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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Corruption scandal deals new blow to Xi’s Chinese football dream
Agence France-Presse: 17 February 2023

Alleged corruption at the top of Chinese football has left President Xi Jinping’s dream of his country becoming a global force in the sport appear more remote than ever.


EU handbook touts diverse practices for combating corruption
Neil Hodge – Compliance Week: 22 February 2023

The European Commission published a collection of best practices that companies and compliance officers might find useful to combat corruption.

https://www.complianceweek.com/anti-corruption/eu-handbook-touts-diverse-practices-for-combating-corruption/32705.article

For more on this theme:

Peru’s top prosecutor opens corruption probe of ex-President Castillo

Jamaica PM will not face corruption charges — watchdog
https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/jamaica-pm-will-not-face-corruption-charges-despite-evidence-2023-02-16/

Ecuador prosecutor asks for corruption charges against former president
https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/ecuador-prosecutor-asks-corruption-charges-against-former-president-2023-02-22/

Rebuilding Ukraine: Private sector role can help counter corruption concerns

Fighting Corruption Harder than Fighting ISIS, Says Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister

Myanmar Supreme Court rejects Aung San Suu Kyi’s appeal on corruption charges

Linking Nigeria’s Stagnant Anti-Corruption War With Growing Insecurity

Chief Of Leading Kyrgyz Eye Clinic Arrested On Corruption Charges
https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-corruption-eye-clinic/32269501.html
DRUG TRAFFICKING

“Hugs, Not Bullets”: Government Policy and Cartel Violence in Mexico
John Minns – Australian Institute of International Affairs: 17 February 2023
The recent conflict in Mexico between police and drug cartels has again demonstrated that the monopoly of violence is not in the hands of the government. In the past two decades, cartel operations and violence have expanded despite attempts to limit and quash their growth.
tel-violence-in-mexico/

Belgian government presents plan to fight drug violence that’s become ‘narco-terrorism’
Hanne Cokelaere – Politico: 16 February 2023
The Belgian government presented measures to fight increased drug trafficking and violence at the Port of Antwerp, ranging from checks of port workers to steep fines for users.

For more on this theme:
Mexico's ex-security minister Genaro García Luna convicted of drug trafficking

From Opium To Meth: How Myanmar Became The World's Leading Producer Of Methamphetamine
https://www.talkingdrugs.org/from-opium-to-meth-how-myanmar-became-the-worlds-leading-producer-of-
methamphetamine

Cocaine capital: Antwerp fears drug-related attacks may rise

How a sleepy port became Europe's new drug hub

Degrading the Precursor Chemical Supply Chain to Reduce the Distribution of Fentanyl in the Homeland
https://www.hstoday.us/featured/degrading-the-precursor-chemical-supply-chain-to-reduce-the-distribu-
tion-of-fentanyl-in-the-homeland/

Despite the Taliban’s pledge to eradicate opium, the poppy trade still flourishes in Afghanistan
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Interpol Asian Conference calls for greater cross-sector cooperation
https://www.interpol.int/fr/Actualites-et-evenements/Actualites/2023/INTERPOL-Asian-Confer-
ence-calls-for-greater-cross-sector-cooperation

South American cartels ‘putting European boats into storage’ to use later for drug trafficking
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Forensic researchers use mass spectrometry to identify smuggled wood
Laurel Oldach – Chemical and Engineering News: 22 February 2023

Species identification by chemical fingerprinting could help crack down on illegal wood shipments.

https://cen.acs.org/analytical-chemistry/mass-spectrometry/Forensic-researchers-use-mass-spectrometry-to-identify-smuggled-wood/101/i7

For more on this theme:

Can a tiger change its stripes? Meet the pulp and paper giant bankrolling a huge Sumatran rainforest reserve

Brazil launches operation to drive illegal miners from Yanomami lands

How Illegal Mining Caused a Humanitarian Crisis in the Amazon
https://e360.yale.edu/features/brazil-yanomami-mining-malaria-malnutrition-lula

Colombia’s war on illegal gold mines also hits outlaw armed groups

Illegal mines and “floating towns” on the Puré River leave uncontacted Indigenous peoples at risk

Mechanization of illegal gold mining threatens Ghana’s forests

China’s fishing trawlers endangering marine life of South America: Report

Myanmar’s Arrested Environmental Activism — Analysis

Etsy and eBay are selling dead bats — and scientists are disturbed
https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/etsy-ebay-bats-sold

EU found responsible for extinction domino effect on frog populations

Can Amazon Countries Save the Rain Forest?
https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/can-amazon-countries-save-rain-forest

Invisible destruction: 38% of remaining Amazon forest already degraded
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

UNICEF report warns internet continues to fragment and become less global
Moonshot.news: 9 February 2023
The report says that children in particular stand to lose from this fragmentation because they depend on internet access for education and socializing.

For more on this theme:

(Global) Countries Must Work Together To Make Internet Safe & Trusted: Rajeev Chandrasekhar

(Africa) Africa’s internet registry has sometimes needed financial assistance to keep operating, could fail, warns ARIN head
https://www.theregister.com/2023/02/22/afrinic_failure_warning_apnic_link/

INTERNET FREEDOM

Preparing for Digital Disruptions during Africa’s Year of Elections
Techeconomy: 22 February 2023
This year, 23 African countries will hold elections ranging from local to parliamentary and presidential. Considering that election seasons are known to come with internet shutdowns, digital-platform clampdowns, privacy breaches and other restrictions, it is essential to anticipate likely infringements and work to ensure citizen rights.

For more on this theme:

(Armenia) Armenian authorities seek new internet censorship powers under martial law

(Russia) Russia launches new system to scan the internet for banned content
https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/russia-internet-censorship-oculus-ukraine-war-content-b2281297.html

(India) India’s Government Wants Total Control of the Internet

(Ethiopia) Social media and messaging apps restricted in Ethiopia amid religious tensions
Kremlin-Linked Leader Of Wagner Mercenary Group Acknowledges Ownership Of ‘Troll Factory’

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: 14 February 2023

Yevgeny Prigozhin, who is known to have close ties to President Vladimir Putin, has acknowledged for the first time that he owns the Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg, which specializes in creating fake social media accounts and spreading disinformation and propaganda.

https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-progozhin-troll-factory/32271276.html

For more on this theme:

(Japan) How Japan Is Modernizing Its Cybersecurity Policy

(U.S.) Navy releasing new cyber strategy ‘in a month or so’ to outline cyber superiority vision

(China) For Xi Jinping, Cyber Is Personal
https://nationalinterest.org/feature/xi-jinping-cyber-personal-206214

Australian Cyber Security Centre launches partnership program to strengthen cybersecurity practices across businesses

Ephrem Joseph – Proactive: 15 February 2023

The undertaking seeks to increase the resilience of Australian businesses and organizations to cyberattacks by facilitating information sharing and collaboration.


For more on this theme:

(Africa) Evolution of Cyber Security in Africa

(NATO) NATO Cyber Defence Center Taps DISA as U.S. Team Lead for Intense Cyberattack Challenge

(India) Why Firms in India Must Develop Cyber Resilience Plans
CYBERCRIME

UK government outlines reforms to thirty-year-old cybercrime law
Julia Varley and Stuart Davey – Out-Law: 16 February 2023

The United Kingdom is proposing new powers for law enforcement agencies to tackle cybersecurity threats and online crimes, including the power to require data owners to preserve evidence.


For more on this theme:

(Global) Could the metaverse lead to a spike in cybercrime?

(Russia) Russia wants to legalize cybercrime for homeland

(Global) Cybercriminals Increase Recruiting Tech and IT Pros Across the Darknet

(Global) How Falling Crypto Prices Impacted Cyber Crime

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

The Energy Department’s Puesh Kumar on grid hacking, Ukraine and Pipedream malware
Christian Vasquez – Cyberscoop: 22 February 2023


https://cyberscoop.com/puesh-kumar-energy-cybersecurity/

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Phygital Attacks: Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Cyber Threats

(Europe) EU countries told to step up defence against state hackers
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-countries-told-step-up-defence-against-state-hackers-2023-02-14/

(Global) The Growing Threat to Critical Infrastructure
https://securityintelligence.com/articles/growing-threat-to-critical-infrastructure/

(Australia) Australia Unveils Game Plan to Guard Critical Infrastructure
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

China’s Clouded Future in Afghanistan
Barbara Kelemen – The Diplomat: 22 February 2023
More than a year after the Taliban takeover, the country faces a new terrorist threat that makes it more difficult for China to commit to the region. Will the Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate push Beijing to abandon Kabul?

Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)
Samuele Minelli – Grey Dynamics: 22 February 2023
The problematic situation in the Lake Chad Basin lasted more than 10 years. Since 2015, ISWAP has been one of the principal actors.
https://greydynamics.com/islamic-state-west-africa-province-iswap/

For more on this theme:
Justices will consider whether tech giants can be sued for allegedly aiding ISIS terrorism

US Hammers Islamic State With Multiple Raids

British-born woman who joined ISIS at 15 cannot regain her U.K. citizenship, court rules

Dae’sh Still Sizeable Threat, Senior Counter-Terrorism Officials Warn Security Council, Citing Group’s Growing Use of New Technologies, Lag in Repatriating Foreign Fighter

IntelBrief: The Current State of Islamic State
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-february-14/

Indian embassy in Kabul under threat of Islamic State attack: UN report

Cyber Terrorism: The Islamic State in Cyberspace
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

The dynamics of violent extremism in sub-Saharan Africa
Noura Hamladji and Samuel Rizk – United Nations Development Program: 13 February 2023
There is no better environment for the expansion of violent extremist groups than a vacuum in state authority. It provides ideal conditions for these groups to prey on existing and historical grievances, fill the void with promises of financial support, access to services and attention for marginalized communities. But at what cost?
https://www.undp.org/blog/dynamics-violent-extremism-sub-saharan-africa

Hezbollah’s dominance in Lebanon is not as assured as you might think
Michael Young – The Nation: 14 February 2023
The worse Lebanon’s crisis gets, the shakier the ground underneath the party’s feet becomes.
https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2023/02/15/what-could-threaten-hezbollahs-existence-in-lebanon/

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Al Qaeda’s new leader Adel has $10 million bounty on his head
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/al-qaedas-new-leader-adel-has-10-million-bounty-his-head-2023-02-15/

Jihadist Violence Grows in Benin
https://jamestown.org/program/jihadist-violence-grows-in-benin/

Brief: Nigerian President Buhari’s Term Ending with Boko Haram Not “Technically Defeated”

Brief: The Philippines on the Verge of Victory Against Abu Sayyaf
https://jamestown.org/program/brief-the-philippines-on-the-verge-of-victory-against-abu-sayyaf/

Is Pakistan Poised to Take on the TTP?
https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/02/pakistan-poised-take-ttp

Don’t just target terrorists — deny them safe havens

Deconstructing Counterterrorism: What Has Worked and What More Needs To Be Done

Africa File: Al Qaeda–Linked Militants Take Control in Northern Mali
For more on this theme:

**Recent Arrest Puts Jemaah Islamiyah Back in the Spotlight**
[https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/237678/](https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/237678/)

**COVID wasn’t a ‘bumper campaign’ for right-wing extremists. But the threat from terror remains**

**Al-Qaeda, LeT, JeM in Afghanistan a ‘ticking bomb’: EU special representative**

**Gaza-Based Militant Group Formally Acknowledges Presence in the West Bank**

**Social Media: An Important Tool Used By Palestinian Militant Groups**

**Top Taliban Official’s Public Criticism Reignites Internal Rift Speculations**

**Secure Communities: Stopping the Salafi-Jihadi Surge in Africa**

**Terrorism’s evolving nature makes it a potent threat**
[https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/2023/02/10/terrorisms-evolving-nature-makes-it-a-potent-threat/](https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/2023/02/10/terrorisms-evolving-nature-makes-it-a-potent-threat/)

**Fragile States Provide Extremists Fertile Ground to Recruit and Grow**

**‘We Must Be More Vigilant Than Ever,’ UN Chief Says on First International Day to Prevent Violent Extremism**
[https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/we-must-be-more-vigilant-than-ever-un-chief-says-on-first-international-day-to-prevent-violent-extremism/](https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/we-must-be-more-vigilant-than-ever-un-chief-says-on-first-international-day-to-prevent-violent-extremism/)

**Brief: Indonesian Counter-Terrorism Force Detains JI and JAD Remnants**

**The Reemergence of the Jihadist Counter-Intelligence Group in Pakistan: Lashkar-e-Khorasan**
CRIME AND CONFLICT

A tribunal like no other: Prosecuting Russia's crime of aggression in Ukraine
Fredrik Wesslau – European Council on Foreign Relations: 23 February 2023
A special tribunal could help secure justice for Ukrainians harmed by Russia’s invasion. Such a court would have three major implications.

For more on this theme:

Ukraine war: Russia has committed crimes against humanity, US says

Russia's aggression threatens efforts to protect nature beyond Ukraine

Evidence of Russia's War Crimes and Other Atrocities in Ukraine: Recent Reporting on Child Relocations

Environmental Damage as a War Crime
https://iwpr.net/global-voices/environmental-damage-war-crime

Ukraine: One year after full-scale Russian invasion, victims’ rights must be at the heart of all justice efforts

Russia's first criminal case against Ukraine's forces goes to court

Rape as war crime in Ukraine: Investigators fight stigma, shame and Russian occupation to deliver justice
https://inews.co.uk/news/world/rape-war-crime-ukraine-investigators-stigma-shame-russian-occupation-2150625

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

What if Putin’s plan for a quick victory in Ukraine had succeeded?
Carl Bildt – The Strategist: 21 February 2023
Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn’t met any of the strategic objectives he alluded to when he launched his full-scale invasion of Ukraine a year ago. Still, it’s worth considering the counterfactual. What if Russian forces hadn’t bungled the invasion? Where would we be now if the Ukrainian resistance had collapsed, or if the West had responded not with unity but with confusion and disarray?
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Word war:** In Russia-Ukraine war, information became a weapon
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-technology-politics-782d23450e93b667af7b57e0bb365f

**Destruction and Devastation: One Year of Russia’s Assault on Ukraine’s Health Care System**
https://phr.org/our-work/resources/russias-assault-on-ukraines-health-care-system/

**Russia’s appetite may extend beyond Ukraine**
https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3861479-russias-appetite-may-extend-beyond-ukraine/

**Beijing is ‘watching closely’ if Russia succeeds in Ukraine, NATO says, flagging rising China challenge**

**Closing ranks: Ukraine’s role in future European defence**

**Will Iran’s Fatemiyoun and Zainebiyoun Brigades Reinforce the Russian Army in Ukraine?**

**Is Pakistan Truly Sending Military Aid to Ukraine for Its Fight Against Russia?**
https://jamestown.org/program/is-pakistan-truly-sending-military-aid-to-ukraine-for-its-fight-against-russia/

**Before Decisive Battles, Russia’s War Against Ukraine Reaches a Political Culmination**
https://jamestown.org/program/before-decisive-battles-russias-war-against-ukraine-reaches-a-political-culmination/

**Russian Armed Forces Face Severe Demographic Challenges**
https://jamestown.org/program/russian-armed-forces-faces-severe-demographic-challenges/

**Russia Continues to Target Central Asian Migrants for War Effort**
https://jamestown.org/program/russia-continues-to-target-central-asian-migrants-for-war-effort/

**How will the war in Ukraine end?**

**Ukraine’s Year of War: What Does It Mean?**

**Russia in Ukraine: accountability and global order on the precipice**
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/russia-ukraine-accountability-global-order-precipice

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https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/ukraine-has-held-russias-invasion-so-far-heres-how

**How Bad Is Ukraine’s Humanitarian Crisis a Year Later?**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

One Year After: How Putin Got Germany Wrong
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/one-year-after-how-putin-got-germany-wrong

Carnegie Experts on the Ukraine War's Long Shadow
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/23/carnegie-experts-on-ukraine-war-s-long-shadow-pub-89109

A Fight for Survival: What Victory Looks Like to Putin
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89102

Two Deeply Troubling Trends From Ukraine’s Year of War

The Ukraine War’s Lingering Nuclear Power Danger
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/21/ukraine-war-s-lingering-nuclear-power-danger-pub-89080

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Is China Providing Russia With Military Support?
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/21/is-china-providing-russia-with-military-support-pub-89075

Russia Has Lost Its Decisionmaking Centers to the War
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89073

As War Rages, Russian Society Has Assumed the Fetal Position
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88938

Putin’s War Against Ukraine: The End of The Beginning

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

One Year of War in Ukraine: Are Sanctions Against Russia Making a Difference?
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/one-year-war-ukraine-are-sanctions-against-russia-making-difference

Faint cracks emerge in the facade of Putin’s rule, one year after Ukraine invasion

Our experts decode the Putin speech that launched Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

Invasion anniversary: Does Putin still have a pathway to victory in Ukraine?
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Sanctions alone won’t defeat Russia in Ukraine. But they’re having a bigger impact than it might seem.**

**Russia policy after the war: A new strategy of containment**

**Narrative Warfare**
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**Undermining Ukraine**
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**Analysis: Nuclear risk seen rising as Putin unpicks last treaty with U.S.**

**After nearly one year of war, how Ukraine defied the odds — and may still defeat Russia**

**What Putin Broke**
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**Five Big Lessons From the War Against Ukraine**
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**Ukraine — Military Victory Won’t Be Enough**
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-military-victory-wont-be-enough/

**Behind the Lines Special Edition: One Year On**
https://cepa.org/article/behind-the-lines-ukraine-after-russias-invasion/

**Russia’s Descent into Warlordism**
https://cepa.org/article/prigozhin-wagner-accelerate-russia-into-warlordism/

**A year of war: how Russian forces have been pushed back in Ukraine**
https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2023/feb/21/a-year-of-war-how-russian-forces-have-been-pushed-back-in-ukraine

**Here’s How Ukraine Could Retake Crimea**

**Ukraine: Russia’s inability to dominate the sea has changed the course of the war**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Belarusian Fighters In Ukraine Set Sights On A Long March – Analysis

Russia Is Down, But Not Out, in Central Asia

Ukraine fight against Russia is ‘critical to the future’ of how the world works

Ukraine 12 months at war: why Kyiv's western allies must rethink the limits of their military aid

How will the Russia-Ukraine war end?
https://news.stanford.edu/2023/02/17/will-russia-ukraine-war-end/

The ripple effects of Russia's war in Ukraine continue to change the world
https://www.npr.org/2023/02/22/1157106172/ukraine-russia-war-refugees-food-prices

The global supply chain consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war
https://news.ufl.edu/2023/02/russia-ukraine-global-supply-chain/

Hacks, leaks and wipers: Google analyzes a year of Russian cyberattacks on Ukraine

I helped create a ‘cyber army’ to help Ukraine defeat Russia. We can’t fight with guns, but we can fight with our laptops.

Beyond Ukraine: Russia’s Invasion & Its Impact on the Conventional Arms Trade

Victory in the Battle of Kyiv: A Story of Ukrainian Resilience and Strategy

The 8 Reasons Why Russia's Much-Hyped Coming Offensive Will Fail Miserably