



WASTE REPORT for June 8, 2015

Anyone up for a Game of Waste?

Imagine if the federal government funded a major U.S. broadcaster to put on a baseball tournament, featuring MLB players, and all in the name of combating gang violence?

Surprisingly, the State Department (State) is doing almost exactly that in Afghanistan, by propping up the Sixers Cricket League. Last year the federal government gave One TV, a **for-profit Afghan television station, roughly \$350,000, to “support the development of a national cricket league [principally a tournament] in Afghanistan,”** In addition to sponsoring the league, **this grant helped train personnel on sports broadcasting and production.** ¹

Just last month, State published a new grant opportunity to put on the same tournament this year and again, includes **training “Afghans in the production of professional sports broadcasts (specifically cricket).”** This time, the grant is for **up to \$500,000 with an option for a one year extension.** Applicants must demonstrate their ability to work with the Afghan Cricket Board (which is the sport’s governing body), but also One TV, as they retain the exclusive broadcasting rights to the tournament. ²

The idea behind the cricket league is to **provide an outlet for young men who may be susceptible to extremism** in Afghanistan. ³ But instead of something like a little league, **these at-risk youths mostly get to watch on TV, which may be hard given only 0.003 percent of the population have TVs.** ⁴ Instead, the league is comprised of five regional teams ⁵ and is to feature well-known Afghan cricket players such as Mohammad Nabi Eisakhel, who last year captained the Bandi Ameer Dragon as well as the successful Afghan National Team. ⁶

Uncle Sam’s Afghan Cricket League? Now That’s a Sticky Wicket

¹ <https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=27765306-04D5-EC2A-EF26-B66BD60929B9&AwardID=7960995&AwardType=G>

² Department of State, *Men’s National Cricket League in Afghanistan*, Kabul, Afghanistan. April 2015, Grant Id No. SCAKAB-15-CA-008-SCA-04222015

³ Ibid

⁴ Basic Data- Afghanistan, PressReference.com, Web: May 2015; <http://www.pressreference.com/A-Be/Afghanistan.html>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ <http://1tvnews.af/en/news/sport/11849-cricket---afghan-sixer-tournament-commences--bandi-ameer-dragons-vs-spin-ghar-tigers>