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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Corruption endangers world’s shrinking fisheries
Fu Ting, Grace Ekpu and Helen Wieffering – The Associated Press: 10 February 2023

“Fisheries corruption can have devastating impacts on marine ecosystems and local communities that may depend on them,” says Ben Freitas, the manager of ocean policy at the World Wildlife Fund.
https://apnews.com/article/corruption-threatens-ocean-fisheries-de31ff22ca73def5b7d6c8e299099a2

For more on this theme:

Fighting Corruption in Wartime Ukraine
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/fighting-corruption-wartime-ukraine

Repression, Debt, Corruption and Human Trafficking: Hun Sen’s Cambodian Legacy

Tokyo Olympic bribery scandal rolls on; company apologizes

Encouraging Signs that Corruption is being Successfully Tackled in Parts of Africa

Vietnam’s Anti-Corruption Drive Can Never Go Far Enough
https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/vietnams-anti-corruption-drive-can-never-go-far-enough/

Malaysian Anti-Graft Authorities Freeze Opposition Party Accounts

Xi’s Anti-Corruption Campaign: Yunnan Province in Focus
https://jamestown.org/program/xi-s-anti-corruption-campaign-yunnan-province-in-focus/

Ukraine’s defence minister declares ‘zelo tolerance’ on corruption
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-defence-minister-declares-zelo-tolerance-corrup-2023-02-09/

Jamaica PM Facing Anti-Corruption Scrutiny

Corruption and war: two scourges that feed off each other
https://theconversation.com/corruption-and-war-two-scourges-that-feed-off-each-other-199265

Malawi Drops Charges Against Anti-Corruption Chief
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Now That Hydra’s Gone, the Crypto-Based Dark Net Drug Trade Is Still Trying a Comeback
Kyle Barr – Gizmodo: 9 February 2023

The darknet drug marketplace took a major hit last year with the end of Hydra. The illicit digital drug trade has yet to fully recover, according to blockchain data.

As ‘Tranq Dope’ Arrives in a Philadelphia Neighborhood, So Do Alarming Health Challenges

The veterinary tranquilizer xylazine — the choice du jour of local drug dealers to cut fentanyl — can lead to necrotic ulcers and leaves street medics and physicians confused about how best to deal with this wave of the opioid crisis.

For more on this theme:

In drug bust, Lao police seize half a ton of crystal meth in Golden Triangle

Leader of Drug Trafficking Organization Pleads Guilty to Trafficking Thousands of Kilograms of Cocaine

How surveillance tech helped protect power — and the drug trade — in Honduras

How Belgium became Europe’s port of call for cocaine

Comparing the Dangers of Fentanyl and Heroin
https://amuedge.com/fentanyl-heroin-dangers

Thailand Tightens Laws on Meth Possession Amid Regional Drug Boom

UNODC: Counterfeit medicines kill 270,000 people a year in the Sahel

Customs vows to combat drug trafficking via dark web
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

AI machines could report illegal wildlife trade
Open Access Government: 15 February 2023
Illegal wildlife trade commonly takes place in online marketplaces, involving anything from advertising to selling live animals or animal products.

For more on this theme:

Ecuador says illegal mining is national security threat

China’s Rampant Illegal Fishing Is Endangering the Environment and the Global Economy

Mexico, NGO double down on efforts to protect world’s smallest porpoise

New surveillance technology used in Australia — first trial to stamp out illegal fishing in WA

Tougher punishment against wildlife trafficking from today
https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2023/02/01/tougher-punishment-against-wildlife-trafficking-from-today/

Thai government turns its sights on illegal coral trade

The illegal jaguar trade is thriving online. Why aren’t governments stopping it?

Lula’s Amazon pledge looks distant as Brazil battles deforestation

Fighting Lebanon’s illegal logging scourge
https://en.qantara.de/content/fighting-lebanons-illegal-logging-scourge

Heriberto Araujo: ‘Small farmers can help save the Amazon’

Amazonian countries must act together to reverse rainforest loss, experts say
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

EU countries mull strengthening cooperation on digital diplomacy
Luca Bertuzzi – EURACTIV: 15 February 2023

European governments seem to agree that the digital dimension of the EU’s foreign policy needs to be enhanced. But how to do it still needs to be decided.


For more on this theme:
(Global) Global Standards Collaboration: Is It Possible?
https://circleid.com/posts/20230203-global-standards-collaboration-is-it-possible

(Global) Lessons From the World’s Two Experiments in AI Governance
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/14/lessons-from-world-s-two-experiments-in-ai-governance-pub-89035

INTERNET FREEDOM

Russia, India and Iran Imposed the Most Internet Censorship in 2022
Novinite: 14 February 2023

More than 4 billion people around the world were affected last year by suspensions of access to the internet and social networks, with about half of the cases in Asia, according to a report by the Dutch company Surfshark.

https://www.novinite.com/articles/218853/Russia%2C+India+and+Iran+Imposed+the+Most+Internet+Censorship+in+2022

For more on this theme:
(China) China to crack down on online ‘rumors’ amid public distrust of official statements

(India) Indians find easy workarounds to watch BBC’s banned documentary on Modi

(Turkey) RSF reports many press freedom violations since Türkiye’s earthquake

(Cambodia) Cambodia’s Hun Sen shuts down independent media outlet Voice of Democracy

(Kashmir) Kashmir Registers Highest Number of Internet Restrictions Globally
CYBER STRATEGY AND STATECRAFT

Pending National Cyber Strategy to Feature ‘Strong Stand’ on Quantum Cryptography
Alexandra Kelley – Nextgov: 15 February 2023

A top United States cyber official discusses the path of transitioning public and private networks to post-quantum cryptographic standards, and emphasizes data inventory in organizations’ efforts to transition cryptographic systems.


For more on this theme:

(Europe) Europe To Tackle Cyber in New Law
https://www.afcea.org/signal-media/cyber-edge/europe-tackle-cyber-new-law

(Pakistan) Cyber deterrence: Is it possible?

(India) Digitalizing India: a force to reckon with

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Cyberattack targets NATO Special Operations HQ websites: Reports
Al Mayadeen: 13 February 2023

NATO Special Operations Headquarters websites were the target of a cyberattack that remains under investigation.

https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/cyberattack-targets-nato-special-operations-hq-websites:-rep

For more on this theme:

(Global) The Ukraine war is fuelling and obscuring cyberattacks
https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2023/02/06/how-the-ukraine-war-is-fuelling-and-obscuring-cyberattacks/

(Russia, Ukraine, Global) New Info-Stealer Discovered as Russia Prepares Fresh Offensive

(Global) Reddit was hit with a phishing attack. How it responded is a lesson for everyone
https://www.zdnet.com/article/reddit-was-hit-with-a-phishing-attack-how-it-responded-is-a-lesson-for-everyone/

(North Korea, Global) North Korea ransomware targets hospitals to fund digital spycraft, US agencies warn
https://cyberscoop.com/north-korea-ransomware-hospital/
CYBERCRIME

Seoul hits North Korea with its first sanctions for cybercrime
Thomas Maresca – UPI: 10 February 2023

South Korea imposed sanctions against North Korea in response to cybercrimes that Seoul says are funding the secretive state’s illicit nuclear and missile development programs.

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2023/02/10/North-Korea-hackers-cybercrime-sanc-
tions-cryptocurrency/1951676018790/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Top Cybercrime Trends Organisations Should Take Note Of In 2023
https://brandspurng.com/2023/02/02/top-cybercrime-trends-organisations-should-take-note-of-
in-2023/

(Global) How Cybercriminals Are Operationalizing Money Laundering and What to Do About It
https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities-threats/how-cybercriminals-are-operationalizing-mon-
ey-laundering-and-what-to-do-about-it

(Global) The Lawfare Podcast: How Cyber Criminals Can Exploit ChatGPT
https://www.lawfareblog.com/lawfare-podcast-how-cyber-criminals-can-exploit-chatgpt

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

New industry group to boost critical infrastructure resilience
Brandon How – Innovation Aus: 6 February 2023

A new industry association has set out to establish a cyber intelligence-sharing community to help boost the cyber resilience of the largest and smallest critical infrastructure providers in Australia.

https://www.innovationaus.com/new-industry-group-to-boost-critical-infrastructure-resilience/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Study Finds Nearly Half of Critical Manufacturing Organizations at Significant Risk of Breach
https://www.engineering.com/story/study-finds-nearly-half-of-critical-manufacturing-organiza-
tions-at-significant-risk-of-breach

(U.S.) GAO Wants Time Frames for DHS Efforts on Critical Infrastructure Security
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/gao-wants-time-frames-to-complete-
dhs-efforts-on-critical-infrastructure-security/

(NATO) Critical Infrastructure Protection on the Agenda at NATO Meeting
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/critical-infrastructure-protec-
tion-on-the-agenda-at-nato-meeting/
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Ethical Arguments for the Separation of ISIS-Affiliated Male Youth from Their Mothers into Rehabilitation Programs
Anne Speckhard and Molly Ellenberg – Homeland Security Today: 13 February 2023

Whether children of ISIS mothers should be separated from their mothers is complex question. The answer depends on a variety of factors.
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/ethical-arguments-for-the-separation-of-isis-affiliated-male-youth-from-their-mothers-into-rehabilitation-programs/

UN Says Threat From Islamic State Group Remains High
The Associated Press: 9 February 2023

The Islamic State terror group’s threat near active conflict zones where it is present has increased, a top official tells the United Nation’s Security Council.
https://www.voanews.com/a/un-says-threat-from-islamic-state-group-remains-high-/6956888.html

For more on this theme:
Stockbroker-turned-unrepentant ISIS sniper convicted on US terrorism charges

In northern Mali, Islamic State attacks cause ‘tragedies beyond comprehension’
https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/02/06/Mali-Islamic-State-attacks

Syrians Fear Daesh Resurgence As Kurdish-Led Forces Sweep Raqqa

Survivors of ISIS genocide upset over a court order to return terrorists to Canada

ISIS-Khorasan Appears to Be Replacing the Taliban’s Terror in Afghanistan

Dutch plan to prosecute repatriated ISIS woman for crimes against humanity

ISIS calls for attacks on Christians around the world in the wake of Koran book-burning stunts in Sweden
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Frankenstein’s Monster: The Growing TTP Threat in Pakistan
Muhammad Akbar Notezai – The Diplomat: 10 February 2023

The latest wave of terrorism in Pakistan represents decades of policy choices coming home to roost.


UN report: Sayf al-’Adl widely seen as new al-Qaida leader

United Nations experts say the predominant view among member nations is that the leadership of al-Qaida has passed to Sayf al-’Adl, who was responsible for Osama bin Laden’s security and trained some of the hijackers involved in the 9/11 attack on the U.S.

https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-al-qaida-ayman-zawahri-politics-organized-crime-6ad-9f318e79064657b6e72b123ba8d7

For more on this theme:

Insurgency in the Sinai: A 6-Month Forecast
https://greydynamics.com/insurgency-in-the-sinai-a-6-month-forecast/

New Military Offensives Put al-Shabab Terrorist Group on the Back Foot
https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/02/02/new-military-offensives-put-al-shabab-terrorist-group-on-the-back-foot/

Fatalities from Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Surge by Nearly 50 Percent

Polisario Money Laundering Scheme Linked to Hezbollah
https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2023/02/353925/polisario-money-laundering-scheme-linked-to-hezbollah

Taliban Asks Pakistan Not to Blame Them for Violence at Home
https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/taliban-asks-pakistan-not-to-blame-them-for-violence-at-home/

What is behind the rising violent attacks in Pakistan?

UK counter-terrorism strategy needs to refocus on Islamism — review
https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-counter-terrorism-strategy-needs-refocus-islamism-review-2023-02-08/

Inside The Haqqani Terrorist Network
https://www.npr.org/2023/01/31/1152799553/inside-the-haqqani-terrorist-network

The Pakistani Taliban’s Reemergence in Swat
https://jamestown.org/program/the-pakistani-talibans-reemergence-in-swat/
CRIME AND CONFLICT

Russia deports thousands of Ukrainian children. Investigators say that’s a war crime
Deborah Amos – NPR: 14 February 2023

The Russian government operates a network of at least 40 child custody centers for thousands of Ukrainian children, a potential war crime, according to a report by Yale University researchers in a collaboration with the U.S. State Department.


U.S. State Department Briefing:
Evidence of Russia’s War Crimes and Other Atrocities in Ukraine: Recent Reporting on Child Relocations

For more on this theme:
The grey zone: Russia’s military, mercenary and criminal engagement in Africa
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/russia-in-africa/

Deadly Rio de Janeiro: Armed Violence and the Civilian Burden
https://acleddata.com/2023/02/14/deadly-rio-de-janeiro-armed-violence-and-the-civilian-burden/#s1

Behind the Lines: Russian Soldiers Seize Ukrainian Homes
https://cepa.org/article/behind-the-lines-russian-soldiers-seize-ukrainian-homes/

Ukraine Symposium — Field-Modified Weapons under the Law of War
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/field-modified-weapons-under-law-war/

Prosecuting War Crimes Symposium — German Domestic Prosecutorial Experience
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/german-domestic-prosecutorial-experience/

Prosecuting War Crimes Symposium — Justice for Victims of [Some] War Crimes Act?
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/justice-victims-war-crimes-act-reflections-from-across-the-pond/

Acacio Medina Front — Ex-FARC Mafia
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine at One Year: Has China Supported Russia?
Jason Li – Stimson Center: 13 February 2023

China has walked a fine line: suspending business when threats to Chinese interests necessitated it, parroting Russian talking points when they aligned with China’s criticism of the U.S., and continuing trade when the environment was conducive.

https://www.stimson.org/2023/ukraine-at-one-year-has-china-supported-russia/

For more on this theme:

Russia's War on Ukraine Could Grind On for Years, Warns Prigozhin
https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-s-war-on-ukraine-could-grind-on-for-years-warns-prigozhin/6958999.html

Russia is draining a massive Ukrainian reservoir, endangering a nuclear plant
https://www.npr.org/2023/02/10/1155761686/russia-is-draining-a-massive-ukrainian-reservoir-endangering-a-nuclear-plant

What Iran's Purchase of Russian Jets Means for Regional Security

Ukraine to Russia: Stop using food as a weapon

EU set to sanction Iranian companies over Russia's war in Ukraine
https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-set-to-sanction-iranian-companies-over-russias-war-in-ukraine/

The role of technology in the Russia-Ukraine war

Norway And Estonia Agree: Russia Isn't Going To End Its War On Ukraine

Policy, Guns and Money: Ukraine war and Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship

Why North Korea is denying its involvement in Russia's war in Ukraine

With caution and tact: How Asian countries voted on Ukraine at the UN
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/caution-tact-how-asian-countries-voted-ukraine-un

Moscow accuses Japan of Russophobia, making 'vicious attacks' over Ukraine war
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moscow-accuses-japan-russophobia-making-vicious-attacks-over-ukraine-war-2023-02-14/

Will logistics be Russia's undoing in Ukraine?
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Ukraine Has the Battlefield Edge

As Russia’s Invasion Of Ukraine Nears The One-Year Mark, Kremlin Keeps Pro-War Symbols Prominently In View
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-pro-war-symbols-propaganda-putin-ukraine-annivesary/32267708.html

This Is How Russia’s New Offensive Could Backfire
https://worldcrunch.com/focus/new-russia-attack-ukraine-backfire

Is The End Of The Russian-Ukrainian War In Sight? — Analysis

Policymakers: Keep Ukrainian soldiers front of mind as this war of attrition continues

Putin’s invasion shatters the myth of Russian-Ukrainian brotherhood

Russia’s new offensive will test the morale of Putin’s mobilized masses

ECHR ruling confirms Russian invasion of Ukraine began in 2014

The path to peace in Ukraine runs directly through Putin’s red lines
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-path-to-peace-in-ukraine-runs-directly-through-putins-red-lines/

Is Putin’s Russia heading for collapse like its Czarist and Soviet predecessors?

Vladimir Putin must not be allowed to bankrupt the Ukrainian breadbasket
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/vladimir-putin-must-not-be-allowed-to-bankrupt-the-ukrainian-breadbasket/

Countering Russian threats to global financial security

Can Putin win?
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Stop Saying “War in Ukraine” — It Is Russia’s War Against Ukraine and Democracy
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/stop-saying-war-ukraine-it-russias-war-against-ukraine-and-democracy

Ukraine’s Charm Offensive In Europe — Analysis

Ukraine: The Coming Offensives
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-the-coming-offensives/

Lesson From Moldova’s Crisis: We’re at War
https://cepa.org/article/lesson-from-moldovas-crisis-were-at-war/

Our podcast: one year after Putin’s invasion, how is Ukrainian journalism faring?

New Russian Offensive Underway in Ukraine

Cossacks Used to Promote Moscow’s War Against Ukraine
https://jamestown.org/program/cossacks-used-to-promote-moscows-war-against-ukraine/

Putin’s War in Ukraine Hitting Russia’s Numerically Smallest Nations Hardest
https://jamestown.org/program/putins-war-in-ukraine-hitting-russias-numerically-smallest-nations-hardest/

The Next Cyber Phase of the Russia-Ukraine War Will Echo in Asia

Russia Reconsiders Its Air Defense Strategy – Analysis

Coins of War: How Crypto Keeps Feeding Russia’s War Despite Sanctions

What are ‘shadow fleets’ and how do they hinder efforts to help Ukraine?

Controlling the narrative
https://www.the-security-times.com/controlling-the-narrative/

Double Win: How Russian Oil Companies Defied Sanctions and Paid Less Tax
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89052

What China Has Learned From the Ukraine War
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/what-china-has-learned-ukraine-war
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Lessons From Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine

Man vs. Myth: Is Russia’s Prigozhin a Threat or Asset to Putin?
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89008

Mercenary Shocks: What the War in Ukraine Will Eventually Mean for Africa

Lessons from the meme war in Ukraine
https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/lessons-from-the-meme-war-in-ukraine/

Chisinau Confirms Zelenskiy Statement On Russian Plan To Destabilize Moldova
https://www.rferl.org/a/moldova-russia-plan-destabilize-/32264249.html