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**COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)**

**CORRUPTION**

*Reporting corruption in a time of war: The Ukrainian journalists’ dilemma*
Veronika Meklozerova – Politico: 26 January 2023

We face a continual tension between holding the government to account and not wanting the enemy to undermine us by exploiting bad news.


*‘No return to the past’: the man leading Ukraine’s fightback against corruption*
Daniel Boffey – The Guardian: 25 January 2023

Ex-public prosecutor Oleksandr Novikov is on a mission to build a culture of integrity in the war-torn country.


*For more on this theme:*  
**Guatemala: Protect judicial staffers fighting impunity and corruption**
**Zambia’s Former Ruling Party Rejects IMF Allegation of Corruption Under Lungu**
**Corruption scandal in Thai parks agency has far-reaching impacts, activists say**
**Hungary’s New Graft Fighter Says Orban’s System Isn’t Corrupt**
**Corruption is damaging Cyprus economy and society**
https://cyprus-mail.com/2023/01/15/corruption-is-damaging-cyprus-economy-and-society/  
**Corrupt Power Sector Strangles South Africa**
https://www.heritage.org/africa/commentary/corrupt-power-sector-strangles-south-africa  
**Mexican mother confronts loss, corruption and impunity in a ‘femicide nation’**
**Even a corrupt government may transfer resource revenues to citizens**
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug Traffickers' Exploitation of Balkan Ports Requires Regional Response
Sasa Djordjevic – Balkan Insight: 24 January 2023

Criminal networks are the primary illegal users of ports in the Balkans for the trafficking of cocaine, amphetamines and heroin. Tackling them requires greater international police cooperation.


Fentanyl Precursors from China and the American Opioid Epidemic
Martin Purbrick – The Jamestown Foundation: 19 January 2023

The fentanyl epidemic was born in America, rose from the supply of precursor chemicals made in China and is now even more destructive as Mexican drug cartels profit from huge demand.


For more on this theme:
China Is Using Mexican Drug Cartels To Supply ‘Deadliest Drug’ Fentanyl Into The US — Drug Enforcement Former Boss

Mexican cartels: The hidden hand behind Colombia's drug trade

Mexico to Review Jailed Drug Lord’s Plea to Come Home
https://www.voanews.com/a/mexico-to-review-jailed-drug-lord-s-plea-to-come-home-/6924647.html

Drug Raid Links Myanmar Army Chief’s Children to Notorious Weapons Dealer

Will the arrest of Ovidio Guzmán, son of infamous cartel leader El Chapo, help Mexico's war on drugs?
https://news.northeastern.edu/2023/01/18/mexico-war-on-drugs-el-chapo-son/

The Big Business of Smuggling Cocaine To Europe: Big Take Podcast

Latin American cocaine cartels bring violence to Europe

Cracking the covert app that exposed Europe's drug gangs

Canberra’s pill-testing results confirm that ‘ketamine’ is often another drug
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Chile's Copper Industry Under Siege as Robbers Attack Ports and Trains
Henry Shuldiner – InSight Crime: 19 January 2023

Train robberies in the desert, cargo containers hijacked from a massive port and tons of cathodes heading to China – Chile is reckoning with the cost of being the world’s leading copper producer.

The agents on Brazil’s illegal logging front line
Reuters: 22 January 2023

Reuters accompanied raids led by Brazilian environmental agents to stop loggers and ranchers illegally clearing the Amazon rainforest. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s government has pledged to end the surging destruction.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFsed6ZZHiY

For more on this theme:

Saving Uganda's Wildlife: The Fight Against Poaching and Illegal Trade

Gorillas, militias, and Bitcoin: Why Congo’s most famous national park is betting big on crypto

Malaysia Could Cut Palm Oil Exports to the European Union

8 of the Top 10 Companies Involved in Illegal Fishing Are Chinese, Study Says

Brazil should work with other countries to curb illegal gold trade, says mining lobby

International Cooperation Is Critical to Illegal Fishing Fight

Eliminating fisheries crime calls for innovative partnerships. WWF just helped launch one.

More than half of reef sharks and rays threatened with extinction, study shows
https://news.mongabay.com/2023/01/more-than-half-of-reef-sharks-and-rays-threatened-with-extinction-study-shows/
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Making The Internet Trustworthy With Distributed Security And Data Governance
Julian Durand – Forbes: 19 January 2023
The internet, humanity's most disruptive invention, has transformed industries and revolutionized how people interact.

For more on this theme:
(North Africa) The North African Forum on Internet Governance to be held in Tripoli in May

(Global) Building an AI governance strategy that works
https://venturebeat.com/ai/building-an-ai-governance-strategy-that-works/

(India, Global) What is the role of metaverse in India's e-governance

INTERNET FREEDOM

Iran second worst country for internet censorship in 2022 following protests: Report
Jennifer Bell – Al Arabiya : 24 January 2023
Iran repeatedly shut off the internet in parts of country and blocked access to social media platforms to curb protests sparking from Mahsa Amini’s death.

For more on this theme:
(China) Chinese platform restricts streams after players use politically sensitive handles

(China) Chinese censorship of COVID criticism remains strong

(Iran) Iran Disrupts Internet Access During University Entrance Exams
https://circleid.com/posts/20230119-iran-disrupts-internet-access-during-university-entrance-exams
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Australia fronts International Counter Ransomware Taskforce
Samira Sarraf – CSO: 23 January 2023

The unit is a result of the International Counter Ransomware Initiative — initially led by the U.S. government — and now counts 37 members globally, including the European Union.

For more on this theme:

(Global) World Economic Forum Launches the Centre for Trustworthy Technology
https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/01/18/world-economic-forum-launches-the-centre-for-trustworthy-technology/

(U.K.) UK schools build cyber resilience
https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/uk-schools-build-cyber-resilience

(Global) Here’s how emerging economies are investing in their digital future

(Australia) Cyber Infrastructure Security Centre restructured

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Yum Brands says nearly 300 restaurants in UK impacted due to cyber attack
Reuters: 19 January 2023

Yum Brands said a ransomware attack affected some information technology systems of the company, which led to closures in the United Kingdom for a day.

For more on this theme:

(U.K.) Royal Mail making limited progress on ransomware recovery

(U.S.) Riot Games Halts Work After Cyber-Attack

(Canada) Canadian tool manufacturer hit by cyber attack

(Norway) Cyber Attack Hits 1,000 Merchant Ships as Norway Firm Targeted
CYBERCRIME
Fewer ransomware victims are paying up. But there’s a catch
Danny Palmer – ZDNet: 23 January 2023
Cybercriminals are finding it harder to make money from ransomware attacks. Still, that doesn’t mean ransomware is less dangerous.
https://www.zdnet.com/article/fewer-ransomware-victims-are-paying-up-but-theres-a-catch/

For more on this theme:
(Global) Cyber-Threat Actors Tailoring Attacks to Key Sectors
(U.S., Global) How Public and Private Entities Can Fight Cybercrime
(Global) Island hopping — How cyber criminals are capitalizing on poorly defended partners
https://www.biometricupdate.com/202301/island-hopping-how-cyber-criminals-are-capitalizing-on-poorly-defended-partners

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION
Ukraine calls for ‘Cyber United Nations’ amid Russian attacks
Maggie Miller – Politico: 15 January 2023
A top cyber official proposed the idea as Moscow targets Ukraine’s infrastructure.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Combatting Growing Cyber Threats to Critical Infrastructure
(Global) Securing Critical Infrastructure with Zero Trust
(U.S.) HSToday Q&A: CISA Infrastructure Security Leader Mussington on Recent Critical Infrastructure Threats
(U.S.) Cybersecurity Under the Ocean: Submarine Cables and US National Security
(Europe) Why Europe’s DORA regulation is a band aid but not a cure
ISIS ATTACK ON CHINESE NATIONALS IN KABUL UNLEASHES WAVE OF ANTI-CHINESE JIHADIST PROPAGANDA
Lucas Webber – The Jamestown Foundation: 6 January 2023
On December 12, militants of the Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate assaulted Chinese nationals and Taliban officials in a hotel. The deadly attack prompted a surge of anti-Chinese messaging in different languages across social media platforms.

GERMAN LAWMAKERS RECOGNISE ISLAMIC STATE CRIMES AGAINST YAZIDIS AS GENOCIDE
Reuters: 19 January 2023
German lawmakers acknowledge genocide committed by the Islamic State group against the minority group in Iraq in 2014.

For more on this theme:
Rise of Islamic State-Khorasan in Afghanistan has grave implications for India

How the Targeted Killing of ISIS Leaders Revives the Terror Group’s Ideology

U.S., Partners Find Success in Mission to Defeat ISIS

Thematic Expert — impact of the ISIS conflict on public health

CENTCOM Commander Lauds Iraq’s Repatriation of al-Hol Residents

UN: Al-Qaeda and ISIS terrorist groups driving insecurity in Mali

ISIS Attacks Still Claim Iraqi Lives Five Years after Defeat
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

A Harried Hezbollah
Mohanad Hage Ali – Carnegie: 25 January 2023

The group is facing challenges in Lebanon and the region but has limited options for dealing with them.

https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/88876

For more on this theme:

Informal Networks, Terrorist Entrepreneurs, and an “Alliance Hub”: Reflecting on Cooperation between the Japanese Red Army and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – Special Operations Groups

Supreme Men, Subjected Women: Gender Inequality and Violence in Jihadist, Far-Right, and Male Supremacist Ideologies

Somalia’s fight against Al Shabaab, the group who must not be named

Wagner Group leads Russia’s African front in cold war with the West

Combatting Cyberterrorism via Spatial Insights

The Sahel Region in West Africa, a Top-10 Conflict Spot to Watch in 2023, Says Crisis Group

The Azadi Briefing: Taliban and Pakistan On Collision Course Over Cross-Border Attacks
https://www.rferl.org/a_azadi-briefing-taliban-pakistan-cross-border-attacks-afghanistan_32212301.html

Understanding Terrorism: A Semantic Conundrum
https://theowp.org/reports/understanding-terrorism-a-semantic-conundrum/

Ask the Experts: How Can Renewed U.S.-African Partnerships Counter Terrorist Threats?
https://www.usip.org/blog/2023/01/ask-experts-how-can-renewed-us-african-partnerships-counter-terrorist-threats
CRIME AND CONFLICT

European court rules Ukraine cases against Russia admissible
Mike Corder – The Associated Press: 25 January 2023

Europe's top human-rights court ruled that it can adjudicate cases brought by the Netherlands and Ukraine against Russia for alleged violations in eastern Ukraine in 2014, including the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17.


For more on this theme:

UK joins international push to hold Russia accountable for Ukraine invasion

Climate-fueled Violence and Displacement in the Lake Chad Basin: Focus on Chad and Cameroon

Honduras Makes Progress in Tamping Violence — But at What Cost?

The Bitter Truth Behind Russia's Looting of Ukrainian Art

Behind the Lines: Russia Steps up Ukrainian Deportations
https://cepa.org/article/behind-the-lines-russia-steps-up-ukrainian-deportations/

Putin’s Crimes Against Peace in Ukraine: “Friction”-Based Risks of Nuclear Conflict

Resilience to organised crime: new insights from West Africa
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/resilience-organised-crime-insights-west-africa/

Cameroon could face new atrocity crimes after deploying government forces to counter armed separatists

How Will US Support Justice For Ukraine? – Interview
https://www.eurasiareview.com/26012023-how-will-us-support-justice-for-ukraine-interview/

Myanmar military accused of war crimes, genocide in German suit
CRIME AND CONFLICT

For more on this theme:

Violence in Brazil’s Amazon are also crimes against humanity, lawyers tell international court

What next for northern Africa’s conflict zones?
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2236511

What distinguishes war crimes from other criminal offences?
https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/-what-distinguishes-war-crimes-from-other-criminal-offences--48199286

Hague Tribunal’s Blind Spots Marred Wartime Sexual Violence Cases

Sudan: Progress in Darfur militia leader trial, but Government cooperation wanes

Former Members of the BiH Army convicted for Crimes against Civilians
https://sarajevotimes.com/former-members-of-the-bih-army-convicted-for-crimes-against-civilians/

Russia must be punished for its war crimes
https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3822023-russia-must-be-punished-for-its-war-crimes/

The Reckoning Project: Ukraine Testifies
https://iwpr.net/impact/reckoning-project-ukraine-testifies

Ukraine’s Zelenskiy urges U.N. action on deportations

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

How Russia loses allies amid the war in Ukraine
Nikola Mikovic – The Interpreter: 27 January 2023
Setbacks in the Kremlin’s campaign are causing regional supporters to think twice about the Eurasian military alliance.

For more on this theme:

How Ukraine Fought Against Russia’s Air War
https://www.lawfareblog.com/how-ukraine-fought-against-russias-air-war

What the Wagner Mercenaries’ Row Reveals About Serbia’s Relations with Russia
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88885

How the War in Ukraine Is Boosting Russian Politicians’ Careers
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88874
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Will Ukraine Wind Up Making Territorial Concessions to Russia?

What the Return of Kremlin Ally Medvedchuk Means for the War in Ukraine
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88849

The Political Considerations Behind Russia's Military Command Chaos
https://jamestown.org/program/the-political-considerations-behind-russias-military-command-chaos/

Prospects for Ukraine's Economy in 2023 Remain Cautiously Optimistic
https://jamestown.org/program/prospects-for-ukraines-economy-in-2023-remain-cautiously-optimistic/

Kyiv Quells Russian Orthodox Church’s Influence Within Ukraine (Part One)
https://jamestown.org/program/kyiv-quells-russian-orthodox-churchs-influence-within-ukraine-part-one/

The Kuban: A Real ‘Wedge’ Between Russia and Ukraine

Iranian Ballistic Missiles Threaten to Change Battlefield Dynamic in Ukraine

Russia's Nagging Arms Production Problems
https://jamestown.org/program/russias-nagging-arms-production-problems/

Putin, Lavrov Set New Accents to Russia's Case for War in Ukraine

Upcoming Spring Draft Set to Be Most Difficult in Russia's Recent History
https://jamestown.org/program/upcoming-spring-draft-set-to-be-most-difficult-in-russias-recent-history/

A People Problem: Learning from Russia’s Failing Efforts to Reconstitute its Depleted Units in Ukraine
https://mwi.usma.edu/a-people-problem-learning-from-russias-failing-efforts-to-reconstitute-its-depleted-units-in-ukraine/

Learning on the Fly: Drones in the Russian-Ukrainian War
https://mwi.usma.edu/learning-on-the-fly-drones-in-the-russian-ukrainian-war/

IntelBrief: Wagner Group Recruiting Prisoners, Criminals, and Felons to Fill its Ranks
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-january-20/

Ukraine: A Real Peace Will Require Change from Russia

Why South Africa continues to be neutral in Ukraine-Russia war

Appealing to Russians to end the war on Ukraine is wasted breath
https://www.politico.eu/article/commentary-ukraine-war-russia-putin-invasion-end/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia expected to increase cyberattacks in Ukraine war — to little effect

Davos Dispatch: Why now is the time for a ‘Ukraine surge’: military, intelligence, economic and other support to defeat Putin
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/inflection-points/davos-dispatch-why-now-is-the-time-for-a-ukraine-surge/

Wartime Ukraine must maintain course from Russian past to European future

Opinion | How Not to Negotiate with Russia

Russia's atrocities in Ukraine, rehearsed in Chechnya

Don't give Russia an inch, former U.S. diplomat says

Our Debt to Ukraine — Payback Time
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-sacrifice-protects-nato-eu-and-democracy/

German and U.S. Tanks Will Be Critical in Ukraine's Next Phase Against Russia

Assessing the Outcomes of Russia's War on Ukraine
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/assessing-outcomes-russias-war-ukraine

Putin's War Costs: Shifting the Burden to the Population
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/putins-war-costs-shifting-burden-population

After Ukraine: Russia's Potential Military and Nuclear Compensation to Iran

Manpower will be crucial for Russia to mount a spring offensive
https://www.politico.eu/article/manpower-will-be-crucial-for-russia-to-mount-a-spring-offensive/

CARICOM's Evolving Foreign Policy Thinking On The Ukraine War – Analysis
https://www.eurasiareview.com/20012023-caricom-evolving-foreign-policy-thinking-on-the-ukraine-war-analysis/

Limits Of Convenience: Why Russia-China Cooperation Won't Last
https://worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/russia-china-ukraine-war
HYBRID THREATS AND IRREGULAR WARFARE

Unmanned Systems in China’s Maritime ‘Gray Zone Operations’
Prakash Panneerselvam – The Diplomat: 23 January 2023

While China’s autonomous underwater technologies are predominantly used for marine scientific research, they can also be used for military activities.

For more on this theme:

Putin is facing defeat in the information war
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putin-is-facing-defeat-in-the-information-war/

A Battle of Hearts and Minds: Propaganda in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

Just War and the Changing Face of Armed Conflict

SE Asia stands firm against China in South China Sea

Protect Unmanned Surface Vessels in the Gray Zone

Drone havoc in Ukraine puts Iran’s asymmetric warfare advantage into sharp relief
https://www.arabnews.com/node/2236621/middle-east

Ukraine Symposium – Ukraine’s “Suicide Drone Boats” and International Law
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/ukraines-suicide-drone-boats-international-law/

Russia Early War Propaganda Campaign in Ukraine Crisis