

Chris Donnelly
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Keith Sargent; Guy Spindler

Hi Keith
Thanks for your call and email.

I am sorry that only now have I read this through. I do appreciate very much all the effort that went into the proposal to get it into the FCO as a placeholder. It did its job, and had I been compos mentis I would have been able to contribute to it at the time.

My assessment on reading it now is that this approach will not work in practice and moreover looks too much like a standard PR firm's approach to get the FCO buy in that we will need. I see what the FCO mean by "too much research"

It may be that in my ignorance, I underestimate what can be done by research from London. But, drawing on my experience in the 1990s, my approach would be very different. What I will sketch out below is what I suggest our revised bid looks like. If Edelman do not like this they may wish to reconsider whether they want to partner with us or not. But there would be a great deal of work down the line for them, and they would learn a new approach!

1. we need a local partner in each country to do a detailed insider analysis/assessment of the specifics of governance in each country which creates the basis for vulnerabilities to interference and corrupt practices. Our local clusters can do this job or find someone else they trust to do it for us. only locals can judge what it is safe to do and what to avoid.

2. the local partner then needs to do or commission an assessment of the agents or promoters of corruption and influence, eg key businessmen or politicians, as well as opposition politicians and clean businessmen, journalists etc who can be allies. These we bring out on trips to London, HQ NATO etc. Our Greek clusters are a good model, and we should involve them, as is their report on Ivan Savvides in Greece

3. this will need personal meetings with our local colleagues and their contacts, possibly in a neighbouring country. NB our Moldova cluster is meeting in Lithuania this week. Use of protonmail and whats app etc. Progress and activities are determined by what the locals consider safe practice. It cannot be rushed or decided from London

4. once the country assessment is done (in each country separately) we need a brainstorming with the local teams to develop a local strategy, devise practical activities tailored to local needs, and propose ideas they may not have thought of. This also includes how to engage with potential local allies. In Serbia, for example, we used the Club de Madrid to get the former Spanish MOD, Narcis Serra, to act as mentor to the then MOD Boris Tadic. I brought Tadic to London via the Atlantic Treaty Association (of which IfS is now the UK Rep) to expand his horizons and link him to MPs. He eventually became President.

5. In each country, we need to identify a national goal we can use as a lever, and start with that country. E.g. in North Macedonia/FYROM, they want to get into NATO. We also need, therefore, to work with HQ NATO on this. I have all the necessary contacts.

6. this gives us the basis to devise a tailored "Good Governance" strategy to help the country qualify e.g. for NATO membership. This will be based on basic principles and local specifics. In the 1990s I used Robert Klitgaard from Witwatersrand Uni, later in California. This would be a great role for Mark Pyman if he's interested.

7. we would engage with the UK and other embassies to get their support and advice, and access to their relevant national institutions. I found the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Italian Guardia di Finanza to be the most useful.

8. we would also need to engage with local big business that want access to markets and see e.g. NATO membership as beneficial. In Slovakia in the 1990s I used UK companies wanting to do business to engage with local businesses. We set up the Klub 500 of companies with more than 500 employees. We got UK MPs via the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to teach them how business relates to, and can fund and lobby, political parties legitimately in a democracy, instead of their then model of cash in brown envelopes.

9. In the 1990s, where we could we got Henry Strickland to work in Govt bureaucracies and businesses building behavioural change bottom up. We engaged the Orthodox Bishop to the EU, Emmanuel of Reghion, to bring leaders of all religions from Belgrade to a workshop in Vlatadon monastery in Greece to get them onside (He is now Metropolitan of France) and also engaged the Catholic hierarchy via a parish and diocesan link, which gave us good local publicity and trust.

10. we engaged the military, police and Services, taking recently retired senior UK counterparts to talk to locals and discuss collaboration, work after retirement etc, Gen Sir Rupert Smith and Air Marshal Sir John Walker led this for me. It diffused local opposition from "Power Ministries". More study visits abroad etc.

11. What I needed in the 1990s and did not have was an equivalent of Edelman who could scale up successful activities to have real impact. I think there is a LOT of work for them in achieving the essential behavioural change. E.g. advertising campaigns on TV promoting change, a TV soap opera looking at the problem of corruption etc. English language training giving the right messages. Courses in country and in London or elsewhere teaching politicians, academics and journalists.

12. also different now is that Russian influence and money is now better entrenched than it was, and we should expect more opposition. But if we are alert to this risk we can manage it.

I think the FCO would be more sympathetic to an approach like the above. It needs costing etc. would be grateful for your comments

Xxx
Chris