

***An integrated approach to managing risk  
& protecting value in  
complex environments***

## Dr. Jason Thomas (PhD)



Jason specialises in field-based, geo-political assessments and the design and implementation of stability programs for Australian firms considering investments in challenging and complex operating environments. He also provides pre-investment and pre-travel area assessments. He works by, with and through local leadership in the field to develop adaptable approaches to establishing relationships that erode support for non-technical threats to projects by creating a community web or protection. He has a specific interest in cross-border assessments and areas located near porous international boundaries.

Jason has conducted field operations for a range of organisations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Peru, China, Philippines, Jordan, Iraq, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, PNG, Syria, Cote d'Ivoire, and southern Mali.

He completed the only successful field assessment of almost the entire TAPI route for the four consortium countries in 2014 on behalf of the Asian Development Bank. He is experienced at working with Boards, & CEOs, senior government ministers, foreign military commanders, police, the UN, US, Canadian, French, Australian, Pakistan and Afghan diplomatic representatives.

He has also conducted research into the use of kidnapping by jihadist groups, as tactic to influence Western government's strategic policy. This research is used to inform travel security and kidnap prevention training. His other research interests are focused on how terrorists and insurgents adapt when being engaged by Special Operations Forces.

Jason is the Program Manager for the graduate risk management program at Swinburne University and the MBA unit on high risk strategies. He advises Australian Industry Group members. Jason is interested in applying networked based biological frameworks to deflect risks to people and projects.

Jason completed his PhD (Curtin University) in 2016 and uses the OODA Loop to analyse Salafi-Jihadi inspired home-grown terrorism as a tactic of asymmetric warfare. He has an M.A (Distinction) from Otago University, NZ. Jason is a Paul Harris Fellow.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Capabilities Statement

Our objective is to enable your organisations to exploit uncertainty and achieve your strategic objectives.

We can team with you or be deployed independently to analyse and determine the non-technical risks in dynamic and complex project environments from which to design and implement locally applicable solutions.

Our field-based approach enables clients to obtain a deep, contextual understanding of the relationships that run through the geo-political, country, local, tribal and cross-border networks, which can affect the long-term value of a project.

Risk identification, evaluation and treatment is achieved through:

1. Going in early without pre-conceived positions.
2. A multilayered approach to mitigate against threats to people and assets that may come from political, tribal, criminal or insurgent influences within a community.
3. Working by, with and through all layers of leadership (within the company and local community).
4. Designing conditions-based, culturally relevant models that build reciprocal relationships and reduce risk.
5. Frank, timely & impartial communications to the Board, CEO and Senior Leadership team.

## Examples of Projects

- Wildlife crime prevention assessment, DRC.
- Strategic risk assessment and stability design for a global beverage (Mexico).
- Geo-Political Advice for projects in Senagal, Indonesia and the DRC.
- Field-assessment of the kidnap strategies of the Abu Sayyaf Group, (Philippines).
- In-country field assessment multiple locations in (PNG).
- USD7.2b Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline (all countries)
- USD5.9b Tampakan Copper & Gold Project (Philippines)
- Seconded to Philippine Special Forces Unit to assess Typhoon Yolanda damage (East Samar)
- USD1.2b Rio Blanco Copper & Gold Project (Peru)
- USD250m Sissingué Gold Project (Cote d'Ivoire & Southern Mali)
- Northern Iraq & Syria cross border assessment and Strategic security design (Northern Iraq)
- Southern Syria cross border assessment (Jordan)
- Geo-political risk assessment for mining feasibility visit (Mexico)
- Feasibility Assessment post-ADF withdrawal– DFAT Aid Program (Afghanistan)

## Services

Our objective is to challenge assumptions and unlock meaning from trends within dynamic markets. This can be achieved through the following menu of services and methodology.

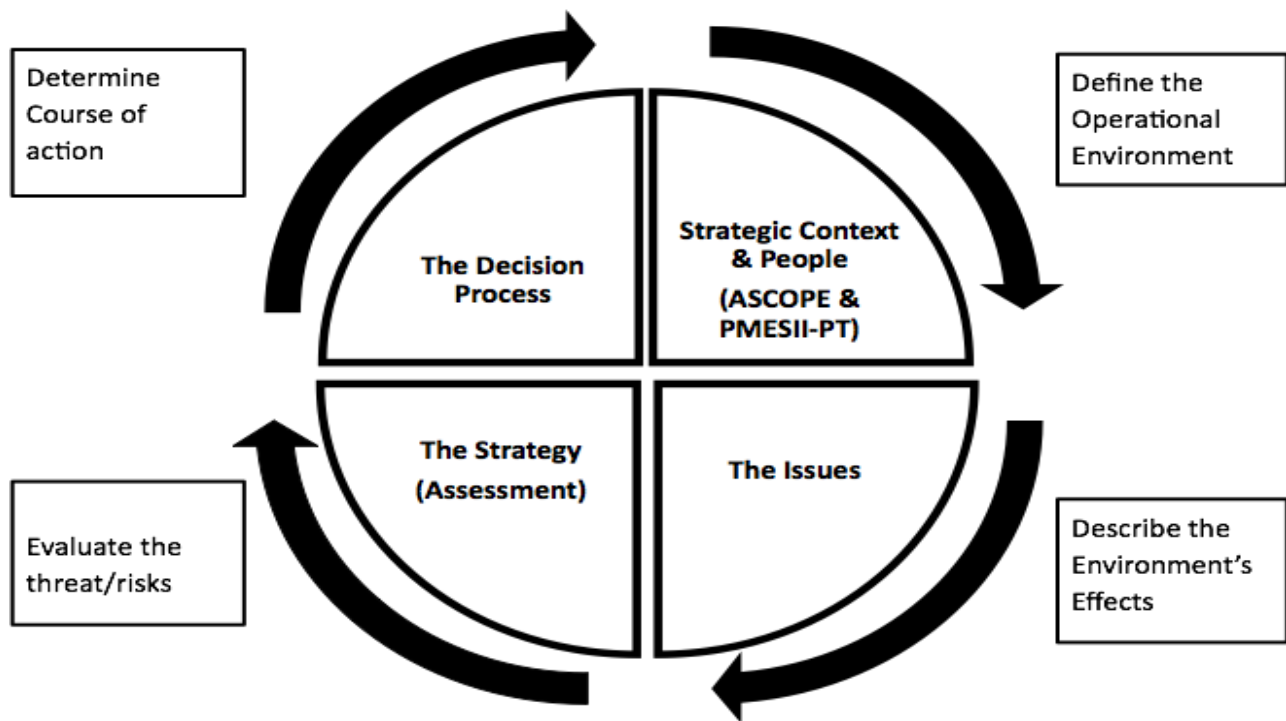
### STRATEGIC ADVICE & DESIGN

- Geo-political & Regional Risk Analysis
- Country Risk Assessments
- Risk Mitigation & Stability Operations Design.
- Policy modelling & development

### EXECUTION, OPERATIONS & TRAINING

- Field-Based Risk Assessment (due diligence/early works/capital raising/insurance)
- Implementation of Stability & Mitigation Strategy (link design with execution).
- Monitoring & Evaluation (effects-based)
- Travel security & kidnap prevention training.

## Strategic Methodology



## Monitoring & Evaluation

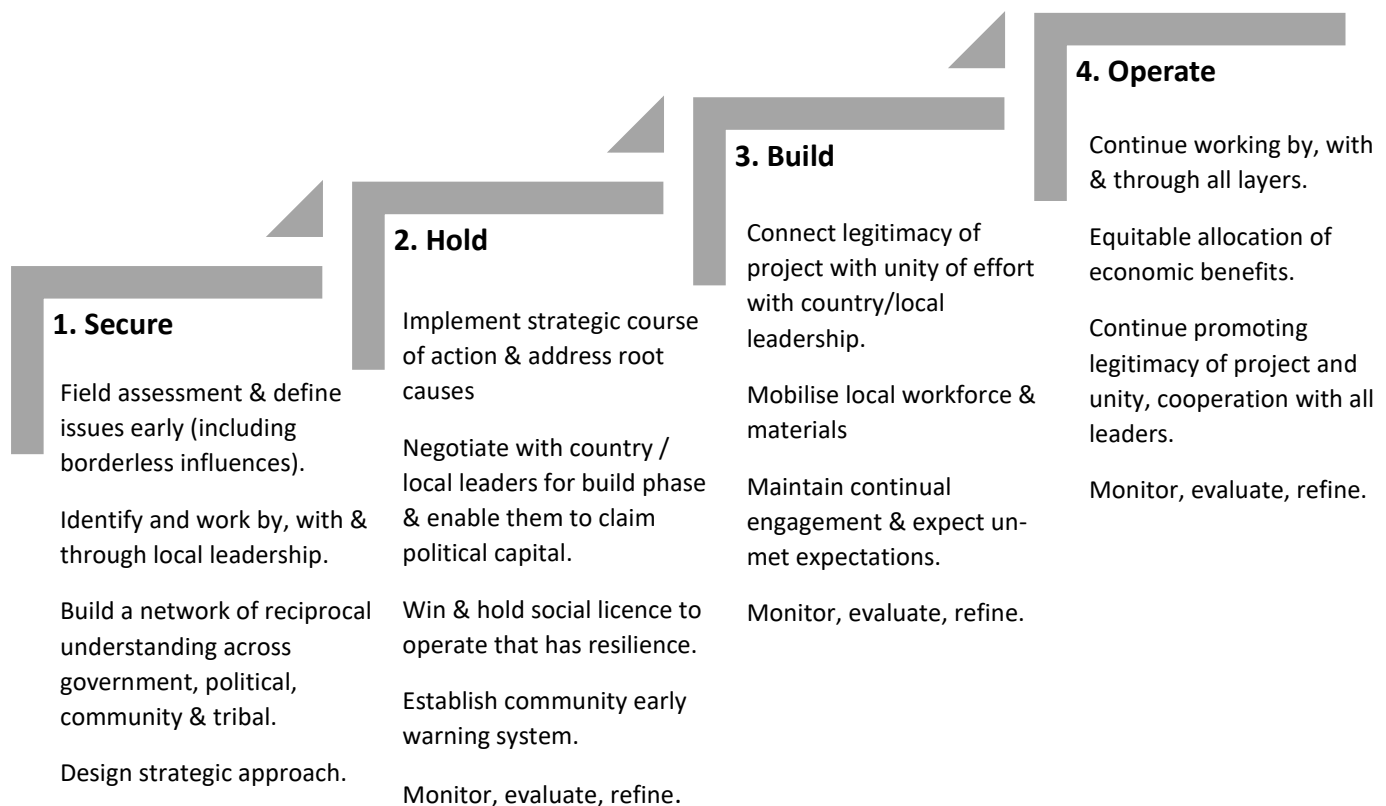
A project stability plan will require continual monitoring and evaluation to establish a measure of performance and a measure of effectiveness.

- Measure of Effectiveness = Are we doing the right thing?
- Measure of Performance = Are we doing things right?

The monitoring & evaluation is focused on outcomes as opposed to activity, and on maintaining a radar for second and third tier effects within the context of the project environment.

Findings from M&E feed into adaptability and conditions-based refinement as a range of external factors may change or be changed by a client's presence – it is a continuum of *Observing, Orientating, Deciding and Acting* to remain adaptable and resilient.

## Design & Integration across the Project Cycle





## **CASE STUDIES OF COMPLETED PROJECTS**

## **Case Study 1 – Australian Mid-Cap Resource Company in Africa**

### **Introduction**

In 2015 the CEO of an Australian mid-cap resource company with operations in West Africa requested our services following suspected Jihadists attacks close to their project and located on a porous border region. In addition, the project faced the uncertainty of a Presidential election and an attempted Coup in a neighbouring country that threatened regional stability and investor confidence. The gold price and the stability around the project were the two factors to determine if early works should proceed.

### **Approach & Implementation**

#### ***Phase 1 – Field Assessment***

The recommended approach was to conduct a low-profile, field-based political, community, tribal and cross-border risk assessment. This included due diligence on relevant regional geo-political risk factors as they applied to the Australian investment.

The field-assessment involved directly travelling to the project area and engaging with all appropriate government, military, community, tribal and religious stakeholders. This included direct discussions with international stakeholders such as the US, French and Canadian diplomatic missions, the UN, the African Development Bank and other multi-national companies with assets in the target country. Extensive cross-border stakeholder discussions were also required. In-depth, semi-structured, contextual interviews and discussions took place with all stakeholders as well as extensive visual examination of key terrain locations, villages, check-points, roads and artisanal mining camps within 40 – 50 km of the project.

#### ***Phase 2 – Design of Stability Strategy and Framework***

Data gathered from the field-assessment informed the design of a project stability strategy. A contextual analysis and description of the geo-political risks and opportunities were also included. These findings were presented to the Board who determined to proceed with early works construction.

Solutions and recommendations included the establishment of quarterly dialogue with Australian international and diplomatic partners based in-country, the development of a cross-border community-web of protection around the project, a stability liaison group with government, military and tribal leaders and close monitoring of regional government, political and terrorist threats. A kidnap prevention and travel security program was also established.

#### ***Phase 3 – Execution & Operations***

The Board then invited us to implement the stability strategy working by, with and through their in-country team. This included the development of deeper engagement with all international and diplomatic stakeholders and direct on the ground monitoring of the Presidential election. The outcome resulted in confidence of the Board and Project Director to maintain their course of action throughout this period and report to shareholders and the market accordingly.

## **Case Study 2 – Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline**

### **Introduction**

In 2014 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) required in-depth due diligence of the proposed TAPI project for the purpose of completing the pre-funding feasibility study and to accurately inform the Consortium leaders that included Presidents, Energy and Foreign Ministers of the four TAPI countries. This is one of the most challenging geo-political projects in the world.

The engineering firm retained by the ADB had developed the construction and operations plan for the pipeline and its location without any consultation with key stakeholders on the ground.

### **Approach & Implementation**

#### ***Phase 1 – Field Assessment***

A field-assessment was recommended as the preferred method of collecting accurate primary source information to determine the impact of the TAPI project on the human terrain as well as the risk factors from terrorism, community and tribal issues, and interference from powerful regional states.

The field assessment involved traveling almost the entire route of the TAPI project and engaging directly with key informed stakeholders that included government ministers, Presidential offices, military commanders and intelligence services, Provincial governors, as well as community and tribal leaders, US-NATO coalition commanders, cross-border communities, multi-national agencies such as the UN and the World Bank, and diplomatic missions.

The assessment included human terrain mapping of recent historical and anticipated direct and indirect actions against the project, photography of key terrain locations, cross-border inspections, obtaining security clearances from each consortium country to inspect closed locations of their country and off-the-record engagement with high-level officials. The assessment took place in the context of a Presidential inauguration within Afghanistan and the draw-down of US-NATO forces.

The field assessment was a sensitive exercise and required resisting efforts by local and regional powers to influence the observations, recommendations and outcome of the report. This required careful management of information, confidentiality of informed stakeholders, electronic security protection and kidnap prevention strategies for the field assessor.

#### ***Phase 2 – Design of Stability Strategy and Framework***

Data from the field-assessment informed the design of a fully-costed TAPI stability strategy and plan for the development, construction and operational phases of the project. A complicating factor was that the TAPI project spanned four separate sovereign nations with different regulatory frameworks.

The stability strategy and framework resulted in Turkmengaz being nominated as the Consortium leader and the four TAPI countries agreeing to proceed with inaugurating the project for the next phase that began in 2015.