

NEW RISKS OF CRISIS - FRESH PERSPECTIVES FROM OPEN SOURCE

- Stresses from Cultural and Environmental Factors including Crime
- Media Sources as a Barometer and an Information Source
- Aiding a Range of Functions in Developing Situations

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OPEN SOURCE

An early British open-source handbook tells the story of a general sent to subdue an island. This island had recently been partially occupied and was in revolt. The general succeeded. He was an imaginative and decisive officer and he made extensive use of the various forms of intelligence.

He sent out ships to chart the island's coast and identify its harbours and waterways - *naval intelligence*. He surveyed the interior - *mapping* and *imagery*. He studied the weapons of the local rebels and their tactics and devised his own methods to counter them - *military intelligence*. When it suited, he made deliberately slow progress through the country, allowing his reputation to go ahead of him - *media spin*. He investigated the state of agriculture and industry, identified mineral deposits and mining potential and established that the country was worth occupying - *economic intelligence*. He had reported to him the speeches of rebel leaders and so heard their arguments and knew what they said about him - *political intelligence* and *open source*. (Some speeches are fully texted in the book.) And he studied the locals. He found out about their languages and religion and character and "he listened to the experts" - *cultural intelligence*. He learned what made the people tick, particularly that "little was accomplished by force if injustice followed", and after winning he governed accordingly.

This is not a recent book and it is about the British, not by them. It is by the historian Tacitus and is the biography of his father-in-law Gaius Julius Agricola, who subdued Britain for the Romans two thousand years ago. Plenty of sand has run through the glass since then, but the same basic ideas apply.

Monitoring the media is as old the media. Former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is supposed to have said that he got more out of reading the *Neue Zuericher Zeitung* - a Swiss daily newspaper - than out of all his intelligence briefings. Part of the humour of this is that the *Neue Zuericher* looks like an old fashioned "intelligencer" with the style of an eighteenth-century broadsheet.

All countries and governments practise media monitoring in some form or another. From the Japanese embassy in London monitoring the UK press, through the mighty German Chancellor's press office, via companies that track mentions of toothpaste manufacturers - and the like - on local music stations, to the great spin-doctoring concerns that influence every move a politician makes. Governments, parties, interest groups, transnationals - they are all at it.

This presentation is a view of how monitoring "open source" media around the world can aid different government and reporting functions in different situations, acting both as a political barometer and an information source.

I will try to indicate how they can help us understand some of the new threats to democracy and freedom.

(slide 1) BBC - INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTER

The BBC is a major broadcaster domestically within the United Kingdom and internationally. It employs around 20,000 staff, runs a number of national and international television channels, five national and around 40 local radio channels. In addition, BBC World Service radio broadcasts in 40 languages and has around 150 million listeners. There is also a major commitment to Internet services, including BBC News Online - one of the world's best-known.

Since 1939, the BBC has found it worthwhile to monitor other broadcasters - other media - around the world and it continues to support a unit to do this. The BBC does this to understand its markets and competition and to help it report the news to those markets.

(2) BBC MONITORING - AN ASSET FOR BRITAIN

The BBC also sees its monitoring service as a national asset supporting British interests. Our reporting helps inform a British and world public and deepens public understanding about what is going on in the world and why. It is a service to the British government, civil service and institutions.

In effect BBC Monitoring sees open source media reporting as helping a number of communities of interest:

- the **diplomatic** community - and the wider community of those interested in foreign affairs;
- the **defence and intelligence** - and **law-enforcement** - communities;
- the fourth estate- **broadcasters** and other **media** - and through them the British and international public;
- the legislature - **parliament** and its members;
- also the **educational** and the **business** communities;
- and what is described in Britain as "**joined-up government**" - the bits that aim to make the individual elements act as a coherent whole. In practice that means the Prime Minister's own offices.

All these "communities" , these types of organisation, can benefit from knowing what is appearing in the media around the world. And there are three types of benefit that an organisation like BBC Monitoring can offer:

1. **Individual reports** - many hundreds a day about what is happening in the world - **information**
2. A picture of what people and the the media in a country or region are saying - **opinion**
3. **Knowledge management** - assistance in wading through millions of words in numerous languages from almost innumerable media sources and making some sense out of them -

The valued-added help in data **navigation** comes from:

- knowledge of countries, languages and cultures,
- knowledge of the sources and media environment
- knowledge of the customer's needs and tools, as well as human skill to deliver the right material to suit the right function in a given situation.

(3) GLOBAL COVERAGE

BBC Monitoring's aim is to provide sustained global coverage, maintaining a wide overview of foreign media source and monitoring the key ones.

This means not just **radio and television**, but also news **agencies** and the **press** and the **Internet**.

Working in partnership with FBIS, BBC Monitoring offers output from the monitoring of around 3,000 sources in 150 countries and from 100 languages. What is offered is the product of a high level of skill and understanding.

(4) FBIS

BBC Monitoring provides global coverage through its close partnership with FBIS - the US Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The partnership works through a division of coverage and by working to similar operational and editorial standards. Each partner passes the other its monitored output - the transcripts; each partner turns these transcripts into products and services for its respective customers.

FBIS provides coverage of the Far East and Latin America. The partners share coverage of Africa, the Middle East and Europe. BBC Monitoring majors in the FSU and Central Asia. Both partners maintain a string of monitoring operations to cover their areas.

(5-6) SERVICES

BBC Monitoring's key trademark is that it tells you "**the words as spoken**" - exactly what a television service is reporting, exactly what a minister says in an interview, exactly what a treaty contains.

Around 800 reports are issued each day. Reports like these can be accessed through Internet databases, profiled directly to end-users or fed into user organisations' intranets.

Thousands of words and more than words. Also pictures, sound, information about the make up of governments and other official organisations.

It is important that this is also a service - not just a machine. At the highest level of service the users get desk-to-desk contact with the monitors who know the target countries and the topical issues.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT / CULTURAL & OTHER STRESSES

We want to illustrate what we do - and who can be assisted - by working through a scenario – an evolving hypothetical crisis. For subject matter we are using a wide range of examples that illustrate the topics of growing relevance, many to do with cultural factors.

- Terrorism
- Crime
 - including drugs, weapons, human trafficking, money laundering, corruption
- Racial hatred and genocide
- The “road to democracy”
 - including the opportunities open to women
- The environment
- The media - a common and linking factor.

[All the examples come from BBC Monitoring output.]

(7) SITUATION NORMAL

First, I ask you to imagine a “situation normal”, a country X in which we have some interest, but where there is no particular crisis. There is no crisis in our relations with X, nothing in the news, nothing really going on. So no one is interested? Not so. Actually a range of professionals have an interest. These people are specialists and experts with an ongoing need to follow what is happening. They include foreign affairs analysts, defence analysts, overseas posts, the intelligence community and international broadcasters. They are likely to be experts and understand X and look for detailed and consistent reporting - for example political, economic, security-related.

To satisfy their developing needs we are developing our source **collection** - for example in Russia, Africa and the Middle East. We need to ensure access to authoritative, representative sources [which change over time] and to maintain our language asset.

(8-10) TOPICS

A stable diet for experts might consist of policy papers (here one on Russian information security), reports on developing international cooperation (here about Russian arms exports to Iran), and reports on fighting (here casualties in Chechnya).

There are newer areas of interest. Here are two:

(11-13) CRIME

The impact of crime on the fabric of society is increasingly relevant - here crime in Russia, crime in Columbia/Peru - the links between crime, corruption, politics and power .

(14- 20) The "ROAD TO DEMOCRACY"

The media have always been prime levers of political influence as well as a barometer of the political climate. In Iran the Friday sermons preached in the mosques have carried social and political messages. The main ones are broadcast prominently - here one in support of the Palestinian intifadah. A political pulpit.

In recent months the Iranian media have been right at the centre of the political struggle between conservatives and reformists.

Similarly, the position of women in society is an increasingly prominent topic. In Europe this may be the role of women in the armed forces. In the Middle East the subject is voting rights and social pressures tensions.

All this is cultural intelligence. What is making people tick?

(21) SITUATION - EMERGING CRISIS

In stage 2 we imagine that a crisis is beginning to emerge. Two things happen.

Firstly, the audience for open source widens. New people get interested and want to know what is happening. More senior officials in foreign policy areas, more senior officers in the military, more prominent news people, some parliamentarians.

Secondly, the burden on the professionals who understand the subject begins to increase. There is more expalining to do. And there is more information to absorb in order to keep up.

(22) There is a need for clear reporting suitable for non-specialists. Speed becomes more important. We need to be sure our reports are easy to understand individually and our pool of data is easy to navigate overall.

We are working to develop our **presentation and delivery**. It must be possible to get at our data wherever you are.

TOPICS**(23-26) TERRORISM**

Terrorist attacks are alarming and destabilising and terrorist groups hard to combat. Media reporting is seen as a way of understanding the springs and origins of such groups. Here are three examples from Greece, Spain and South Africa.

(27-29) ENVIRONMENT

Environmental issues are increasingly seen as political stress factors. Water shortages and the control of supplies is regarded as a critical factor in the Middle East (seen here) and Central Asia.

Perhaps less talked about are the problems in the Far East, illustrated by drought warnings issued by the Chinese media.

(30) SITUATION - ESCALATING CRISIS

In stage 3 of the scenario the crisis escalates. Typically, interest widens as the story starts to appear on the main news programmes. The wider public is starting to get interested. The public in allied and hostile countries are paying attention and the mood being generated will be relevant to the conduct of policy. Government press officers are needing to know quickly what is being reported and how their country's policy is perceived.

This means an interest in information. What is going on in the crisis area? And what is being said about it? What is the wider media picture? What mood is developing? How are we being depicted?

(31) TOPICS

As countries - like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia - have fragmented over the past decade, so their media have proliferated. It is important to understand who the media are and what they represent. This is a significant area of expertise.

Some of these new sources operate in on a very localised basis and ways have to be found to access their message. BBC Monitoring has developed a form of Web receiver to pick up broadcasts and bring the signals back to locations where they can be monitored

(32-35) RACIAL HATRED AND GENOCIDE

Racial hatred has erupted into genocide and the media have been direct players - for instance those radios involved in incitement in Rwanda, as well as those involved in the Great Lakes situation. Stations like these that can be monitored using the new techniques.

(36) SITUATION - CONFLICT

At this point a conflict has started. The need to understand grows. Wide interest is becoming mass interest as the story leads news programmes. Special reporting is instituted - both by broadcasters and within government - and the crisis is the main preoccupation of top politicians. Active service units are engaged in the region. Alliances strive to coordinate their policy, actions and presentation. Areas of interest both concentrate - as closer detail on the focus of the conflict is required - and expand - as wider international reactions become relevant.

(37) TOPICS

The media can themselves become so directly involved that they become the targets. NATO focused on taking out broadcasting and transmitter sites in Serbia during the Kosovo campaign. NATO commanders needed to know how successful they were being. At one and the same time they found they were destroying the enemy's mouthpiece and their own source of information.

(38-39) Sources like the Chechens' own "Kavkas Center" Web site become one of the few ways of hearing the rebels' own message, as traditional media outlets are limited. From Chechnya to Mexico, the Web becomes the rebels' medium.

(40) RESOLUTION AND FALL-OUT

When a conflict is resolved (more or less satisfactorily), attention typically begins to decline and the audience gradually diminishes, until we get back close to our original audience of experts. But there remains an audience on the ground - perhaps involved in peacekeeping or constabulary duties - and with a strong need to know what is being said by the media - existing or newly established. This phase may be to do with efforts to restore democracy in which the media again plays a central role. In addition, following the media is a means of testing the local mood.

(41-49) TOPICS

The examples in this section recall the difficulties of the Serb opposition in finding a media voice in last year's elections, and the eventual role of the Serb media in bringing about Milosevic's fall by switching sides. Two further examples pick out the Libyan media's view of the Lockerbie trial outcome and a reminder how long-lasting the political fall-out of a conflict can be - Turkish anger at the French decision to recognise killings of Armenians in 1919 as genocide.

Crime flourishes in unstable situations. Examples might seem harmless. Trafficking in people is a growing horror.

Finally, there is the need to know who is who - who fills what post. BBC Monitoring is increasing its data services carrying this sort of information. Our range of Country Profiles - outlines of 180 countries, the issues facing them, their governments and media - can be found on BBC News Online.

(50-51) EFFECTIVE OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE

BBC Monitoring is aiming to provide effective open source intelligence - to help cover the needs of different functions in different situations at different times that add up to a strikingly coherent overall need. Our target: to collect the **right information**, make it **plain**, and deliver it to the **right place** at the **right time**.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a short open source "entertainment" from the archives:

DON'T IGNORE THE OBVIOUS [with apologies to James Thurber]

The goose family - father goose, mother goose and daughter goose - is sitting at home minding its business. Suddenly there is a ring at the door.

"Aha," says daughter goose. "No doubt it is a young gentleman caller for me!"

"Forget it, honey," says father goose. "I'm expecting a brush salesman come to sell me a brush. I'll open up"

Mother goose - more careful - looks out the window and sees a large, hungry-looking wolf with sharp teeth and a bushy tail.

"It's a wolf," she says. "Got wolf written all over him. Teeth and a big tail. Don't open the door."

"Don't be silly, honey," says father goose, not bothering to look. "There's no wolf activity round here. There's a bunch of guys working undercover on wolves. They'd warn us if there was anything going down. It's the brush salesman. What you think are teeth are its business cards. What you think is the tail is my brush."

So he opened the door - and the wolf ate him up.

The moral:

What's open source for the goose may not be open source for the gander...

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