



## **TURNING A CRISIS INTO AN OPPORTUNITY**

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## **My Background**

- BBC Journalist and TV Executive
- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
- Department for Constitutional Affairs
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office





## Outline of Presentation

- Crisis as an Opportunity
- Case studies (foot and mouth disease, Royal Navy hostages)
- Lessons Learned
- Opportunities for Europe



*“When written in Chinese the word crisis is composed of two characters. One represents danger, and the other represents opportunity.”*

**John F Kennedy, Indianapolis, 1959**





## Crisis as Exposure

*“A crisis not only exposes what an organisation does, or does not, do - but reveals what it is truly about”*

- Execution
- Planning
- Strategic Intent



## Case Study: Foot and Mouth





## Case Study: Iran



## Specific Lessons: Your response

- Know it will end
- Have a strategic aim, with clear, consistent messages
- Scale up and mobilise
- Be visible and provide context, facts and explanation
- Pace the effort, learn and be ready for setbacks





## Specific Lessons: Dealing with others

- Nature abhors a vacuum - fill it intelligently
- Relationships are stronger than the story
- Be ready to work with new people
- Show you are listening and adapting
- Facts, as well as arguments



## Europe

*“Last week, 15 Europeans were kidnapped from Iraqi territorial waters by Iranian Revolutionary Guards...if Europe is as it claims to be, what's it going to do about it? Where's the solidarity? Where's the action?”*

Timothy Garton Ash, *The Guardian*, March 29th 2007





## Europe

*“... the people in Iran do have to understand that if something happens to citizens of the European Union, the European Union reacts in a solidarity manner with the countries and the member states and with the people of that country.”*

Javier Solana, Bremen, March 30th 2007



## Crisis: a learning opportunity for Europe

•**Execution** - Support the frontline. Power is “at the edge”.

•**Planning** - Emphasis on fast co-ordination. It’s a bigger picture, with implications for long-term, as well as mid-term.

•**Strategic Intent** - We must serve and be seen to serve the needs of Europe’s citizens. Close the democratic deficit.





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