

24 March 2024

DENMARK: BRITISH CUM-EX TAX FRAUD SUSPECT TELLS COURT HE USED LEGAL LOOPHOLE

On 21 March, yahoo News carried a report on the case of British hedge fund trader Sanjay Shah, the main suspect in a \$1.3 billion tax fraud case. Shah, 53, is accused of being the mastermind behind fraudulently securing dividend tax refunds from the Danish treasury via trading schemes, known as 'cum-ex', between 2012 and 2015. Shah outlined how his London-based hedge fund Solo Capital Partners directed a closed "spiderweb" of trades, and took advantage of what he called a legal loophole that arose when shares were no longer physical shares.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/danish-tax-fraud-suspect-tells-113600013.html>

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA FRESH FLAG OF CHOICE FOR RUSSIA-CALLING DARK FLEET TANKERS

On 21 March Lloyds List reported that 12 tankers have joined the Antigua & Barbuda registry this year, including 5 that reflagged after being sold to new anonymous buyers and deployed in Russian trades, as tankers linked to US-incorporated Marshall Islands and Liberia registries find alternative flag providers.

<https://www.lloydslist.com/LL1148615/Antigua-and-Barbuda-fresh-flag-of-choice-for-Russia-calling-dark-fleet-tankers>

<https://antiguanewsroom.com/antigua-and-barbuda-fresh-flag-of-choice-for-russia-calling-dark-fleet-tankers-reports/>

AUTHORITIES IN COLOMBIA EXPOSE *TREN DE ARAGUA'S* INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG TRAFFICKING

On 22 March, Insight Crime reported that the capture in Colombia of a leader of a faction of the Venezuelan mega-gang has highlighted the organisation's little-known role in drug trafficking. The exposure of *Tren de Aragua's* business on Colombian soil indicates that the gang's criminal portfolio in the region is expanding, especially its involvement in large-scale drug trafficking.

<https://insightcrime.org/news/authorities-in-colombia-expose-tren-de-araguas-involvement-in-drug-trafficking/>

CRYPTO TRACING IS REVOLUTIONISING CRIME-FIGHTING, BUT CRITICS CALL IT A 'JUNK SCIENCE'

On 13 March, AOL carried this article about a new kind of forensics: Blockchain analytics. Thanks to the immutable and public nature of many blockchains, companies like Chainalysis and TRM Labs can trace activity to individuals and companies who may have been fooled into believing their

actions were discreet. However, the article reports on attempts to challenge or undermine the analysis.

<https://www.aol.com/crypto-tracing-revolutionizing-crime-fighting-124050197.html>

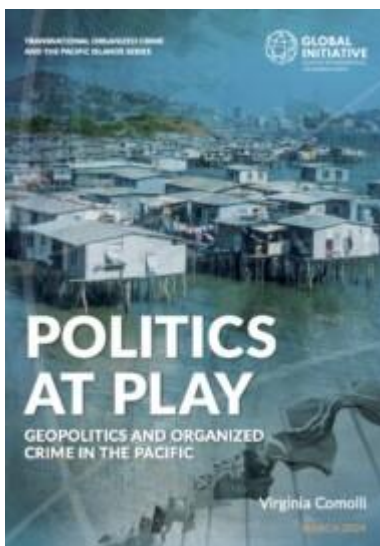
WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED TO VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT VO VAN THUONG?

On 24 March, RFA carried an article asking this question, as 2 deputy prime ministers, 2 presidents and another Politburo member have been dismissed since December 2022, in moves which underscores the risks of Hanoi's anti-corruption campaign.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/commentaries/vietnam-politics-03222024150312.html>

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISED CRIME AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

On 12 March, the Global Initiative Against Organised Crime published a series of papers, saying that its Pacific Programme is mapping how organised crime is impacting the Pacific Islands and exploring the different criminal actors driving illicit activities. It says that the Pacific islands, once considered almost immune from such crime, now occupy a more prominent place on the international strategic chessboard as a result of the proliferation of trade, diplomatic and security engagements in the region in the 21st Century. This is due to greater foreign presence and influence in Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, and intensifying geopolitical competition among external partners. This reality, alongside greater connectivity and market trends, is also drastically transforming the criminal landscape. There are multiple criminal actors present and active in the Pacific islands, but the most pervasive are foreign actors.



<https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/transnational-organized-crime-and-the-pacific-islands/>

US: CRITICAL MINERAL RESOURCES: NATIONAL POLICY AND CRITICAL MINERALS LIST

On 20 March, a briefing from the US Congressional Research Service dealt with this issue from a US perspective, defining terms and policies.

Figure 6. DOE Critical Materials, 2020-2035



Source: DOE, *Critical Materials Assessment*, July 2023, https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/doe-critical-material-assessment_07312023.pdf

Notes: Aluminum, copper, and silicon are not considered critical (red) in the short term (left); however, DOE included these minerals on the 2023 DOE Critical Materials List because they become near critical (yellow) in the medium term (right). Uranium, a fuel mineral, is considered in the Critical Materials Assessment and is plotted here but is not included on the 2023 DOE Critical Materials List. Terbium is included on the list but not shown on this graph, because there is not enough quantitative data to plot its importance and risk, according to DOE.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47982>

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