**Interview with Sarah Crawford, manager of Cot’s Global Fragility Act assistance, march 14, 2025, Abidjan, Cot d’Ivoire**

GFA is likely safe for Cot. Clear evidence of malign activities and need to address those issues to address fragile state status.

GFAs currently in Cot, Benin, Togo, Guinie. Any country that touches AIC

Democracy and elections are off the table now at state. Ivorians don’t like it anyway, 73 percent feel that the US interferes internally.

**Resilience for peace by EAI.**

* Great program. DRG was a strong focus. Were locals happy? For some of it. Some under DRG was cancelled. Major effort that was cancelled was Resilience for Peace. They did best research on VEOs. (Todd; need to ask)
* Certain NGOs are losing all their programs. NDI is gone.
* News of loss of resilience for peace program was a big loss and its demise made headlines here.
* National security council used their products
* It was very OTI like, very iterative, launched many programs to see what sticks.
* They did research on creating the Drive Index. Offered key indices of where violence was likely to flare up. Moving this to Seed Research a local firm.
* Provided atmospherics, where they would work with locals in affected communities to provide first hand knowledge of attacks. If locals don’t inform gov then likely limited way to understand attacks. There is trust with local community but local community not trusting to tell the military.
* Helped with identity papers. Might need to drive 3,000 miles in some locations to get a license or certificate for a motorbike. They helped bring this to these communities and it helped address the number one concern in the area which is corruption (local officials would take bribes to provide documents).
* Social cohesion, helped improve civ mil relationships; they partnered with AILCT to create curriculum
* The Number two in command of land forces says “winning is no longer happening on the battlefield, it is happening in hearts and minds.” Words poken at GFA conference last year; very telling

GFA mioney goes through the Bureaus. INL part was just unfrozen.

**Demise of usaid?**

By April 20, review should be complete. But now soft power will be gone.

**Impact? Anything we pull will have negative impact because we are renigging on promises.** Government likes the programs because it legitimizes their political process. We worked with NDI to ensure we conduct democracy processes. At embassy we are observers. That partner will be lost.

Millenium Challenge Corporation is moving forward to fix the airport road. It was billed as a two week construction effort but because of the pause it has been stopped for two months and it has caused a lot of traffic problems. And there is a billboard giving credit for all of this to the US.

Security remains a top concern. Increased DOD presence in embassy increased from 7 when she started to 120. If that stopped we would have a problem for America and other nations would step into the breach. We are now the partner of choice.

Health programs? Stopped giving ARTs (anti-viral meds for HIV).

Information was a cross cutting component of GFA. We recognize that combatting fimi is essential. Cot thinks the us is cause of debt when it is actually china. They lump us with the French.

Previous GFA program had several information programs.

* Storytelling, journalist do not know how to tell stories while influencers and extremist recruiters can tell stories. So they are training journalists and doing embeds, mentoring, sharing connections, cross collaboration and training. Implemented by Nichols consulting via USAID contract. Did largest study to date on information manipulation. (requested report)
* Fake news, no one talks about it external malevolent actors so no recognition of the problem.
* Regional program called Strategic regional peace and stability or SRPS. Funded counter fake news campaign that was launched in July. It has the tagline, “Be responsible online”. Run by Beltway bandit DAI. Ask for the name.
* GEC signed MOU and launched campaign with us and French support. We funded the road show. Funded some billboards. Be responsible campaign. Goal was to brand fake news, used a demon symbol showing that fake news was the devil. GEC funded the initial part and USAID took it over.

The revised GFA program will include a more detailed information component. Will include Facebook component which is number one source of news and Whatsapp which is where ppl react and share the news. Goal will be monitoring aspect to identify fake news and FIMI and a counter disinformation component. But details not worked out yet.

GEC held a program where they did a tech challenge and had 16 local orgs, 14 of which were fact checkers (she believes too many fact checkers). Everyone proposed a fact checking program. The winner had an interesting program on nokia brick phones. Very low tech. basically ppl can send a hash suymbol to a free 800 type number and if you hit hash mark it will record you. If want to learn about disinformation hit the star key. Uses mix of ai and human assistance. So if program detects known fake news it will use ai to analyze and communicate. For content that is called in, if the computer has heard about it then it will will use ai to catalogue and if not then a person picks up the phone to document the fake news. Run by organization named DAR.

Recommends we talk with AILCT deputy director, speaks English.

Ivorians also want to create law giving them legal means to counter fake news.

**The new**