

## “Although she be but little, she is fierce...”

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**A common question asked of KCS is, “Who are your competitors?”. While the stock answer would be to mention the giants-by-size Kroll or Control Risks, or the notorious more discreet firms Hakluyt or Diligence, in truth neither division quite hits the mark. KCS is a firm occupying a very particular market position, in a very carefully chosen manner, which collectively have allowed the firm to achieve high levels of success in a highly complex and competitive sector while betraying none of the principles of intelligence.**



Although KCS is a small firm, this is by design. The company has a key core staff, in offices split between the UK and Thailand, but this is only the ‘tip of the iceberg’. These analysts have access to over a thousand human assets around the world, who are able to supply sensitive intelligence not available through traditional channels, back to the team. Given that these assets will have many decades of experience and position in their chosen markets, their actionable and reliable intelligence enables the KCS analytical team to go that extra mile with their thinking and deliver a product with real ‘edge’.

We are also able to call upon the skills of professionals in the cyber-arena, who not only have the technical aptitude to identify and mitigate compromises and vulnerabilities within a given system but also who have ‘presence’ on the dark web and who are able to extend their reach to set a particular problem within a wider, and vital, context.

This decentralised network, utilising qualified analysts to parse and expound upon the material drawn from human assets directly on-the-ground and cyber-experts in the dark web and beyond, creates a fusion of intelligence and enables KCS to operate according to the needs of the Client but in a flexible manner, and with broad reach to go places where other investigators cannot and go beyond traditional means of enquiry in an effort to secure ‘the bigger picture’.

Examples of recent cases bear out this ability to punch well above our weight. In the recent Philippines presidential election, there were allegations that multiple voting machines in a handful of districts had been deliberately hacked in an attempt to compromise the result. While large cyber-security companies were stalling on issues of price and practicalities, KCS was able to come in ‘under the radar’ and solve what was a time-sensitive problem in an effective manner through having instant access to the right people, in the right places, and in an actionable manner.

KCS also worked for two years for one of Russia’s largest industrial companies, investigating a highly opaque web of interests, shell companies, and assets belonging to two particular oligarchs who conducted a campaign of violence and intimidation against business competitors in an attempt to monopolise their particular industry, and then embarked upon an effort to conceal their holdings when the competitor began to seek restitution. Given that this investigation took place across three continents, required a variety of investigative techniques and no small amount of breadth and depth in order to uncover the full range of assets necessary for the Client to be satisfied.

The Eastern European market in particular has brought complex cases that see the intersection of government and organised crime interests (to the extent that there is a difference) against a Client in a manner that requires extraordinarily careful handling in order to prevent disaster. For example, the ‘journey’ of one major industrial firm into Eastern Europe began with a senior executive being physically assaulted by hired thugs, for not making the requisite bribes (a practice with which they never engaged), with policing authorities not interested and lawyers claiming powerlessness due to a lack of ‘evidence’. Or, the market entry of a major foodstuffs producer into one particular city known for its intermingling of criminal and government elements, which began to suffer repeated instances of harassment and intimidation after refusing to cut the local governor in on deals, resulting in contrived charges being alleged and threats being made to both the company’s continued existence and the lives of those working in-country.

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Both of these cases required highly discreet investigation to establish the parameters and players arrayed against the Client, and very considered action in just the right manner in order to resolve the problems. In each case, dialogue with extremely high-powered individuals within Russia was established in order for these figures to act as *krysha* (cover) for the firms and ensure that they would no longer be subject to illegal activity. The success of such an approach rested entirely on the quality and level of connections within Eastern Europe, rather than how many people (or how much money) could be thrown at the problem. Discretion wins the day.

A long history of repeat clients, including some of the world's biggest law firms and industrial companies, is also testament to the reach that KCS can boast, and the quality of the intelligence that is supplied. Notably, some years ago the company won the exclusive contract to conduct the full security review for the Sakhalin Islands on behalf of a major oil firm in the biggest such project in history, proving that size is no impediment to creating transparency.

Essentially, whether the aim is to uncover all the risks, weaknesses and threats associated with a prospective or current entity, or to conduct a more complex and wide-ranging investigation into an already-present issue that cannot be handled through normal channels, KCS has the reach and aptitude to offer real value to a Client.

### KCS Group Europe - Strategic Intelligence & Corporate Security

A leading provider of security and intelligence services, we operate discreetly in some of the world's most difficult environments on complex cases of fraud, theft, corruption, or market dynamics. We gather intelligence through the discreet use of human sources to level the playing field and help our clients to identify and deal with any risks, weaknesses and threats which could impact on their business financially or reputationally.

Our key areas of expertise include:

- Corporate Intelligence Services
- New market or sector entry research
- Know your customer screening

In addition, through our specialist team at KCS IS, we also offer a unique service in the areas of Cyber Security and Cyber Risk. This covers penetration testing, vulnerability assessments, intelligence gathering and cyber security audits, providing unparalleled, analysis, contingency planning, and implementation for our clients.

To find out more or to arrange a meeting to discuss your business needs, please...  
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