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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

China’s Anticorruption Campaign Adds Popular Culture Entertainment Into its Toolbox
China is using a TV series called “In the Name of the People” to help in its anticorruption fight. The show depicts the ugly side of graft in China and has been watched over 20 billion times across major Chinese online video platforms.

Brazilian Corruption Steals from Nation’s Poorest
Madeline Asta – Council on Hemispheric Affairs: 6 July 2017
The news has been focusing on the scandal of high-level corruption in Brazil, but the stories have missed those most impacted by such graft – the nation’s poor.
http://www.coha.org/brazilian-corruption-steals-from-nations-poorest/

For more on this theme:

Does Corruption Affect Access to Bank Credit for Micro and Small Businesses?
Evidence from European MSMEs

Another narcotics task force is in the midst of a corruption and brutality scandal. This is nothing new.

Brazil Shutting Down ‘Car Wash’ Corruption Task Force

Brazil president Temer says corruption charge against him ‘weak’

International Center Launched to Combat “Global Scourge” of Grand Corruption
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Australia's Drug Strategy Is Out Of Date, But That's Just The Start Of The Problem
John Coyne – The Huffington Post: 3 July 2017

Australia’s drug confiscations are at an all-time high, which could be interpreted as good news. Unfortunately, the seizures are having almost no impact on the availability, price or purity of crystal methamphetamine, meaning the supply remains healthy despite law enforcement’s best efforts.


Narco-Drones: A New Way to Transport Drugs
Brenda Fiegel – Small Wars Journal: 5 July 2017

Narcotraffickers are always looking for new ways to transport their drugs. In Colombia, some drug lords are attempting to use drones to send cocaine shipments to Panama.

http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/narco-drones-a-new-way-to-transport-drugs

For more on this theme:

Narco crime: A serious threat to the Americas / In 60 seconds

A What-Works Approach to the Opioid Crisis

Argentina's First Drug Use Data in Years Confirms Booming Local Market

Bolivian Coca Cultivation and the International Cocaine Trade

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Watchdog says Chinese town is major ivory smuggling hub
Kelvin Chan – The Associated Press: 3 July 2017

Chinese-led organized criminal networks have turned an obscure southern port town into the world’s largest hub for ivory trafficking, according to a report from the Environmental Investigation Agency.

U.N. Resolution Targets Libyan Fuel Smugglers

Aidan Lewis – Reuters: 30 June 2017

The United Nations Security Council is trying to halt illegal fuel smuggling from Libya by extending sanctions to cover refined petroleum products as well. Despite the resolution, the powerful smuggling networks have been in operation for years, so it is unclear if the sanctions will have much effect.


For more on this theme:

The Hawaii Legislature wants to stop the aquarium fish trade. The governor has other ideas.
https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-07-06/hawaii-legislature-wants-stop-aquarium-fish-trade-governor-has-other-ideas

Digital forensics training course from INTERPOL for wildlife investigations

Web patrolling to crack online wildlife trade in Odisha

This engineer is using old cell phones to stop illegal logging
http://www.popsci.com/using-old-cell-phones-to-stop-illegal-logging

UNESCO urges Poland to halt logging in ancient Białowieża forest
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-environment-forest-idUSKBN19Q2NE

CRIME AND TERROR NEXUS

Understanding links between terrorists and organised crime can thwart attacks – Dr Matteo Bonfanti

Anita Makri – Horizon: 6 July 2017

An interview with Dr. Matteo Bonfanti, a senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich in Switzerland, revealed his belief that investigators should exploit the fact that terrorists often work with criminal organizations to achieve their goals.


For more on this theme:

When organized crime connects to international terror

New draft laws on combat to money laundering and financing of terrorism
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Insecurity, economic crisis, abuse and exploitation in Libya push refugees and migrants to Europe, new study reveals.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): 3 July 2017

Nearly half of all migrants traveling to Libya believe they will find jobs there, according to a UNHCR study of mixed refugee and migrant flows. Once in Libya, however, they often end up fleeing to Europe. The migrant route through Libya is the most common — and the most deadly.


Full report:

Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges

Smugglers are abandoning migrants in the middle of a desert the size of Texas

Max Bearak – The Washington Post: 5 July 2017

The news has focused on the deaths of migrants at sea, but what about the hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths that occur in the Tenere desert in Niger, part of a smuggling route stretching to the Mediterranean?


For more on this theme:

Concord Europe: Lack of solidarity between EU Member States on migration
http://www.afronline.org/?p=43365

Zuwara, the Libyan city working to stop migrant smuggling

A perfect storm: The failure of European policies in the Central Mediterranean

Southern Africa: UNODC launches network to combat human trafficking

Sharp rise in British children being sexually exploited by human traffickers

Saving victims hiding in plain sight: Why nurses need mandatory training in human trafficking
ORGANIZED CRIME AND MONEY LAUNDERING

**New network to fight organized crime in the Caribbean**

*Nelson A. King – Caribbean Life: 2 July 2017*

To fight organized crime, the Organization of American States launched the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network in the Caribbean, the seventh network of its kind in the world.


*For more on this theme:*

- **Glass quarter full? The state of global anti-money laundering in four charts**

- **Argentina Crime Survey Is Another Step Toward Transparency**

- **Project SUN: A Study of the Illicit Cigarette Market in the European Union, Norway and Switzerland**
  https://rusi.org/publication/other-publications/project-sun-study-illicit-cigarette-market-european-union-norway-and

- **Multiple arrests in international drug trafficking and money laundering ring**
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The Development of Cyber Norms at the United Nations Ends in Deadlock. Now What?
Adam Segal – Council on Foreign Relations: 29 June 2017
International tension has grown over alleged nation-state backed cyber attacks on governments and the private sector. This problem was highlighted by the recent failure of a United Nations advisory body to reach consensus on the right of states to retaliate in response to online attacks.

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Who should lead internet policy?
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2017/07/03/who-should-lead-internet-policy/

(Global) Cybersecurity: The cold war online
http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v547/n7661/full/547030a.html

(Global) The UN GGE Failed. Is International Law in Cyberspace Doomed As Well?

INTERNET FREEDOM

China Plugs Gaps in Great Firewall, Bans LGBT Multimedia Content
Radio Free Asia: 4 July 2017
China has reportedly shut down a popular service provider, GreenVPN, which was one of the few remaining ways the population could circumvent the “Great Firewall” of China. China also took steps to ban a plethora of sexual content it deems “obscene.”

For more on this theme:
(Kenya) This Is Internet Censorship Through the Back Door
http://allafrica.com/stories/201707060473.html

(Thailand) Reform body votes for tight social media censorship
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Getting Chief Executives to Take Cyber Risks Seriously
Amy Aixi Zhang – Council on Foreign Relations: 5 July 2017

It may be tough to convince CEOs and their boards of directors that cyber risks are worth fretting about, but with a record 1,093 data breaches last year alone, it’s a message they need to hear.
https://www.cfr.org/blog-post/getting-chief-executives-take-cyber-risks-seriously-0

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Striking a Balance Between Privacy and Security

(U.S.) By Hoarding Bugs, the NSA Is Weakening Security for Everyone Else

(Global) ITU Global Cybersecurity Index 2017 shows improvements and strengthening of global cybersecurity agenda
http://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/Pages/2017-PR29.aspx

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

How Russia and others use cybercriminals as proxies

Russia and other countries are using proxies to conduct cyber attacks. They offer criminals the chance to use their skills for their country in exchange for immunity.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Cyber threats—democracy under fire on two fronts

(Ukraine, Global) Hacking a Country
http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/hacking-a-country
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Proposed “Digital Geneva” Convention: Towards an Inclusive Public-Private Agreement on Cyberspace?
Maria Gurova – Geneva Centre for Security Policy: July 2017

The idea that the private sector should adopt a “digital Geneva” convention is intriguing and timely, but without global outreach, it risks failure.
http://www gcsp.ch/download/7030/164069

For more on this theme:

(Global) Public-private partnership key for cyber security: Kaspersky Lab

(U.S.) Public-Private Partnerships Could Bolster Healthcare Cybersecurity Efforts

(Singapore) Private sector, police tie up to fight cyber criminals

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Germany big target of cyber espionage and attacks: government report
Andrea Shalal – Reuters: 4 July 2017

According to a new report from the BfV domestic intelligence agency, Germany is a major target of cyber attacks and industrial espionage, costing companies billions of euros each year.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-espionage-idUSKBN19P0UC

For more on this theme:

(U.S., Global) The Growing Danger of IP Theft and Cyber Extortion

(Russia) Russia steps up spying efforts after election
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

How China’s cyber command is being built to supersede its U.S. military counterpart
Chris Bing – CyberScoop: 22 June 2017

China has been hard at work building a cyber warfare unit over the past two years called the Strategic Support Force (SSF). Its capabilities are impressive, placing China among the nations with leading hacking powers. The SSF combines the powers of several public and private agencies — separated in other countries — under one umbrella, affording it a lot of resources and authority.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) New report swings and misses on communities and next generation broadband

(Taiwan) Tsai swears in cyberwar commander
http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/06/30/2003673594

COMBATING TERRORISM AND CYBER CRIME

Australia has created a cyber warfare unit
Allie Coyne – ITNews: 30 June 2017

In addition to expanding the Australian Signals Directorate’s authority for offensive targeting, the Australian government has created a new “information warfare unit” responsible for military cyber operations.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Hacking back is exactly what American industry must do to defend against cyberattacks
http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/technology/339706-hacking-back-is-exactly-what-american-industry-must-do-to

(Kenya, U.S.) Kenya, US sign deal to fight cybercrime
INFORMATION SHARING

Collaboration is key to combating cyber crime
Aaron Tan – ComputerWeekly.com: 4 July 2017

Interpol has called for speedy and effective information-sharing between law enforcement agencies, governments, businesses and cyber security companies to counter growing cyber threats.


For more on this theme:

(Singapore, Germany) Singapore, Germany to work together in new areas such as cyber security: PM Lee
http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/pm-lee-meets-german-chancellor-merkel

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Allies, Partners Observe Guard Exercise
U.S. Department of Defense: 5 July 2017

As part of Cyber Guard 2017, a weeklong exercise led by the United States, participants from across U.S. government, academia, industry and allies rehearsed a whole-of-nation response to cyber attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Hackers breached a US nuclear power plant’s network, and it could be a ‘big danger’

(U.S.) FBI-DHS “amber” alert warns energy industry of attacks on nuke plant operators

(U.S.) Survey: Cyber pros fear attack on critical infrastructure
ISIS

The Fight Goes On: The Islamic State’s Continuing Military Efforts in Liberated Cities
Daniel Milton and Muhammad al-`Ubaydi – Combating Terrorism Center: June 2017

ISIS is returning to its roots in its embattled state, once again turning to guerrilla warfare. This report examines ISIS’ activities in Iraq and Syria to determine the type of operations and to track trends.


Best Of: The War Against ISIS Has Just Begun
Bennett Seftel – The Cipher Brief: 2 July 2017

ISIS is encouraging foreign fighters and ISIS-inspired attackers to carry out local attacks in its name. Despite military setbacks, the group appears to be morphing back into a shadowy terrorist organization.

https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/middle-east/war-against-isis-has-just-begun-1089

For more on this theme:

Islamic State makes desperate stand in Mosul, commanders say

How ISIS Survives the Fall of Mosul

Can the Islamic State Survive If Baghdadi Is Dead?
http://www.rand.org/blog/2017/06/can-the-islamic-state-survive-if-baghdadi-is-dead.html

Vickers, Crocker, Bergen, and Mudd Headline RAND ISIS Conference

Lifting the veil on jihad
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/lifting-veil-jihad

Facing defeat in Mosul, Islamic State mounts diversionary attack to the south
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKBN19S1GR

Filipinos watch in horror as their city is destroyed in fight with Islamic State affiliate
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

The Islamic State of Al-Qaeda
A.J. Caschetta – New English Review: July 2017

What are the chances the remnants of ISIS will merge with al-Qaida? Some experts have long predicted the potential merger, citing the logic behind the choice, but it remains to be seen what lies ahead for both groups.

http://www.newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm?frm=188942&sec_id=188942

For more on this theme:

AQAP Post-Arab Spring and the Islamic State

Hamas turns to Iran

Boko Haram ups its pressure on Niger
http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2017/07/06/boko-haram-ups-its-pressure-niger

Today's Terror Threat Poses Array of New Challenges

Deciphering the jihadist threat on Libya’s shifting sands

TERROR FINANCE

Terror Finance in the Age of Bitcoin
Levi Maxey – The Cipher Brief: 11 June 2017

The use of virtual currencies is already prevalent among organized criminals, but not among terrorist groups, partly because old methods of financing are still working. Nevertheless, criminals and terrorists could collaborate if terrorists begin using the dark web more frequently for financing.

https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/tech/terror-finance-age-bitcoin-1089

For more on this theme:

Foreign Funded Islamist Extremism in the UK
http://henryjacksonsociety.org/2017/07/05/foreign-funded-islamist-extremism-in-the-uk/

Suspicious Activities on Social Media: What Can Be Learnt from Counterterrorist Financing Efforts?
https://rusi.org/commentary/suspicious-activities-social-media-what-can-be-learnt-counterterrorist-financing-efforts
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

As the battle for Mosul draws to a close, the war on extremist ideas must ramp up
H.A. Hellyer – The National: 5 July 2017

What does the defeat of ISIS in one of its traditional strongholds mean for the terror group’s prospects? ISIS will remain a group with a potent message, and battling that ideology as well as the root causes of radicalization must remain a priority.
https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/as-the-battle-for-mosul-draws-to-a-close-the-war-on-extremist-ideas-must-ramp-up-1.112353

The de-radicalisation helpline: A new approach with old results
Hussain Nadim – The Interpreter: 3 July 2017

The New South Wales government’s deradicalization helpline is nothing new and is unlikely to serve its purpose. Tried and tested in several countries, the hotline concept is flawed and has failed on many occasions.
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/de-radicalisation-helpline-new-approach-old-results

For more on this theme:

Counter-Terrorism Strategic Communications: Back to the Future, Lessons from Past and Present

Afghanistan to Block Terror, Extremist Groups’ Online Activities
https://www.voanews.com/a/afghanistan-to-block-terror-extremist-groups-online-activities/3928332.html

Europe’s “new” jihad: Homegrown, leaderless, virtual

Britain is Setting Up ‘Jihadi Jails’ To Crack Down on Radicalization in Prisons
https://heatst.com/politics/britain-is-setting-up-jihadi-jails-to-crack-down-on-radicalization-in-prisons/

Islamist recruiters in Germany ‘go right for young people’s hearts’

The US cannot arrest its way out of violent extremism

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES

Building community resilience to counter violent extremism
Anthony Bergin and Keith Thomas – Asia & the Pacific Policy Society: 1 July 2017

Governments and law enforcement can’t counter violent extremism effectively on their own. Communities should become the building blocks of countering radicalization and terrorism.
https://www.policyforum.net/building-community-resilience-counter-violent-extremism/
ARABIZI: another hurdle for counterterrorism efforts
Jacob Rosen-Koenigsbuch – Australian Strategic Policy Institute: 4 July 2017

The common use of the Latin alphabet to write in Arabic, known as ARABIZI, poses a whole new challenge to counterterrorism as the need for special tools and expertise places a high demand on intelligence services. Simple transliteration issues make the problem exponentially more difficult as well, as does the huge volume of data written in this manner.


For more on this theme:

Post-Conflict Stabilization: Counterinsurgency After the Caliphate

Counterterrorism: acting without thinking?

A Twist in the Quest for an AUMF Against the Islamic State

How to Harden America’s Soft Targets
http://www.rand.org/blog/2017/07/how-to-harden-americas-soft-targets.html

“Diaspora as Partners”: The Canadian Model of Countering Violent Extremism
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

DEALING WITH DISASTER

AT&T is helping state governments get dedicated emergency LTE networks
Christian de Looper – Digital Trends: 26 June 2017

To improve response times in the United States, AT&T and FirstNet partnered to offer first responders a dedicated LTE network to increase communications speed and capacity. While not every state has opted in, the potential for such a network could dramatically improve disaster response.

https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/firstnet-att-emergency-network/

The Regulation and Management of Emergency Medical Teams – Launch of a new IFRC and WHO Report
International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies: 7 July 2017

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) issued a report titled “The Regulation and Management of International Emergency Medical Teams.” The report provides an overview of the issues in regulating and managing international emergency medical teams in a range of large and small-scale sudden onset disasters.


For more on this theme:

The IAEA's Role in Disaster Risk Reduction Law

Disasters, funds, and policy: Creatively meeting urgent needs and long-term policy goals

Making Development More Resilient through Risk Information in Afghanistan

Climate Finance Update – Adaptation: Disaster and Climate Risks in Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism in the Spotlight