CONTENTS

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)
Corruption
Drug Trafficking
Trafficking in Scarce or Protected Resources
Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)
Internet Governance
Internet Freedom
Cyber Attacks, Threats and Vulnerabilities
Cyber Capacity Building
Public/Private Partnership
Protection of Intellectual Property
Cyber Exercises and Training

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)
ISIS and Foreign Fighters
Terrorism Around the World
Radicalization and Messaging
Irregular Warfare: Soft Power
Irregular Warfare: Disinformation and Malign Influence
COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

It's time to start treating Ukraine's corrupt judiciary as a criminal syndicate
Mykhailo Zhernakov – Atlantic Council: 1 December 2020

With Ukraine's anti-corruption reforms finally beginning to produce results, the old elites have hit back. The Constitutional Court of Ukraine declared that some powers of the National Agency on Corruption Prevention are unconstitutional. The decision has sparked a political crisis in Ukraine and underlined the scale of the challenge posed by the country's unreformed judiciary.


Region’s defence and security sectors face rising corruption risk
Emerging Europe: 9 December 2020

Transparency International’s Government Defence Integrity Index found that half the Central and Eastern European countries face high risks of corruption in their defense and security sectors.


Full report:
Progress [Un]Made – Defence Governance in Central and Eastern Europe


For more on this theme:

3 ways to fight corruption and restore trust in leadership
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/12/anti-corruption-transparency-restore-trust-in-leadership/

Cairns Aquarium accused of misusing coronavirus funding, referred to Crime and Corruption Commission by State Government


Cash-for-licences scam uncovered in Romania, says anti-corruption agency


A Ruling Party Official’s Arrest Boosts South Africa’s Fight Against Corruption


France’s former ‘Bling-Bling President’ Sarkozy in court on corruption charges

https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-12-01/frances-former-bling-bling-president-sarkozy-court-corruption-charges

GRECO comes down hard on Greece over anti-corruption measures

DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Endless War to Control Northwest Colombia’s Drug Routes
Javier Villalba – InSight Crime: 10 December 2020

The murder of the indigenous governor of Colombia’s Ríos Valle y Boroboro reserve appears to be a demonstration of power by the Urabeños drug gang. The group gained territory across the northern department of Choco with the goal of defeating the National Liberation Army and controlling the area for moving drugs, migrants and weapons.

https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/endless-war-drug-trafficking/

Why Europe’s big cannabis route is so hard to shut
Kostas Koukoumakas – BBC: 7 December 2020

One of the most established drug-trafficking routes in the world runs through the Balkans. The U.S. State Department’s annual drug report this year described Albania as a "home base for transnational organized crime networks involved in trafficking illicit narcotics across Europe and beyond."


For more on this theme:
Sydney’s cocaine obsession fuels gang violence: NSW Police Commissioner

Special Report: Burner phones and banking apps: Meet the Chinese ‘brokers’ laundering Mexican drug money

Mexico’s so-called ‘War on Drugs’ hasn’t been all for naught
https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/mexicos-so-called-war-on-drugs-hasnt-been-all-for-naught/

Irish navy urged to send ships to west Africa to stop smugglers

East Asia, SEA fastest-growing shabu markets – world report

Malaysia’s Narcotics Nightmare – Analysis
https://www.eurasiareview.com/06122020-malaysias-narcotics-nightmare-analysis/

Belgium steps up cocaine trade fight with Port of Antwerp bans, prosecutor

Planned law on narcotics trade to give drug dealers food for thought
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Social Media Used to Sell Exotic Animals in Brazil
Isaac Norris and Katie Jones – InSight Crime: 9 December 2020

In recent years, wildlife traffickers have more heavily relied upon social networking applications to make sales in Brazil, taking advantage of the relative anonymity and global reach such platforms offer. And the use of online platforms has been exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions.

Endemic Corruption Is Reason Behind Alarming Wildlife Trafficking From Nigeria
Timothy Obiezu – Voice of America: 8 December 2020

A new report details how endemic corruption, weak or absent rule of law, low levels of development and hot spots of armed conflict have left the region wide open to exploitation by well-organized transnational criminal gangs. Since 2015, Nigeria has emerged as the world’s primary exit point for ivory and pangolin scales trafficked from Africa to Asia.

Full report:
Out of Africa: How West and Central Africa have become the epicentre of ivory and pangolin scale trafficking to Asia

For more on this theme:
Africa’s Pandemic-fueled Conservation Crisis

Illegal logging, a problem afflicting the beekeeping industry in Yucatan

‘Timber Mafia’ threatens the future of Romania’s ancient forests
https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/11/26/romania-disappearing-forests

Kenyan farmers and young guides enlisted to protect city forests

Mobile phone App to support fight against illegal fishing launched

Insights from the Incarcerated: An assessment of the illicit supply chain in wildlife in South Africa
https://www.traffic.org/publications/reports/insights-from-the-incarcerated/

Coronavirus risk grows as animals move through wildlife trade
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Child-trafficking in Mali increasing because of conflict and COVID-19
U.N. Refugee Agency: 1 December 2020

More children have been trafficked, forced to work in gold mines and to fight as soldiers in Mali this year as conflict worsened and COVID-19 shut schools, according to the United Nations.

U.S. Supreme Court Assesses Corporate Complicity in Child Slavery
David J. Scheffer – Council on Foreign Relations: 9 December 2020

Should U.S. companies be held responsible for child slavery on West African farms where cocoa beans are harvested? The top U.S. court’s decision could have major consequences for chocolate companies and global supply chains.

For more on this theme:

Brazil’s Dirty List – Not Making a Dent in Modern Slavery
https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/brazil-dirty-list-modern-slavery/

Croatia Urged to Toughen its Response to Human Trafficking

The pandemic is fuelling slavery and sexual exploitation, UN experts warn

UNESCO trains youth organizations on Migration in Africa and Europe

Women who escaped slavery turn anti-trafficking crusaders in India
https://news.trust.org/item/20201201115034-lfjem/

Child sex trafficking: It’s probably not what you think it is


US Expresses Concern About Bangladesh’s Transfer of Rohingya to Remote Island
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Can We Advance Policies Towards a Safe Transnational Internet Market for Medicines?
Mark Datysgeld – CircleID: 9 December 2020

This article focuses on the sale of medicines using the internet. No clear norms have been advanced that address the topic.


For more on this theme:

(Global) UN Internet Governance Forum: Risks and regulation of AI in healthcare
https://www.medianama.com/2020/12/223-igf-ai-healthcare/

(Global) Governance of AI in Global Pulse’s policy work: Zooming in on Human Rights and Ethical Frameworks

(China) Huawei’s Global Advancement of Alternative Internet Protocols
https://jamestown.org/program/huaweis-global-advancement-of-alternative-internet-protocols/

INTERNET FREEDOM

Kazakhstan: As election beckons, authorities tighten control on internet
Almaz Kumenov – Eurasianet: 7 December 2020

In the run-up to next month’s parliamentary election, authorities in Kazakhstan have mounted another drive to snoop on the public’s internet usage and limit access to online resources deemed suspect. This control measure has been sold by the government as a digital security initiative.

https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-as-election-beckons-authorities-tighten-control-on-internet

For more on this theme:

(Africa) Why internet shutdowns are bad for Africa and its future

(China) Tripadvisor shares drop following China app ban
https://techcrunch.com/2020/12/08/tripadvisor-china-banned/

(Europe) EU wants to add internet hate speech as a crime
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Research: Millions of smart devices vulnerable to hacking

Researchers at the cyber security firm Forescout Technologies say they have identified vulnerabilities in software widely used by millions of connected devices — flaws that could be exploited by hackers to penetrate business and home computer networks and disrupt them.
https://apnews.com/article/hacking-software-17d67bd69718c2d0d5f6e2493285abc2

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) FBI and Homeland Security warn of APT attacks on US think tanks
(U.S., Global) Cyberattacks Discovered on Vaccine Distribution Operations
(U.S., Europe) EU drug regulator hacked, data on COVID-19 vaccine accessed
https://apnews.com/article/technology-europe-hacking-coronavirus-pandemic-308f9ff-c3edd95946262f1c76dba9959
(UAE, Israel) UAE target of cyber attacks after Israel deal, official says

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

The GCC’s digital economy is growing, but risks must be managed
Dominik Treeck – Atlantic Council: 9 December 2020

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) governments seeking to diversify their economies and position for growth are rightly focused on the importance of digitization. However, scale and sustainability require serious attention to associated risks.

For more on this theme:
(Asia) World Bank highlights importance of bridging Digital Divide in Central Asia
(U.S.) Preparing the cyber workforce of the future
(Europe) High-speed internet lines to surge in Europe as virus boosts demand: Study
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

World Economic Forum establishes principles so cybercrime is not ‘so ridiculously easy’
Teri Robinson – SC Magazine: 8 December 2020

The World Economic Forum’s Partnership against Cybercrime Working Group’s recommendations for organizations facing cyber crime challenges include: promoting principles for public/private cooperation to combat cyber crime, taking collaborative action to disrupt cyber crime ecosystems and partnering to combat global cyber crime.


Full report:
Partnership against Cybercrime

For more on this theme:
(Global) Acronis and World Economic Forum Partner to Combat Global Cybercrime

(Global) Expand Internet connectivity so no one gets left behind, Google CEO urges

(Africa) Liquid Telecom – It is time for African businesses to partner with educators
https://www.htxt.co.za/2020/12/07/liquid-telecom-it-is-time-for-african-businesses-to-partner-with-educators/

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Brazil Hits Enter on Digital Piracy Crackdown
Alessandro Ford – InSight Crime: 1 December 2020

Brazil launched a nationwide operation against digital piracy in conjunction with United States and United Kingdom law enforcement, but doubts remain about how connected the practice is to more traditional aspects of organized crime.


For more on this theme:
(Global) Cybercrime could cost the world almost $1 trillion in 2020, McAfee says
https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/cybercrime-could-cost-the-world-almost-1-trillion/article33269047.ece

(India, U.S.) India, US Sign Deal on Intellectual Property Cooperation
https://tntribune.com/india-us-sign-deal-on-intellectual-property-cooperation/

(China, U.S.) Viewpoint: China Exploiting Supply Chain Vulnerabilities
https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2020/12/9/china-exploiting-supply-chain-vulnerabilities
CYBER EXERCISES AND TRAINING

Hunt Forward Estonia: Estonia, US strengthen partnership in cyber domain with joint operation
U.S. Cyber Command: 3 December 2020


For more on this theme:

(Global) Engaging Remote Workers to Defend Information and Systems With Gamification

(Israel) Cyber training program for released soldiers wins Innovation Award
https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/cyber-training-program-for-released-soldiers-wins-innovation-award-649450

(U.S.) Army Making Big Push to Train, Retain Coders
https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2020/11/30/army-making-big-push-to-train-retain-coders
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Mozambique Terrorist Group Poised to Establish an Islamic Emirate

Lawrence A. Franklin – Gatestone Institute: 3 December 2020

Radical Islamists from Kenya and Tanzania have teamed up with ISIS to transform what was initially a low-intensity ethnic rebellion into a full-fledged Islamic jihad against Mozambique’s central government.

https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/16816/mozambique-terrorism-islamists

Islamic State Hind Province’s Kashmir Campaign and Pan-Indian Capabilities

Animesh Roul – The Jamestown Foundation: 3 December 2020

This article explores the emergence and consolidation of Islamic State Hind and how Kashmir remains Indian jihadism’s epicenter in terms of Islamic State media and armed campaigns in the country.


For more on this theme:

Islamic State increases attacks in Iraq’s Sunni areas


Islamic State in Afghanistan is a Major Threat


Charging the ‘Beatles’: Inside the case against IS militants

https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-islamic-state-group-william-barr-only-on-ap-syria-b307a-4ecd3b59d4bff461b18d6e957ab

39 Islamic State-Linked Abu Sayyaf Militants Surrender in the Philippines


US Offers Resources to Help ‘Contain, Degrade and Defeat’ Mozambique Insurgency


Finnish minister to face no charges over push to bring home Islamic State children


Islamic State Fighters’ First Claimed Attack in Tanzania: Strategic Calculations and Political Context


Uzbekistan repatriates women and children linked to Islamic State in Syria

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Lebanon’s Hezbollah suing those accusing it of port blast
The Associated Press: 4 December 2020
A former Lebanese Christian member of Parliament and a website affiliated with a Christian party in Lebanon are Hezbollah’s latest targets in the legal arena.
https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-beirut-lebanon-militant-groups-671cb12bc0366ad53d79089e4aceb3a4

Mozambique’s Crisis Requires a New Playbook to Fight Extremism
Leanne Erdberg Steadman; Bethany L. McGann; Colin Thomas-Jensen – United States Institute of Peace: 3 December 2020
Militarized approaches to terrorism have limited utility, particularly in Africa. USIP argues that the focus should be on addressing what drives conflict.

For more on this theme:
Al-Qaeda: The core problem
Al-Qaeda fighters in Syria return to Yemen’s Marib
Tanzania Teams Up with Mozambique to Contain Terrorists
https://www.voanews.com/africa/tanzania-teams-mozambique-contain-terrorists
Turkey remains a transit hub for foreign terrorists, UN report reveals
EU Task Force Takuba in Mali
https://www.cfr.org/blog/eu-task-force-takuba-mali
Indonesia: Putting the Sigi Attack in Context
Jihadism in Spain: a silent but real threat
Mali Interim Government Considers Talks With Islamist Militants
Reports of Al-Qaeda’s Demise are Greatly Exaggerated | Opinion
https://www.newsweek.com/reports-al-qaedas-demise-are-greatly-exaggerated-opinion-1552904
Al-Shabaab Militias ‘Smuggle’ Small Arms Through Somaliland

11  Return to Table of Contents
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Christchurch terrorist’s radicalisation shows the limits of surveillance and censorship
Stilgherrian – ZDNet: 9 December 2020

The final report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain (mosques) on 15 March 2019 was published last week. New Zealand’s inquiry found YouTube and Facebook were central to the right-wing mass murderer’s radicalization but detecting the lone-wolf attacker would have required connecting dots that the social media platforms didn’t have.


Ex-Boko Haram fighters deradicalized, but still unreconciled
Shola Lawal and Sani Adam – The Christian Science Monitor: 8 December 2020

Can radical militants be rehabilitated? Deradicalization is only part of the equation. The rest depends on wounded communities deciding whether to accept them back — and deep, difficult dialogue.


For more on this theme:

Europe Doubles Down on Online Terrorist Content
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/transportation/europe-doubles-down-on-online-terrorist-content/

Teaching anti-terrorism: how France and England use schools to counter radicalisation

Counts must build community trust in combating extremism

Islamist referrals to counter-extremism scheme rise for first time since 2016

Islamic Defenders Front & the rise of radicalization in Indonesia and Popular Front of India fanning radicalization in India- An Inside View

Indonesia’s Program to De-radicalize MIT Militants Off-Target, Analysts Say
IRREGULAR WARFARE: SOFT POWER

China’s inroads into Slovak universities: Protecting academic freedoms from authoritarian malign interference
Matej Šimalčík and Adam Kalivoda – Central European Institute of Asian Studies: December 2020

This report attempts to provide the most comprehensive record to date of how Slovak academic institutions engage with China and evaluate the nature, volume and transparency of these interactions.

For more on this theme:
Twitter attack will only further harm China’s collapsing soft power
https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/twitter-attack-will-only-further-harm-chinas-collapsing-soft-power/

U.S. ends exchange programs with China, calling them ‘propaganda’

China’s soft power is failing in Australia, despite opening Confucius institutes all over
https://theprint.in/opinion/chinas-soft-power-is-failing-in-australia-despite-opening-confucius-institutes-all-over/557202/

Scotland must be wary of China’s bid to spread its influence

IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Russian Disinformation Popularizes Sputnik V Vaccine in Africa

In Africa, perceptions of Russia’s flagship vaccine, Sputnik V, are largely positive, even though it didn’t undergo the rigorous clinical trials that other vaccines have. Sputnik V seems to be as much about public relations and Russian soft power as about stopping the spread of COVID-19.
https://www.cfr.org/blog/russian-disinformation-popularizes-sputnik-v-vaccine-africa

For more on this theme:
China’s online meddling goes beyond the Great Firewall
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/china-s-online-meddling-goes-beyond-great-firewall

EU vows to crack down on disinformation targeting democracies

CSIS accuses Russia, China and Iran of spreading COVID-19 disinformation