

Managing Risks & Seizing Opportunities: Insights in Geopolitics for Public Affairs Teams

Nicholas Whyte, APCO Worldwide

nwhyte@apcoworldwide.com

Twitter: [@nwbrux](https://twitter.com/nwbrux); Mastodon: [@nwhyte@wandering.shop](https://mastodon.social/@nwhyte)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nwhyte/>

Where I'm coming from

- Belfast
- Bosnia
- Balkans + thinktanks
- Public Affairs



The situation

Our clients tend to be:

- Business-focussed
- Impatient with politics
- Defensive of sunk costs

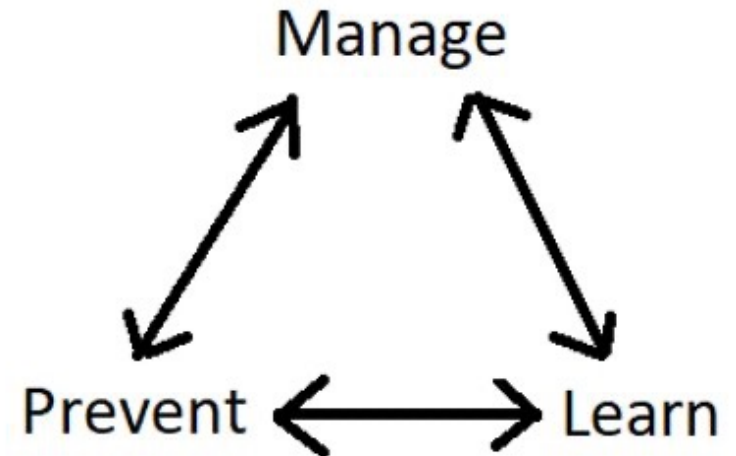


We need to be:

- Alert to possible risk
- Ready to mitigate problems
- Searching for positive opportunities

What do clients want?

- Make the problem go away!
- Prevent the problem from happening
- Have a trusted source of advice



How much can you know?

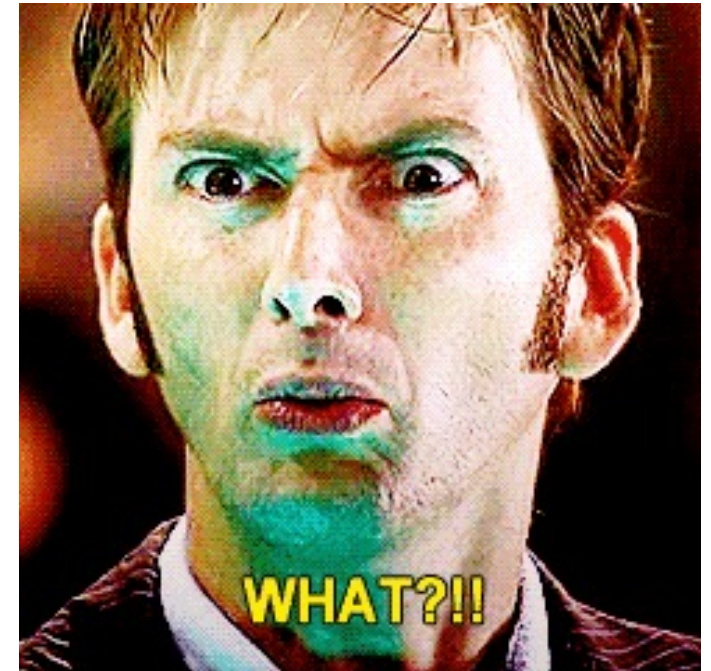
Open Source:

- Media
- Specialist analysis (including APCO)
- Parliamentary speeches

Private sources

- Diplomats
- Academics
- Business contacts / LinkedIn

Доверяй, но проверяй



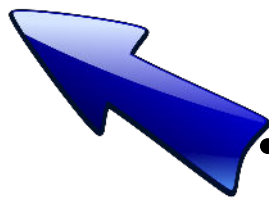
APCO Geopolitical Risk Radar



Key global and EU trends

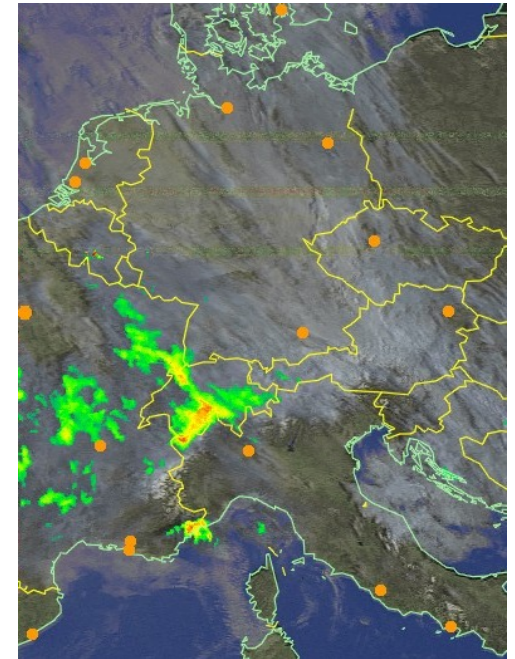
Global:

- Threat of recession
- Increased cost of living (and of doing business)
- US v EU v China protectionism – corporate restructuring
- Rise of cyberattacks



Europe:

- Ukraine war
- Domestic political weakness (FR + DE)
- EU legislation on digital sovereignty and supply chains
- All the other stuff too



What does the work product look like?

- Continuous conversation
- Monitoring
- Specific briefings
- Thought leadership support
- Guidance on engagement with senior stakeholders
- Corporate social responsibility activations



When risk gets specific

- Identify the problem
- Ensure clarity of scope of work
- Gather information ruthlessly
- Identify key external stakeholders
- Decide on key deliverables
- Ensure client buy-in



Ethical considerations

(In the shadow of Qatargate)

- We are under scrutiny as never before.
- No allegation of involvement by any Brussels-based consultancy.
- Crucial to stay not only within the law but within the EU Code of Conduct and the EPACA/SEAP Codes of Conduct.
- Also crucial to insist on the same from our clients.
- We all gain by practicing the highest standards of ethical behaviour



Geopolitical risk is coming to a client near you

- Are you ready?

