

21st Century Statecraft

“We’re working to leverage the power and potential in what I call 21st century statecraft. Part of our approach is to embrace new tools, like using cell phones for mobile banking or to monitor elections. But we’re also reaching to the people behind these tools, the innovators and entrepreneurs themselves.”

– Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, October 15, 2010.

Technology and innovation have changed the conditions for statecraft in the 21st century. Just as the Internet has changed economics, culture, and politics, it is also significantly impacting the practice of foreign policy. It is not simply the fact that more people are using ever more sophisticated technologies; the structural changes that have accompanied these quantum leaps in connection technologies are highly disruptive.

Consider three fundamental networks of international relations – trade, communications, and mass media. The infrastructure that conveys goods around the globe has shifted over the centuries from ships to rail to highways. Our communications networks have gone from post to telegraph to telephone. And our mass media have moved from print to radio to television. Today, all three of these systems operate largely on the Internet. It is a triple paradigm shift converging on a common infrastructure.

Add to this convergence two other major disruptive forces. First are demographics. In the developing world, a growing percentage of the population is under the age of 30. Alongside this “youth bulge”, women and girls are breaking through glass ceilings and pushing back against traditional gender roles. And migration flows have altered the complexion of nearly every society’s culture and economy. Second is pervasive connectivity. In early 2009, there were 4 billion mobile handsets on the planet. Today, there are over 5 billion. This explosive growth rate is led by the developing world where access to information and communications technology are disrupting economies and societies. Recent events in North Africa have put a spotlight on these evolving phenomena.

The United States is responding to these shifts in international relations by extending the reach of our diplomacy beyond government-to-government communications. We are adapting our statecraft by reshaping our development and diplomatic agendas to meet old challenges in new ways and by deploying one of America’s great assets – innovation. This is 21st Century Statecraft – complementing traditional foreign policy tools with newly innovated and adapted instruments of statecraft that fully leverage the networks, technologies, and demographics of our interconnected world.

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“On their own, new technologies do not take sides in the struggle for freedom and progress, but the United States does. We stand for a single internet where all of humanity has equal access to knowledge and ideas. And we

recognize that the world’s information infrastructure will become what we and others make of it.” – Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, January 21, 2010.

21st Century Statecraft – Policy

The building blocks of an expanded approach to diplomacy and development begin with adapting our policies to reflect the challenges and opportunities of today's world. The Secretary has led a wide-ranging review of our internal and external policies intent upon optimizing for how technology and innovation can improve our effectiveness.

Internet Freedom: In January of 2010, Secretary Clinton gave a groundbreaking speech on Internet Freedom, establishing the United States as the global leader in the promotion of freedom of expression in the Internet age. The policy contains three fundamental elements: the human rights of free speech, press, and assembly in cyberspace; open markets for digital goods and services to foster innovation, investment, and economic opportunity; and the freedom to connect—promoting access to connection technologies around the world. A third of the world's population, even if they have access, live under governments that block content, censor speech, and curb the potential of the Internet as an engine of free speech and commerce. The policy of the United States is to work to promote open governments, open economies, and open societies.

As the Secretary said in her paradigm-shifting speech on Internet Freedom in January of 2010: “this issue isn't just about information freedom; it is about what kind of world we want and what kind of world we will inhabit.” Rising with the swelling tide of connection technology around the globe, we have the first uniquely 21st Century human rights issue intertwined with a pivotal economic issue. It is our challenge to apply creatively the lessons of the past alongside the technologies of the present, to produce citizen engagement, economic growth and social empowerment in the future.

The Secretary gave a second major address on Internet Freedom on February 15, 2011. She expanded her vision of Internet Freedom and presented the “dictators dilemma” that bedevils closed societies. These regimes must decide whether they will choose to prosper from the economic and social benefits of the Internet or to miss those opportunities in order to control political speech. The US is now leading a discussion with other world leaders to develop common strategies to protect and sustain freedom and security in the Internet Age. The State Department has integrated these issues into our diplomatic agenda at all levels.

Civil Society 2.0: In a speech in Morocco in November of 2009, the Secretary announced the launch of Civil Society 2.0. She explained: “We seek to support civil society efforts worldwide because we believe that civil society helps to make communities more prosperous and stable.” The Secretary's vision is to build the technical capacity of civil society organizations to accomplish their missions through the use of connection technologies. The Civil Society 2.0 initiative seeks to match these organizations with technology tools and tech-savvy volunteers to help raise digital literacy, strengthen the information and communications networks of NGOs, and amplify the impact of civil society movements. From simple

tools, like websites and text messages, to more complex applications like content management systems and social media platforms, technology can be a powerful catalyst for the growth of civil society groups.

A robust civil society sector supports the pursuit of many of America's foreign policy goals, from climate change to poverty reduction to education and healthcare. Investments in technology to foster a more adept corps of domestic and international NGOs working for social good has a multiplier effect across a

wide variety of issue areas. Tech-literate civil society actors also plays a key role in developing openness and transparency for good government. It strengthens governing institutions by facilitating citizen engagement.

Effective civil society groups are also a force for stability, security, and public service. Strong civil society groups create information networks for civic activism that establish greater community cohesion that exists outside of government. These networks are critical in emergency response. We witnessed this in very visible ways after the Haitian earthquake in the coordination and direction of relief efforts. It is clear that civic activists armed with information technology have an important impact over time by creating networks of people interested in participating in self-government through public/private partnerships and community service.

As a part of this initiative, the State Department held TechCamp Chile in Santiago this November. This event was designed to bring together civil society leaders and technologists in Latin America to identify social problems in local communities and technologies that can help to solve them. This was a hands-on project involving on-site training and software development to create a community of civic-minded technologists and a virtual corps of tech knowledge for global civil society. Following on the heels of TechCamp Chile was a virtual event in partnership with Random Hacks of Kindness. Technology volunteers worked to solve the problems presented in Chile as well as others compiled by other social good organizations. We have built on the lessons learned from Chile and created a model for TechCamp that is being applied by embassies around the world.

Institutionalizing Innovation: The Secretary has placed a high value on the integration of innovation into organizational reform. In December 2010, the State Department completed a Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) to guide our activities over the next four years. The QDDR's convened an Innovation Task Force to help modernize the practice of statecraft. This group led efforts to establish changes at State through the QDDR such as incorporating new standards for hiring to find young, technology minded staff, emphasizing new media platforms to reach new audiences, integrating technology deeper into our development practices, and revising the foreign service exam to test for problem-solving skills necessary in today's world.

- *Training:* The State Department is embedding innovation/new technology into its formal training programs through the Foreign Service Institute. We are working with our allies to train their foreign service officers in how to adopt and adapt 21st Century Statecraft for their own purposes.

- *New Media:* The public diplomacy work of the State Department has become increasingly active on social media platforms to reach new audiences. Our diplomats in Washington and at embassies and consulates are being trained and encouraged to integrate both local and global social media as devices to create international dialogue.

- *Virtual Student Foreign Service:* Through the State Department's Office of e-Diplomacy have come a variety of new initiatives, including the Virtual Student Foreign Service. This new program connects young people on college campuses across America with our embassies abroad—harnessing the power of technology to put bright young minds to work for our foreign policy goals. More than 100 positions are available in the new service in 2010-2011.

- *Tech@State*: State Department hosts quarterly Tech@State events in Washington. These working sessions bring together thought leaders, technologists, companies and civil society organizations to put technology in service to our foreign policy goals.

21st Century Statecraft – Program

“These technologies are the platform for the communications, collaboration, and commerce of the 21st century. More importantly, they are connecting people to people, to knowledge, and to global networks.”

– US Department of State QDDR, December 2010.

The case for change that supports the practical, programmatic work of 21st Century Statecraft is that information networks are changing the character of our international relations. No longer is diplomacy conducted purely government to government or government to people. It is now conducted people to people and people to government. We have opportunities to connect the talents, generosity, entrepreneurship and innovation of the American people directly with the people of the world. The social, economic, and political value of creative interaction between the world’s diverse communities is an enormous untapped resource. We are working to unleash it by experimenting with a wide variety of programmatic activities at the State Department.

Technology Delegations: To target opportunities for collaboration in partner countries, the State Department conducts regular technology delegations and exchanges. Delegations are comprised of a carefully selected group of technology executives, thought leaders, investors, or social entrepreneurs. These delegations aim to solve problems through dynamic engagement with public and private sector leaders on a variety of issues from education to healthcare to public safety. The goal is to match strengths in technology markets and innovative thinking in one country with social and economic needs in another. Each delegation produces several tangible projects for immediate implementation to address local needs identified by the delegations. This is not about pushing American ideas onto a world already full of great ideas. This is about leveraging international partnerships between governments and

the private sector (both commercial and noncommercial) to find mutual benefit in indigenous and collaborative innovation. We can do this by targeting investment, by facilitating connections for NGOs, businesses, and governments with needed partners, and by offering ways to enhance and combine local products and services to make them better serve the needs of the people. We have conducted technology delegations to Iraq, Mexico, Syria, Russia, India, and Colombia. Most recently, a delegation visited Liberia and Sierra Leone focused on empowering women and girls.

Text Haiti: Connection technology can play an important role in disaster response. For example, after the earthquake in Haiti, a group of young diplomats that the Secretary brought to the State Department created Text Haiti – a program that permitted cell phone users to make donations to the relief effort by texting the word “Haiti” to a text message short code – 90999. State’s tech-savvy staff then used social media networks to make this campaign go viral on the Internet. We raised more than \$30 million in just three weeks—a stunning success that shows the power of large networks.

Haiti Relief Coordination: Another example from Haiti was the way in which mobile technology became a tool of disaster relief and coordination among aid organizations. The State Department played the lead role connecting and convening the Southern Command, the Coast Guard, NGOs with technology development expertise, and large aid organizations on the ground in Haiti to create a text-message-based alert and response system that sped relief to those that needed it most. We see this as a model. Our role is to build bridges between best of breed communications technologies built by innovative social entrepreneurs and connect them to government and large aid organizations to produce smarter, faster results for people in harm's way.

mWomen: In the fall of 2010, the Secretary launched the mWomen initiative – a public-private partnership led by the Global Women's Initiative designed to close the global gender gap in mobile phone adoption, which stands today at 300 million women in low and middle-income countries. Bringing together government, industry, and civil society organizations, the mWomen effort is designed to generate not only higher levels of cell phone ownership and use among women, but to produce applications designed to empower women and girls. These applications are to include literacy and language learning, budget management tools, and medical counsel on prenatal care.

Anonymous TipLine – Mexico: A prominent deliverable from our technology delegation to Mexico, the TipLine is a joint project with the Government of Mexico to construct an anonymous crime-reporting service in Ciudad Juarez. The goal is to give citizens in a city beset with drug traffickers and violence a safe way to share information with law enforcement. The Juarez implementation will be a pilot project in 2011. The Government of Mexico plans to scale up a successful model to other cities.

Iraq-Silicon Valley Entrepreneurship: A deliverable from our technology delegation to Iraq, we have established an internship program for young entrepreneurs in Iraq to bring talented young people to Silicon Valley for training and skills development. Catalyzing innovation and investment in the technology sector is a common outcome of our delegations. The program with Iraq is a public-private partnership with a \$1 million supporting grant.

Mobile Banking: The Secretary's strong desire to bring technology-driven financial inclusion into our development strategy has led to Department-wide consideration of mobile banking. We are working with a variety of countries, NGOs, banks, and telecommunications companies to find the best models for mobile financial services. In particular, we are working in East Africa to study the successful Kenyan model and to assist the Democratic Republic of Congo in developing a framework for service provision.

Apps for Africa Competition: The State Department supported a mobile applications competition in East Africa (Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya) to build mobile apps for civil society groups. The project was led and managed by our local NGO and technology partners in East Africa – iHub, Appfrica Labs and SODNET. Working closely with the Embassy in Kenya, this project spotlighted regional entrepreneurial and technical talent by challenging programmers to solve local social/economic problems with SMS, mobile web and web apps. The winners included an application designed to increase the fertility of cattle and a text message service aimed at helping expecting mothers plan and budget for the expenses of childbirth.

21st Century Elections: To increase the effectiveness of election monitoring, we built and deployed tools for civil society organizations and elections monitors to report and map electoral irregularities using digital technologies including SMS and email. The service is intended to encourage civic

participation and social investment in the integrity of the democratic process. Working with the open source software platform – Ushahidi – the project had successful implementations in Sudan and Guinea.

Landmines in Colombia: After decades of armed conflict, Colombia is second only to Sudan in the numbers of landmines lacing the country. As a deliverable of a technology delegation, we have paired a US-based mobile technology firm with Colombian NGOs, government agencies, and telecommunications providers to map the location of landmines and connect victims of landmines with rural community health providers. Though still in the planning stages, the system will serve to prevent injuries and deaths by sharing an online map indicating the location of landmines and alerting people inadvertently entering a known landmine location of the dangers.

