

The interview
Dan Kaine tells CIR about his recent assignments

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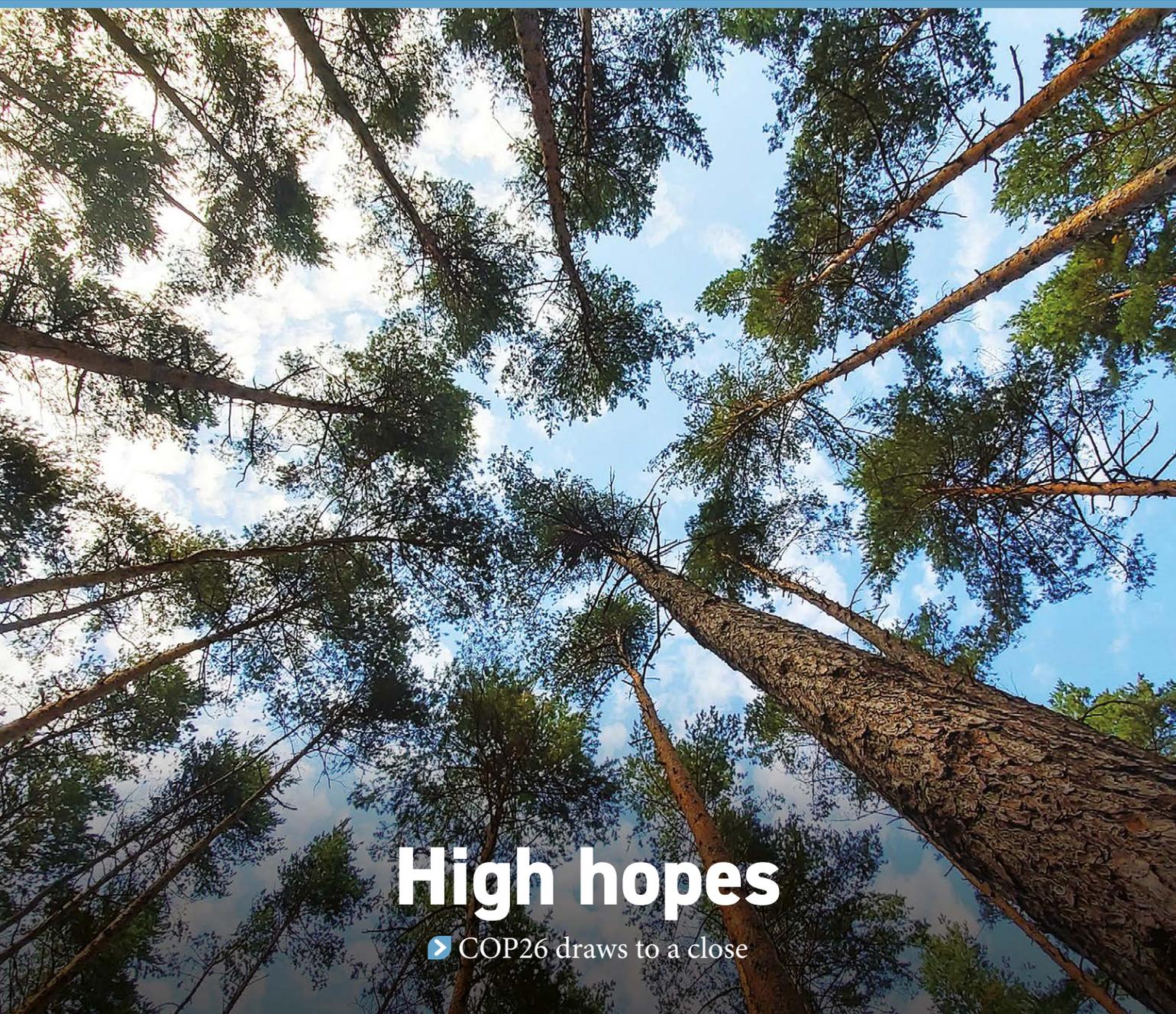
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An instinct for risk

✔ Deborah Ritchie speaks to Dan Kaine about his work in Afghanistan, West Africa and Japan, where his firm, Inherent Risks, has recently been involved in a number of crisis response assignments

What can you tell us about the COVID-19 compliance programme you created and ran for the Olympic Games in Japan?

After successfully leading a team that provided on the ground risk advisory and incident response for sponsors of the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil, I was approached by an insurer to conduct a risk assessment and travel risk management plan for staff attending the postponed 2020 Olympic Games in Japan.

At the time, there was a lot of speculation in the media about whether the Games would go ahead or not, and sponsors were receiving media backlash for planning to attend during a global pandemic. Fans had also been ordered not to attend.

A global event like the Olympic Games involves a considerable amount of support staff providing anything from administration and logistics, to nutrition and medical functions. Inherent Risks was initially retained to conduct a COVID-19 compliance risk assessment for 37 people to attend the Games. This was later increased to 79 – from eight different countries.

Ultimately we were asked by the insurer for an honest opinion of whether or not this was possible, safely, and if so, to formulate a plan as to how it might work.

Our first hurdle was that the 37 people belonged to six organisations (later increased to 79 people from a total of 11 organisations from eight countries). This added to the complexity as each of these organisations had their own risk management and duty of care

policies in place, based on their own countries' government guidelines, and not one cohesive plan.

Inherent Risks presented a comprehensive and proactive plan to the insurer that would require all 11 organisations to comply with one standardised duty of care and travel risk management plan, that was supported by a multilingual, 24/7 special assistance team set up specifically for this event.

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Over four weeks, our team successfully managed 167 journeys to and from Japan, coordinated and recorded daily COVID-19 testing, tracked over 2,500 local journeys to and from hotels and events, provided medical assistance for 12 cases, security assistance for three cases, and trauma counselling for one.

In addition, our team handled over 160 calls and emails from staff and their families after a 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Japan.

COVID-19 is not the only virus outbreak, of course. What can you

tell us about the Ebola situation in West Africa, and other health risks?

I've personally been involved in providing pandemic response in Africa since 2015 when the Ebola outbreak hit Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. At that time, we coordinated the medical evacuation of close to 300 oil and gas company staff from the region, and helped with getting medical supplies, which is an extremely complex task in West Africa.

Many of the lessons learned from those times I have adapted to assisting clients throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Those experiences also led to me completing fields of study with Harvard University on Preventing and Responding to the Next Pandemic; the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on Tackling the Novel Coronavirus; and the World Health Organisation on Rapid Response to Pandemics.

During the COVID pandemic, Inherent Risks was called upon to provide supply chain sourcing and logistics support for an Ebola outbreak in Liberia, followed by a separate, but linked outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our first task was to coordinate the pick-up of medical tents and crates of PPE from three separate countries, transport them by air, and then safely deliver them by road to two field hospitals, in two extremely complex and challenging environments.

We were also asked to source additional medical tents, PPE and Ebola vaccines that needed to be cold-chain transported and stored.

After successfully sourcing medical tents from Germany, Dubai and South Africa, approved PPE from Turkey, and vaccines in Switzerland, we were faced with the complex task of coordinating transport that was required at extremely short notice.

Through our existing global partnerships, we canvassed their capabilities and availabilities to transport this cargo from five separate countries, during a global lockdown, and into two regions that required additional permits, and in-country security to guarantee its safe delivery.

We deployed our retained crisis consultants from Sierra Leone and South Sudan to Liberia and DRC to secure the required permits, conduct a risk assessment of the supply routes, and coordinate the required ground security. At the same time, we organised delivery of all cargo to the relevant departure airports for inspection, and coordinated charter flights.

What can you tell readers about your recent assignment in Afghanistan?

You may have seen world leaders and intelligence agencies quoted in the media as saying that the coup by the Taliban in Afghanistan was unforeseen. That's simply inaccurate.

On the 11th August, Inherent Risks contacted several organisations with expat and local employees on the ground to inform them of a potential security situation, and to advise them to consider evacuating their staff and assets from the country. This advisory came as

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a result of the Taliban closing all border crossings between the 5th and 6th August. By the 9th, they had seized control of all land borders.

Local intelligence also suggested that the Taliban were closing in on Kabul as early as the 10th, and by the 13th, they had completely surrounded the capital. On the 14th August, the US Embassy (followed by several other countries) warned all of their citizens to evacuate the country immediately. The Taliban took control of the country on the 15th.

By the early hours of the 16th, we were inundated with calls and emails. Our first task was to identify safe havens for 24 foreign citizens, and to coordinate transportation out of Kabul so staff could hibernate until a more comprehensive evacuation plan could be established.

This resulted in providing foreign embassies with the exact locations of their citizens, should rescue operations be conducted, and providing advice to those hibernating on what to do, and what not to do in this situation.

From the 16th to the 31st of August (the deadline of which the Taliban had given coalition troops to leave the country) Inherent Risks staff provided advisory services to 11 separate organisations, assisting 91 foreign citizens, and over 300 Afghans to evacuate the country.

As we speak, we continue to provide ongoing consultancy to expats and locals who chose to remain behind, or who did not manage to evacuate.

What makes your recently launched advisory unique in the market?

Inherent Risks at its core is a risk advisory firm that specialises in finding solutions to complex problems in challenging environments. By design, we also have two completely separate, but fully integrated divisions providing medical assistance and

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crisis management services. This enables us to provide a proactive and holistic turnkey solution, not only to the insurance industry, but to organisations with people and assets abroad. This month, for instance, we start a new contract with an international NGO with contracts in South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Iraq. They originally approached us knowing that their 'end-game' was to secure Inherent Risks as their medical assistance and incident response provider, and tasked us with finding them an insurance carrier that has the risk appetite for the countries they operate in, and a carrier with whom we had an agreement.

Through specialty brokers we have worked with and built relationships with over several years, we were able to identify a carrier that requested several specific risk assessments, including an in-country risk assessment, which we carried out. The carrier also placed a caveat on the NGO that all local and expat staff needed to undergo country-specific hazardous environment training, which our firm also conducted.

As well as providing medical assistance and incident response, which includes emergency evacuations, we also provide secure journey management, and coordinate COVID-19 testing, as well as alcohol and drug testing for over 10,000 total trips per year for this client.

▶ Interview by Deborah Ritchie