in Ukraine

Russian Border Bullying Is Back — Finland This Time
https://cepa.org/article/russian-border-bullying-is-back-finland-this-time/

Ukraine’s Volunteer IT Army Confronts Tech, Legal Challenges
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-volunteer-it-army-confronts-tech-legal-challenges/

The Kremlin’s Pied Pipers Lure Children to War
https://cepa.org/article/the-kremlins-pied-pipers-lure-children-to-war/

Russia Playing Cat-and-Mouse With OSCE (Part One)

Russia Playing Cat-and-Mouse With OSCE (Part Two)
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Ukraine’s Traitor-Hunt
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-traitor-hunt/

Wagner Group: Where Are They Now?
https://www.fpri.org/multimedia/2023/11/wagner-group-where-are-they-now/

What ‘winning’ an election means in Putin’s Russia

French Foreign Minister: China’s Cooperation Vital to Ending Russia-Ukraine War

A Winter Test of Will in Ukraine Against Putin

Russia Underestimates China and South Africa’s (BRICS) Peace Initiatives

Ukraine war: it may be stalemate on land, but Kyiv’s Black Sea success could bring wider benefits this winter
https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-it-may-be-stalemate-on-land-but-kyivs-black-sea-success-could-bring-wider-benefits-this-winter-218315

Zelenskyy’s split with military is ‘Russian propaganda’: Ukraine parliament chief

Hungary’s Viktor Orbán threatens to blow up EU’s Ukraine policy

Putin won’t make peace in Ukraine before 2024 US election – US official
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2416986/world

Ukraine, Baltic nations to boycott OSCE meeting over Russia’s Lavrov attending
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-top-diplomat-boycott-osce-meeting-over-russias-lavrov-attending-kyiv-2023-11-28/

Ukraine has a new way to get its grain to the world despite Russia’s threat in the Black Sea

Will Iran give Russia ballistic missiles for the war in Ukraine?
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia's bid to arrest Meta spokesperson revealed amid media crackdown

Snow in Kyiv raises fears Russia will attack Ukraine’s energy infrastructure

Russia to require foreigners to sign 'loyalty agreement'

Expert panel: How will Russia's invasion of Ukraine develop in 2024?

Ukraine makes new push to defeat Russia's electronic warfare

Ukraine’s push into Russian-occupied territory was bold — but a breakthrough is far from guaranteed

Russia must be held to full account for its aggression

Ukraine Commander Warns of Russia Further Expanding War
https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-commander-warns-russia-further-expanding-war-1847224

Ukraine recap: naval success raises hopes of advantage against Russia this winter

Ukraine to change conscription policies in drive to sustain fighting capacity
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/27/ukraine-change-conscription-policies-russia-war

Historians come together to wrest Ukraine's past out of Russia's shadow

Ukraine war has marked a turning point in Europe's gas consumption, says IEA

Many Ukrainians see Putin's invasion as a continuation of Stalin's genocide
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Stalemate best describes the state of war in Ukraine

Putin debunks his own propaganda by disarming Russia’s NATO borders

No Choice but Containment
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/11/30/no-choice-but-containment-pub-91149

Putin’s Favorite “Project Managers” Could Become a Risk to the Regime
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91120

Learned Indifference: How Russian Society Has Gotten Used to War
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91137

Alternate Reality: How Russian Society Learned to Stop Worrying About the War

Russia’s Predetermined Elections Are Still Enough to Rattle the Elites
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91090