Re: Meeting with Meta today

jowalsh@usaid.gov Johnny Walsh Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 10:05:19 AM Eastern Standard Time
To: mkaran@usaid.gov Meral Karan
Cc: jswantek@usaid.gov Jason Swantek, lpoggiali@usaid.gov Lisa Poggiali, lmeils@usaid.gov Lorri Anne Meils, jaford@usaid.gov Jared Ford, jmachleder@usaid.gov Joshua Machleder, lakirby@usaid.gov Lauren Kirby, rtucci@usaid.gov Rosarie Tucci, lpavlovic@usaid.gov Laura Pavlovic, dblack@usaid.gov David Black, lmckechnie@usaid.gov Laura McKechnie

Week after next is fine with me, assuming folks are okay with doing the meeting in the first place. And yes let's definitely invite ITR.

On Thu, Jan 6, 2022 at 10:03 AM Meral Karan <mkaran@usaid.gov> wrote:

> Thanks Johnny. Definitely lots to mull over and possibly a great opportunity. I'm definitely interested in that threats briefing - could we do it after our strategy discussion next week? That allows us all to get our ducks in a row more broadly beforehand.
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> Anyone feel otherwise? Otherwise, I would just make sure Sabeen or folks at ITR are looped in too.
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> Thanks again,
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> Meral Karan
>
> Team Lead, Democratic Resilience and Innovation Team
> Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
> US Agency for International Development
>
> [redacted]

On Thu, Jan 6, 2022 at 9:09 AM Jason Swantek <jswantek@usaid.gov> wrote:

> Thanks, Johnny. Adding in Laura McKechnie, the CSM Media/Digital sub-team lead.
>
> Jason Swantek
> Democracy Officer
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On Thu, Jan 6, 2022 at 12:26 AM Johnny Walsh <jowalsh@usaid.gov> wrote:

> > As I discussed with some of you beforehand, I met today with Facebook/Meta's Brian Rice (former Kerry staffer and their overall lead for outreach to the Executive branch and Shaarik Zafar (former DOS Special Envoy to Muslim Communities, now with the DC office's Public Policy team). Colin Thomas-Jensen passed them my way; it was quite a positive meeting. Highlights:
> >
> > - They led by saying they fully appreciate all the reasons people hate FB, but they/the company want to be leaders in advancing democracy and countering digital authoritarianism. Thought S4D was a real success but wished it had gone bigger and been more specific on the digital auth issue. (...and, of course, that there had been less trashing of FB).
> >
> > - Drawing on what Josh and Lorri sent, I offered three initial categories where I could imagine cooperating: FB helping countries implement Summit commitments during the YOA, creating special access for USAID partners to various FB perks (ad credits, audience data, etc etc), and expanding content moderation to places FB doesn't

adequately cover, including reference to B-Tech. We discussed each in quasi-detail, and Brian was extremely positive on all three. He said we should work on details, but all are entirely within the realm of what FB could and would do.

- As a next step, they proposed a sort of "threats briefing" where some of their team present the key digital authoritarianism trends they're seeing, ostensibly to me but really to a group of us, and we can do likewise if we see fit. Then if we all think the three buckets still make sense, we could do a dedicated meeting on each, with whoever would be most interested.

Working with Meta is thorny, and we should have a group huddle to talk this through. At the same time, the degree of willingness on their end to do specific things was striking, even if it comes from some amount of guilt/PR desperation over the perception that their company broke the world. Would love to hear this group's reactions.

Also, Jason, sorry I didn't include you on an earlier note I sent teeing up this meeting. Are there other DRG folks I'm forgetting who should be in on this?

--
Johnny Walsh
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
U.S. Agency for International Development

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