**Control Risks and the origins of the Global History of Terrorism Archive**

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From an exchange of emails with Dr Tim Wilson, I am delighted to discover that an archive of newspaper cuttings compiled by the international consultancy Control Risks in the late 1980s and early 1990s not only survives but is cherished. Now reincarnated as the Global History of Terrorism Archive at the University of St Andrews, the collection serves as a resource for researchers investigating political, social and security trends across a wide geographical arena during a crucial historical period.

Like all archives, the collection was designed to serve the interests of the institution that created it. I was myself responsible for assembling much of the Asia-Pacific material, and I thought it would be helpful to explain the collection’s origins and purpose so that future researchers are better able to evaluate its usefulness.

Control Risks was founded in 1975 as a team within the Hogg Robinson insurance company in London and became independent following a management buyout in 1982. Its original focus was on crisis management, with a speciality in helping companies respond to kidnap and ransom cases. From there it moved naturally to preventative security advice. From the beginning, its geographical scope was worldwide. The company’s first international office was in Washington DC and this was soon followed by another in Australia. Its clients included international companies based in all three countries as well as continental Europe.

The nature of Control Risks’ business meant that consultants could be called to respond to client emergencies anywhere in the world, often at short notice. To support them, the company began to develop its own information resources. In 1977 two of the company’s founders, Simon Adamsdale and Arish Turle, were detained in Colombia, while working on a kidnap case. Having been accused of complicity with the kidnappers, they were held in Bogotá’s Modelo jail for more than ten weeks before being exonerated and finally released without charge. They put their time to good use, planning the future structure of Control Risks, including the development of what became Control Risks Information Services (CRIS).

The earliest beginnings of CRIS therefore date back to the late 1970s. Roger Meares, one of the Control Risks Directors, was recruited to lead it. For a while, Roger was distracted, working on kidnap cases. He initially employed a part-time researcher and two other managers (Giles Clotworthy and Richard Baker), followed by three new researchers, Sally Bates, Naomi Raison and Chloe Palamountain. In 1980, Roger hired Hans Neubroch to serve as the first Managing Editor, together with Dr Peter Janke who became Head of Research. Both Hans and Peter had previously worked at the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC), a late Cold War think-tank. Peter in turn recruited two former ISC researchers, James Anderson and Richard Sim, and then a third researcher, Edward Grubb. I joined in 1983 as Richard’s successor.

This was of course the pre-Internet age and we depended on the print media for most of our newsgathering. Sources included the main British broadsheets (‘papers of record’) which at that time still maintained a distinguished network of foreign correspondents, as well as *Le Monde*, *Le Soir* and *El Pais*. An Associated Press teleprinter (known colloquially as the ‘bog roll’) kept us up to date with breaking news. We also subscribed to the BBC *Summary of World Broadcasts* and the US-based *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (FBIS) as well as a number of regional publications. In my case, these included the *Far Eastern Economic Review, India Today,* the *Japan Times Weekly*, and monthly publications from Pakistan and the Philippines.

To supplement printed sources, we drew on a network of regionally based ‘stringers’ (in journalistic parlance) as well as the advice of mainly UK-based academics with whom we could test our interpretations of the latest developments. We also benefited from the support of Richard Clutterbuck (1917-1998), a former army officer who had become a lecturer at Exeter University and served as an advisor to Control Risks. One of our most careful readers was Sir Clive Rose (1921-2019), a former UN ambassador to NATO, who was one of the company’s non-executive directors.

The researchers’ daily routine started with sharing the newspapers and cutting out the articles relevant to each region (taking care to make photocopies if an important article relating to a colleague’s area of interest was on the other side of the page). We stuck these on to A4 sheets and then assembled them in the ring binders which – to my pleasure – still survive in St Andrews.

At first, we worked to a monthly news cycle. CRIS’s flagship product was a monthly Subscription Service, also known as the ‘Briefing Book’. This consisted of a set of reports, supported by chronologies and ‘backgrounders’, that covered political and security developments in some 50 countries: these were sent to clients in specially designed blue binders. Every three month, there was a longer analytical report on one of our regions (in my case South or Southeast Asia), and once a year a global review of trends in political violence. In the late 1980s, CRIS began to develop an online service, originally using videotex technology, which was reviewed and updated each working day.

Since the Subscription Service was categorised by country, our filing system naturally followed a similar pattern. However, individual researchers had a degree of freedom to choose the material that was most useful for their particular purposes. For Europe our coverage focused more narrowly on terrorism and other forms of political violence. Elsewhere, our range of interests was broader and included wider political and security developments as they might affect regional stability. Illustratively, my own early reports on the Philippines discussed potential successors to President Ferdinand Marcos (1917-1989), who was eventually ousted in 1986, as well as the fortunes of the left-wing New People’s Army (NPA). Then as now, the political dominance of a relatively narrow circle of powerful families was a key consideration in Philippine politics. However, I did not then imagine that a second Ferdinand Marcos might return to power in the 2020s.

In addition to the regular monthly and then daily news analysis, we also prepared shorter and longer reports for individual clients, and the news cuttings provided the basic information required to respond to their queries. One of the first requests that came to me was for a security briefing on behalf of a senior US executive visiting plantations in the southern Philippines. Soon afterwards, I was asked to prepare a political forecast for Turkey on behalf of an American investor. My assessment drew heavily on the advice of our Ankara-based stringer. In my early months with the company, I was also given the task of preparing a report on the Solomon Islands. For this, our in-house information resources were insufficient. However, I was able to provide what I thought might be a plausible analysis after visiting the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS): its holdings included a subscription to a publication known as the *Solomon News Drum*.

Despite these outlier requests, the countries that took most of my time in the 1980s were Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, whose characteristics include a combination of investor interest and political instability. I had spent two years in India before joining Control Risks and expected to spend more time working on that country but during this period there were few requests for special reports. I remember being told that the international companies viewing India came into two categories: those who had been in the country for decades and knew everything about it; and those who thought it was too complicated to be worth touching. Surprising as it now seems, our clients’ interest in China did not start to grow until the late 1980s.

By that time, I had taken on a team-leader role as Head of Research (Peter Janke continued as Research Director until the early 1990s). Tim Parritt, John Phipps, Jake Stratton and Chris Torrens took over from me on the Asia desk. The other researchers who helped compile the archives during the period covered by the St Andrews collection include Antony Goldman, Tony Bennett, Chris Cramer, David Styan, Roger Dunn and Tara O’Connor (Africa); David Fanthorpe, David Laufer, Patrick Tooher, Gemma Garland, Gareth Crooker and Guy Dunn (Europe); Philip Somervell, David Battman and Sandy Markwick (Latin America); and Alison Connorton, Isabel Kershner, Heino Kopietz and Ronan Thomas (Middle East). Our editors included Eric Young, Jo Buckingham, Isobel Walder and Marcus Turner.

Looking back over some 40 years, I am struck by a sense of what has and has not changed. For me personally, the task of cutting up all those newspapers may have been laborious, but it helped provide a foundation of knowledge upon which I continue to draw. My own interests were never confined to the study of political violence, and my current specialities are more to do with anti-corruption and human rights. However, none of those topics make sense unless they are grounded in an understanding of the wider political and social factors that drive historical developments at the regional, national and local levels in the countries that we study.

Arguably, a similar observation can be made about Control Risks as a company. Its range of expertise is now much broader and includes areas such as cyber-risk that did not exist in the 1980s. The company has expanded from less than a hundred employees in the early 1980s to more than 3,000 now. Instead of a small research team based in London, there is now a much wider network based in 37 regional offices. Nevertheless, there is a direct line of continuity between the work that the company was doing in the 1980s and the work that it is doing now.

It is pleasing to know that the ‘steam age’ archives now held in the St Andrews collection will continue to help researchers trace their own lines of continuity when analysing the global and local political, social and economic developments that shape us all.