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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Indonesian Fisheries Minister Edhy Prabowo arrested over alleged lobster corruption
Max Walden and Hellena Souisa – Australian Broadcasting Corp. News: 27 November 2020

Edhy Prabowo, Indonesia’s maritime and fisheries minister, was arrested by the country’s anti-graft agency as it investigated possible corruption in the export of lobster larvae.

Saudi Arabia clamps down on corruption in major drive
WION: 27 November 2020

Saudi Arabia’s National Anti-Corruption Commission is pursuing criminal cases involving 226 Saudi citizens and residents. One case involves officers and civil servants from the Ministry of Defense who are implicated in suspicious financial transactions.

For more on this theme:

EU Stresses on More Anti-Corruption Efforts by Afghan Govt
https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-167721

Anti-corruption committee discusses recommendations to improve governance and integrity

Lebanon’s president pledges to revive forensic audit of central bank
https://www.reuters.com/article/lebanon-crisis-idUSL1N2I70GW

Sierra Leone’s former president Koroma interrogated for corruption and money laundering
https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/sierra-leones-former-president-koroma-interrogated-for-corruption-and-money-laundering/

Rooting out corruption in Nepal

South African corruption inquiry to file criminal complaint against Zuma

Young Kenyans have their say about politics, corruption and their sense of belonging

An heiress, a judge and a job: France’s Sarkozy goes on trial for corruption
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Guns, Drugs and Viral Content: Welcome to Cartel TikTok

The world of Cartel TikTok, a genre of videos depicting drug trafficking groups and their activities, is racking up hundreds of thousands of views on the popular social media platform. “It’s narco-marketing,” said Alejandra León Olvera, an anthropologist at Spain’s University of Murcia. The cartels “use these kinds of platforms for publicity, but of course it’s hedonistic publicity.”


Can smart ports curb drug trafficking?
Richard Chelin and Denys Reva – Institute for Security Studies: 27 November 2020

Seizures of large quantities of drugs such as cocaine and heroin at seaports have risen worldwide as COVID-19 safety measures are making maritime routes the preferred target for drug smugglers.

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/can-smart-ports-curb-drug-trafficking

For more on this theme:

Why Asia is losing its war on drugs

U.S. ‘war on drugs’ in Latin America needs overhaul amid COVID-19 challenges, report says

Iraq has seen major increase in drug trafficking, use in post-Saddam era: official
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/291120201

Colombia must restart aerial fumigation to fight drug trafficking, defense minister says

We cannot allow Dhaka to become a drug trafficking route: Daily Star
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/we-cannot-allow-dhaka-to-become-a-drug-trafficking-route-daily-star

Submarines for Rent – The Best Option for Traffickers in Colombia
https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/submarines-for-rent-colombia/

United Nations commission votes to remove marijuana from list of most dangerous drugs
https://thehill.com/policy/international/528320-united-nations-commission-votes-to-remove-marijuana-from-list-of-most

U.S. may start sharing sensitive intelligence with Honduras in drug fight
https://www.reuters.com/article/instant-article/idUSKBN28C0JN
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

In China, Traditional Remedies for COVID-19 Are Fueling the Wildlife Trade
Despina Parthemos – Sentient Media: 1 December 2020

While China’s herb-based medicines are popularizing traditional Chinese medicine worldwide, wildlife traffickers are simultaneously exploiting the ancient system’s use of animal parts to expand their own market.


He Once Trafficked in Rare Birds. Now, He Tells How It’s Done.

The article profiles Johann Zillinger, once infamous as a high-profile bird smuggler. The piece offers a complex portrait of its subject, who continues to have an intense fixation on birds and seems more than willing to share stories about the illegal activities he once took part in (and spent time in prison for).


For more on this theme:
Africa’s last known white giraffe fitted with tracking device to stop poachers

TRAFFIC and the National Assembly of Viet Nam plan strengthened wildlife legislation and communications

Roque to protectors of illegal logging, mining: There’s blood on your hands

Paraguay whistleblowers allege illegal deforestation cover up

Tree-planting now a requirement for PUV franchise starting December

Curbing illegal mining in the Great Lakes Region amid COVID-19
https://www.miningreview.com/gold/illegal-resources-great-lakes/

Pangolin smuggling: The next coronavirus time bomb?

New Research Shows Wildlife Trade Plays Pivotal Role In Virus Transmission

Mako Sharks Gutted and Tossed on a Chilean Landfill
ORGANIZED CRIME

Going Door to Door: Mexico City’s Response To Child Recruitment
Katie Jones – InSight Crime: 24 November 2020

Up until 2012, Mexico’s government had firmly denied the existence of child recruitment by criminal groups in the nation. Now, officials in Mexico City have launched a new program to stop criminal syndicates from enlisting minors.


For more on this theme:
Contraband Turns to Bloodshed Between Ecuador and Peru

ECOSOC chief calls for boosting int’l cooperation to combat organized crime

Criminal gangs are making billions from fake medical supplies during COVID
https://spectator.us/gangs-billions-fake-medical-supplies-covid/
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Internet Governance and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Part 6: Articles 18-19
Klaus Stoll – CircleID: 1 December 2020

Internet governance needs guiding principles from which policymaking and acceptable behavior are derived. Such governance rules can and should start with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.


For more on this theme:
(India) Delhi Government School Students To Get Lessons On Responsible Use Of Social Media

(Global) Children and the Internet at UN Internet Governance Forum: Issues around gaming, online harms, education

(Global) Universal domain name acceptance: Notes from the Internet Governance Forum

INTERNET FREEDOM

In India, a Clash of Digital Innovation and Internet Censorship
Sandali Handagama and Jaspreet Kalra – Yahoo Finance: 25 November 2020

In India, speaking out on the internet can be dangerous. But with over 700 million internet users, India’s booming digital market collides with internet censorship or outright bans.


For more on this theme:
(Pakistan) In Pakistan, social media platforms risk bans under new ‘draconian’ rules

(China, Tibet) From Public Space To Cyberspace: The CCP’s Increasing Oppression Of Tibet

(Ethiopia) Journalists Struggle Through Information Blackout in Ethiopia
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Overcoming Healthcare’s Cybersecurity Challenges
Vishal Salvi – InfoSecurity: 1 December 2020

Recent cyber attacks against COVID-19 vaccine development facilities highlight a broader issue with health care security globally. The challenge is that the industry is often an easier target than it should be.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Defense Official Calls Cyber Resilience Critical to Protecting Systems, Continuing the Mission

(U.S., Global) To enhance data security, federal privacy legislation is just a start

(U.S.) New internet browsing tools bolster DoD cybersecurity

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Exclusive: Suspected North Korean hackers targeted COVID vaccine maker AstraZeneca – sources
Jack Stubbs – Reuters: 27 November 2020

Suspected North Korean hackers have tried to break into the systems of British drugmaker AstraZeneca, as the company races to deploy its vaccine for the COVID-19 virus.

https://www.reuters.com/article/technologyNews/idUSKBN2871A2

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Audit found ‘significant risks’ in Baltimore County schools’ computer network
https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-county/bs-md-co-bcps-audit-20201126-5yzdymo5bzge3ucxsspxhp74i-story.html

(U.S.) FBI warns of BEC scammers using email auto-forwarding in attacks

(Global) It’s hard to keep a big botnet down: TrickBot sputters back toward full health
https://www.cyberscoop.com/trickbot-status-microsoft-cyber-command-takedown/

(Global) Mysterious phishing campaign targets organizations in COVID-19 vaccine cold chain
CYBER CRIME

The Emerging Ransomware-As-A-Service Economy
Robert Vamosi – Forbes: 27 November 2020

Ransomware is now a service, according to Jennifer Ayers, a senior director at the cyber security company CrowdStrike. That means only a few people are needed to create the new and more sophisticated ransomware we’re seeing today. “What they then do,” she said, “is give the affiliates a copy of the ransomware and allow them to engage in attacks on the behalf of the ransomware operator.”


For more on this theme:

(Global) AI could be the next big defence against cybercrime

(Global) Cryptocurrency miners were ‘distraction technique’ in APT’s espionage campaigns, Microsoft says
https://www.crypterscoop.com/cryptocurrency-miners-apt32-microsoft/

(U.K.) Why the public sector is an increasing target for cyber criminals

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

In remote, offline Kyrgyzstan, the best of the internet comes in a box
Eurasianet: 25 November 2020

Since 2018, the Kyrgyzstan chapter of the Internet Society has been bringing digital resources to remote schools that might otherwise have no internet connection — and thus no way to access curricula during the pandemic.


For more on this theme:

(E.U.) ICC backs Spain’s candidacy to seat future European Union Cybersecurity Centre

(Africa) UNESCO Internet Universality Indicators Advancing digital cooperation in Africa

(Togo) Togo: Could more digitalization be the solution?
MASS SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

**China Runs Trials of Biometric Online ID Card in Two Provinces**
*Gao Feng and Siu Fung Lau – Radio Free Asia: 27 November 2020*

Chinese authorities rolled out an online ID system based on biometrics that is better able to track its citizens’ online activities than the current system, according to Radio Free Asia.


*For more on this theme:*

(Global) Facial-recognition research needs an ethical reckoning
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03256-7

(Global) Employee surveillance software demand increased as workers transitioned to home working

(China) Artist proves how difficult it is to avoid Chinese surveillance
https://www.inkstonenews.com/society/artist-proves-how-difficult-it-avoid-chinese-surveillance/article/3110696
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

What to Do About the Children of the Islamic State
Vera Mironova – Foreign Policy: 25 November 2020

What to do with the children of ISIS fighters is a crucial question. In countries with a long history of an insurgency, cases of children joining their fathers in combat are not rare. At the same time, these are children, and the world should not give them up for gone.


Islamic State Wilayat Khorasan: Phony Caliphate or bona fide province?
Siddhant Kishore – Observer Research Foundation: 30 November 2020

While there is raging debate about whether the Taliban and the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) are foes or operational allies, there is little doubt that ISKP continues to pose a threat to the ongoing peace process and to Afghan security.

https://www.orfonline.org/research/islamic-state-wilayat-khorasan-phony-caliphate-or-bona-fide-province/

For more on this theme:

British hero who tackled ISIS gunman not willing ‘to sit in the corner and die’

Court Considers Whether Woman Who Joined ISIS As A Teen Is Allowed To Return To U.K.

Islamic State Claims Deadly Kabul Rocket Attack

No Way Home: Former IS Detainees Doomed to Limbo in Iraq
https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/no-way-home-former-detainees-doomed-limbo-iraq

Islamic State Khorasan Province’s Peshawar Seminary Attack and War Against Afghan Taliban Hanafis

ISIS can regroup in Rojava camps as teens come of age: top Kurdish official
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/28112020

ISIS Supporters Slam Afghan Taliban And Al-Qaeda Over Taliban Delegation’s Meeting In Doha With Iranian Ambassador
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Nigeria’s super camps leave civilians exposed to terrorists
Malik Samuel – Institute for Security Studies: 30 November 2020

Last year, the Nigerian military started pulling soldiers into bigger, stronger and better equipped camps. This “super camp strategy” sought to bolster the military’s combat posture and enhance its resistance to Boko Haram attacks on its bases. However, terrorists are taking advantage of the space created by this new military strategy. They’re moving around more freely, deepening their roots in communities and strengthening their supply chains.

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/nigerias-super-camps-leave-civilians-exposed-to-terrorists

Far-right terrorism grows in West as global deaths from attacks hit five-year low
Tracey Shelton – Australian Broadcasting Corp. News: 25 November 2020

The 2020 Global Terrorism Index has found that deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year since peaking in 2014. But far-right attacks have increased by 250% globally, to a level not seen in the past 50 years, with the pandemic likely to exacerbate the trend.


Full report:
Global Terrorism Index 2020

For more on this theme:

Why Was Iran Hiding Al Qaeda’s No. 2 in Tehran?
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-was-iran-hiding-al-qaeda’s-no-2-tehran-173064

Taliban Rigging Drones to Drop Bombs, Afghan Spy Chief Says

Saudi Arabia has in place ‘measures to combat terrorist financing’

At Least 110 People Feared Dead in Attack on Farmers in Nigeria

The hunt for jihadists in Africa’s Sahel region

Al-Qaeda’s Maghreb branch has revealed its weakness with new leadership

RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Counter-Radicalization and Female Empowerment Nexus: Can Female Empowerment Reduce the Appeal of Radical Ideologies?
Nima Khorrami – European Eye on Radicalization: 30 November 2020

Can and should female empowerment be considered as an effective counterradicalization tactic, available to states and international and regional organizations?

For more on this theme:
Muslim schools are allies in France’s fight against radicalization – not the cause

Life after al-Shabab: Driving a school bus instead of an armed pickup truck

Josephine Teo: COVID-19 is helping to fuel radicalization

The Radicalization of Bangladeshi Cyberspace

IRREGULAR WARFARE: SOFT POWER

Credit stress hurts new money going into China’s massive infrastructure project, says Moody’s
Yen Nee Lee – CNBC: 24 November 2020

China’s Belt and Road Initiative is being hindered by the coronavirus pandemic and the related financial strains in participating countries.

For more on this theme:
Beijing’s Global Megaphone

Soft Power Policies of East Asian Titans
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/11/16/soft-power-policies-of-east-asian-titans/

China cannot have it both ways on trade
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/china-cannot-have-it-both-ways-trade

Buddhism: A New Tool for China’s “Sharp Power”
http://chinascope.org/archives/25213
IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Beijing’s influence in European Parliament draws fresh scrutiny
Laurens Cerulus – Politico: 26 November 2020

On the face of it, the invitation to a European Union-China Friendship Group event was business as usual in the European Parliament. But the China group showed greater potential – and ambition – than others of its kind. The group is now under scrutiny over concerns that it is too close to Beijing and could be giving China an edge in ongoing trade talks with Brussels.

https://www.politico.eu/article/china-influence-european-parliament-friendship-group/

For more on this theme:

China’s officials step up online attacks
https://share.america.gov/chinas-officials-step-up-online-attacks/

How much disinformation are we sharing online in New Zealand?
https://www.geekzone.co.nz/content.asp?contentId=23407

LEAK: EU ambassadors want disinformation crackdown in Democracy Action Plan

India’s score of banned Chinese apps: 267 — and counting

China’s manipulation of international organizations
https://share.america.gov/chinas-manipulation-of-international-organizations/

China should be ‘totally ashamed’: Scott Morrison demands China take down post

More than 1,000 visiting researchers affiliated with the Chinese military fled the United States this summer, Justice Department says