
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: XXX
FROM: (MOUNTAINRUNNER)
SUBJECT: USING ICT TO BUILD PEACE, STABILITY, AND DENY SANCTUARY
DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2006
CC: --

Tasked with finding a use for a small amount of previously allocated funds made available when another project came in under budget, the following plan is a soft approach to engage a susceptible population for mutual benefit. This project requires a relatively minor investment, has little risk, and engages existing and future opinion leaders, encourages economic independence and food security.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project uses information and communication technologies (ICT) in a country that is of great strategic importance to the United States: Nigeria. Nigeria is a regional hub for social, economic, physical security, and continues to expand its influence in these areas through participation in UN and African Union peacekeeping, significant investments in information technology infrastructure, and a rapidly expanding movie industry among others.

As we seek to deepen our relationships with Gulf of Guinea nations, the peace and stability of Nigeria is of critical importance. A deeper relationship with Nigeria, in particular, is not without challenges. Nigeria has a rich and long history of Islam extending 1,200 years. Slightly more than half of the country is Muslim, the other half is Christian, making it the largest Islamo-Christian country in the world. There are more Muslims in Nigeria than Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, and all of the Gulf countries combined. This means our developing image as being against Muslims will likely become an issue here.

Nigeria is troubled with corruption, despite pressures from both the bottom and the very top. President Obasanjo is active in Transparency International and the people and media constantly comment, joke, and highlight problems with corruption in their largely free press. These troubles are nationwide and contributed to the Northern States, where the Muslim population is concentrated, switching to Sharia Law. It is in the north where we should be concerned with Islamic extremists.

In the Delta region there are other concerns, notably by guerrillas who claim to fight for the rights of the oppressed and impoverished Nigerians living in the shadows of the resource extraction industries without benefit.

Further, China is actively seeking to take advantage of our slide as it promotes its own outreach to secure natural resources and markets. Through a pattern of dialog, mutual agreements, exchanges, and bribery, the Chinese are making inroads. Consummating deals supplying technology

in exchange for more favorable agreements on oil and other resources, the Chinese continue to deepen relationships. We should not allow them to deepen relationships without establishing broad and deep relationships in the region to prevent possible favoritism toward China in the future, especially when negotiations lack transparency.

This project will fund a two-pronged ICT investment in Sokoto State, a northern Muslim and relatively progressive state with the primary purposes of improving elementary education and agricultural quality and output. Secondary purposes include future opportunities to engage opinion leaders and the public in discussions about the United States, American culture, and other opportunities for exchange. However, the project is designed to prime the pump, so to speak, and enter with a soft hand, downplaying, but not ignoring, American government involvement. In other words, this project focuses on building trust for future engagement.

The goal of this project is to provide the tools to increase the quality and breadth of education, improving and expanding knowledge acquisition, to a group most susceptible to the influences of radical Islam and most likely to spread and encourage moderate Islam. Through the purchase and financing of the "\$100 Laptops" and the agricultural education and research resource known as TEEAL, this double-shot of development in capacity and learning will have a broad impact on this agrarian society. Addressing and reducing illiteracy and improving economic prospects has a positive effect on democracy, state capacity, and will ultimately deny sanctuary to criminal and terrorist elements opposed to the United States and her allies.

This project, while small, is designed for maximum effect. This project is not designed to promote the United States as a brand, but is suitable for follow-on projects of increasingly larger scope and penetration as the population becomes engaged and cognizant of the surrounding world and expanding horizons through continued education and increased connectivity. The expanding ICT infrastructure Nigeria is deploying, with significant assistance from China, will enable greater awareness of the outside world by these seemingly remote areas. By minimizing, but not hiding or deceiving project ownership, we hope to maintain the focus on the project itself. This will undoubtedly make measuring success more difficult, but performance metrics are inherently difficult in this field of fuzzy returns. The best measurement will be what does not happen.

VALUE TO THE UNITED STATES

People want and need basic civil services, including education, roads, clean water, food and safety. Parents want safe schools and hot meals for their children. In places like the Palestine Territories, Colombia, and the tribal areas of Pakistan, extremism takes root partly because of few options and thus creates areas of sanctuary with social, financial, and cultural support for the few that actually carry out their fantasies of attacking the West. In each of these high-profile areas, the state has abrogated its responsibility and extremists and criminal stepped into the gap. We are seeing this potential in northern Nigeria now in the form of the "most dangerous and dynamic Islamic force in the northern half of Africa today: the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat."¹ We must heed of the trajectory of these regions from becoming "breeding grounds of instability, mass migration, and murder."²

¹ Robert D. Kaplan, "America's African Rifles," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2005 2005.

² Robert I. Rotberg, "Failed States in a World of Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 2002.

The lack of local development and opportunity creates a sense of “disembeddedness”³ this project addresses. Salafist ideology builds bonds of under-resourced and disenfranchised populations through in person agents. Only after cementing the bonds through face-to-face interactions does ICT facilitate further development.⁴ The “cyber-caliphate” is based on sociological markings and identification and not virtual tribes.⁵ Report after report recognizes the best solution to eliminate guerrilla movements is to disrupt the “swamps” that feed and support them.⁶

Providing the environment for empowerment and resulting transparency and accountability will lead to positive outcomes. Radicals in the Balkans and Algeria have been marginalized as the state began to provide for its citizens.⁷ Hamas’ victory in Palestine, for example, goes to the same point: clean the streets and provide security and the people will vote you in. We must facilitate the moderates to do become the logical choice by the masses.

As Mao Zedong said, “the guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea.” Without the support of the people, the guerillas loses provision of food, shelter, places to train, ideological support, protection from authorities, and potential recruits. The guerilla becomes a starving target hiding in the wilderness. By enabling the people to provide for themselves, see a brighter future, increase food security, and generally create alternatives, they are less likely to join or support extremist movements.

There is no reason to delay, especially in a low cost and low risk project such as this. The Chinese are actively building their stake in Nigeria without any regard to building capacity of either the state or of the people. If anything, China may actually destabilize the state by supporting corrupt officials. Trouble in the Delta region against the oil industry is in the headlines more frequently as a result of disenfranchisement. The North’s large Muslim population “remains highly prone to radical and polarizing influences” and, in the words of Osama bin Laden, represents the “most suitable sub-Saharan candidate for theocracy.”⁸ We cannot afford to wait because the United States and the West are not the only “saviors” looking to move in.

VALUE TO NIGERIA

Information is power. The ability to turn on or off the tap of information creates or denies opportunities of understanding and knowledge acquisition. When information flows freely, freedom is the result. When it does not, suppression leads to oppression. This project helps open the tap.

ICT for Development, or ICT4D, programs create opportunities for knowledge acquisition and application to promote sustainable systemic change from the inside out. This is done by facilitating the creation or rebuilding of state capacity through tangible and real mutually beneficial

³ Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ David Martin Jones and M. L. R. Smith, "Greetings from the Cybercaliphate: Some Notes on Homeland Insecurity," *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (2005).

⁶ Brennan M. Kraxberger, "The United States and Africa: Shifting Geopolitics in An "Age of Terror"," *Africa Today* 52, no. 1 (2005).

⁷ Ray Takeyh and Nikolai K. Gvosdev, "Radical Islam: The Death of an Ideology?," *Middle East Policy* 11, no. 4 (2004).

⁸ Angel Rabasa et al. "The Muslim World after 9/11." In *RAND Research* (Place Published: RAND, 2004), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG246/index.html> (accessed 10 March 2006).

opportunities. Frequently thought of as a tool to help farmers grow better crops and find better prices, ICT4D is much more. ICT4D's impact may be directly and indirectly felt throughout the social, economic, and political spheres of influence through interconnection and pressures to upgrade networks of dependency.

Nigeria is at a fork in the road. Its rich history of development, optimism, opportunity, and current situation opens the path toward stability in both the country and the region. However, the chance Nigeria will go down the path of state failure is increasing without assistance focused on the capacity building projects already underway.

A dense country of nearly 145 people per square kilometer of land, it is more than twice as dense as Kenya and four times that of South Africa. Like much of sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half of the population (42%) is under fifteen years old. Establishing a secure and stable Nigerian state is clearly then just as critical to the security of the United States and the world as it is to future and security of the region. The susceptibility of Nigeria is clear considering analysis that concludes "countries with larger populations and higher population density had 30% and 40% greater odds of state failure, respectively."⁹

As far as Sokoto, the target for this project, as is the case in much northern Nigeria, it continues to face food security problems. Teaching the man to fish is better than allowing others to tell convince them there are no fish because of the Americans.

TARGET AUDIENCE

While both the northern states and the Delta State are prime candidates, success in the Delta requires a great political input, hence support from the White House, than operating in the north as a result of the oil companies in the Delta.

De-marginalizing people creates imperatives for networks of resistance and can lead to sanctuary for terrorists and criminals. ICT4D democratizes knowledge, encourages participation, enables education, and promotes mobilization. Governments and extremists lose their monopoly on information and publicity. Networks of resistance, such as the Movement to Emancipate the Nigerian Delta (MEND) to the Mexican Zapatistas, develop and prosper when government fails to work for the well-being of its population.¹⁰ Participation in the global economy includes expansion into knowledge-based markets domestically and regionally.

Twelve northern Nigerian states (Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno, Zamfara, and Gombe) have adopted Sharia, without uniformity, since 1999. From a shadow police force in Kano¹¹ to illiterate Sharia court judges,¹² lack of education and insular beliefs has a corrosive effect on civil life, social cohesion within and between states, and overall security. Unfortunately, illiterate judges is not surprising condition considering the falling literacy rates in the north. The states with Sharia law today had substantially lower overall literacy rates than ten

⁹ State Failure Task Force, "State Failure Task Force Report: Phase Iii Findings," (McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 2000).

¹⁰ Evan H. Potter, ed., *Cyber-Diplomacy: Managing Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Declan Butler, "Virtual Globes: The Web-Wide World," *Nature* 439, no. 7078 (2006).

¹² Hauwa Ibrahim, "Islamic Law in Nigeria," in *Islamic Law in Nigeria* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 2006).

years ago, the last period when such reporting was available, than those without Sharia today. Important statistics:

- Combined male and female literacy in the Northern states was 49% compared to 78% for all other states.
- Disenfranchisement of the female population, a major segment of the workforce, is through illiteracy.
- In the Sharia states, 37% of the females were literate compared to 71% elsewhere in the country.¹³

The primary target of this project is Usman Dan Fodio University in Sokoto State, one of the northern states under Sharia. The university is named after the Islamic scholar who introduced Islam to most parts of northern Nigeria in 1804. Sokoto State and this university are considered, in Sokoto's own literature, to be the "center of Islamic learning." In 1999, the current governor recognized the need to prioritize "objectives to address the educational, agricultural, health and economic sectors."¹⁴

While there is still gender discrimination in the state policies, it is potentially less so in Sokoto. The governor has recognized the value of education to education and contribution from women and female children. Further, the namesake of the university is invoked by women faced with discrimination: Usman Dan Fodio strongly encouraged the education of women and female children, emphasizing that "only educated women could make good wives and mothers."

MESSAGES & METHODS

The "good enough" approach, instead of a binary win or lose, should be adopted for this project, especially in the first year and at least, if not beyond, the second year. This approach, based on the United Kingdom's Department for International Development model¹⁵ should be encouraged and emulated by the United States, especially in this type of project that requires adoption and adaptation before deeper and broader inroads typical of US support and engagement can be made. We must work on necessary growth outside of the oil sector¹⁶ and de-emphasize strict growth numbers and schemas.

ICT4D holds promise not just for making necessarily making a new democracy in the mold of the West, but ICT4D can provide "sources of empowerment and emancipation...through which true knowledge can be established and disseminated."¹⁷ Ultimately, a native democracy that is satisfactory to the people, builds peace and enhances stability is the real goal and desired end of any project such as this, which at best can only makes an incremental contribution toward this end.

¹³ Rashid Aderinoye, "Literacy Assessment Practices (Lap) in Selected Developing Countries: Nigeria Case Study," (Paris: ILI/UNESCO, 2002).

¹⁴ See <http://www.sokoto-state.com/>

¹⁵ DFID, *Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States* (London: Department for International Development, 2005).

¹⁶ World Bank, "Country Partnership Strategy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2005 - 2009)," ed. Africa Region Country Department 12 (World Bank, 2005).

¹⁷ S. Schech, "Wired for Change: The Links between Icts and Development Discourses," *Journal of international development* 14 Part 1 (2002).

Later on, the web of interaction and knowledge and awareness this project becomes just a part of allows for bidirectional and multilateral communication.

There are two primary components to this project. The first is The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library, or TEEAL.¹⁸ This is the quintessential tool designed for less developed regions to teach people “to fish” for themselves. TEEAL, in the configuration recommended in this plan, is a collection of 145 agricultural and related science journals from 1993-2003 (budgeted are updates for 2004 and 2005). The TEEAL project has a record of success and very positive feedback in Latin America and across Africa.

The second component of this project is the purchase and delivery of the so-called “\$100 laptops”.¹⁹ The product of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) initiative, this rugged device includes wireless networking for mesh networks (ad hoc peer-to-peer connectivity or a network without a central server or hub controlling communications) with a half-mile range, a sunlight readable black-and-white display option (in addition to full-color DVD color capability), innovative convertible format for both tablet and laptop configurations, camera, microphone, and a wind-up power capability. At this time, the unit price is \$150 per unit, but as production scales upwards, they anticipate hitting the \$100 cost in 2008. This device is designed for elementary education in less developed regions.

Nigerian President Obasanjo and River State (Nigeria) Governor Dr. Odili have endorsed the product. Further, President Obasanjo budgeted for one million laptops for Nigerian children. Nigerian press has been effective in creating awareness and hype with news story on how Nigeria, Libya, Brazil, Argentina, and Thailand have made significant commitments to education through ordering these heralded little wireless computers. While President Obasanjo budgeted for one million laptops, it is important that the United States contributes quietly and softly to the education of the northern Muslim populations for reasons indicated above, at least at the outset. We do not want to appear to be imposing or forcing. As with any change or new technology, adoption must be organic with too much encouragement likely to cause a backlash.

These devices augment or replace missing text books, scarce pencil and paper, and allow for teacher-led and monitored activities. Educational opportunities at the elementary level includes maintaining English as the lingua franca in Nigeria, increasing the quality of other subjects taught, such as Nigerian and world history. Ultimately, stimulating the young minds of their children for future knowledge acquisition and inquisitive behavior is an underlying requirement for our goals.

This project will leverage contacts and partnerships through the TEEAL support organization, OLPC contacts, and USAID relationships. Through a low-key approach, we hope to build trust with the first two and with the partners of all three.

BUDGET

This project is loosely modeled after the ACCESS micro-scholarships program, initiated in

TEEAL	Initial - Year 0	Year 1	Subtotal
lanTEEAL	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,000
Training	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000
			\$ 11,000.00

¹⁸ See <http://www.teeal.org/>

¹⁹ See <http://laptop.org/>

OLPC	Initial - Year 0	Year 1	Subtotal
Laptops	\$ 15,000	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 18,000
Training	\$ 15,000	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
<i>unit cost</i>	\$ 150		\$ 38,000.00
<i>qty</i>	100		
		Grand Total	\$ 49,000.00

Morocco with an even smaller \$34,000 budget.

The budget presented is based on the following assumptions:

- TEEAL Year 0 cost is for lanTEEAL, the networked version of TEEAL.
- TEEAL Year 1 cost updates the library with 2004 and 2005 journal years. By holding off the upgrade, we create an opportunity to engage and evaluate local project members and users.
- Training cost for TEEAL is generous and will use the Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA), a unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, to train the university and other users on TEEAL . In 2005, ITOCA gave eight workshops on agricultural and health sciences in Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Ghana (twice), Ethiopia (twice) and Rwanda, with TEEAL demonstrated at each one. This project will request ITOCA, through our funding and a request to FAO, providing a training workshop for this instance. This funding will also help ITOCA further their beneficial work at minimal cost to the US and with potential positive trickle through effects mentioned above.
- OLPC Laptops Year 0 is the acquisition cost of 100 laptops @ \$150 each (current product cost). Six additional laptops could fit into the budget, but we all know leaving a buffer, however slight, comes in handy.
- Laptops Year 1 is based on 20% of Year 0 costs and reflects estimated replacement, repair, shipping and other costs. The price of these laptops, however, is low enough to largely consider them disposables to the end-user. They will return the device for transport out and for repair or recovery to limit refuse (trash) problems, if at all possible.
- The training budget is generous with room to include shipping if we must share the cost with the OLPC initiative and other non-profits interested in getting these units into the area and tested. Emphasis is placed on train the trainer for self-perpetuating knowledge.
- Year 1 training is also generous and drops off sharply as a result of Year 0's train-the-trainer approach that will continue.
- Any excess or unused funds will find appropriate uses as the project is monitored, including additional laptops.
- Eighty percent of the initial laptop purchase will be deployed to areas facing the greatest educational and literacy challenges. Ten percent will be held in reserve by the TEEAL administrator to replace broken unit and the remaining ten percent will be offered for use to university-sponsored TEEAL clinics for regional farmers or simply added to the reserve. We will rely on OLPC, TEEAL, USAID, and their partners to identify the best candidate villages. It is suggested we include in our selection criteria the quality and motivation of teachers, as they are more critical to the project's success than geo-strategic concerns.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The OLPC and TEEAL projects are American, as well as this project, are American-based initiatives or directly funded by the United States government. However, as said above, we must minimize USG involvement and let the means create the end. Later we can emphasize our participation after the technologies and processes are adopted, but treading too heavy on the outset may be counter-productive. This includes any attempts to actively monitor as the Heisenberg Principle would be damaging.

This small project has an initial duration of two years. We must set low expectations for the first year as the new technology is absorbed and adopted. By letting Africans teach Africans and minimizing the involvement of the United States, we reduce the likelihood of irrational resistance from local or outside extremists. The benefit to the community, as emphasized through the language of the university's founder

Success will be measured by a rebounding literacy rate, improved agricultural output, and an increasingly politically stable environment. While all of these take time to actually realize, anecdotal evidence should be available relatively soon and build. This is a hope as positive comments will encourage further use and encourage further success. While Osama bin Laden saw this region as having great potential, immunizing the northerners against al-Qaeda's brand of Salafism will be the ultimate victory.

As Ted Knicker, Bureau of Educational Cultural Affairs, presented in his 2005 presentation "Howling Wolves and Dead Horses", we can plan for multiple benefits, but we can't rely too hard on absolute measurements. In this case, the most common metric in our projects, improved understanding or relations with the US, is explicitly on the outside of our scope. We hope to achieve this downstream after Year 0 ends and possibly not until Year 2, the third year.

At \$50,000, the cost of this program is minimal with equally minimal risk, yet there is a substantial opportunity for long-term success. Technologies developed for ICT4D tend to be very expensive, largely because the market is acknowledged to be very poor. Encouraging broader investment and broader use of ICT across Nigeria, at most a nudge at their current rate of investment and expansion, can have a tremendous positive impact, especially when combined with ICT4D products as this project proposes (which does not rely on any existing, if any, infrastructure). With smart leadership, a few dollars will go a long way.

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