U.S. Underwrites Internet Detour Around Censors

“…The Obama administration is leading a global effort to deploy “shadow” Internet and mobile phone systems that dissidents can use to undermine repressive governments that seek to silence them by censoring or shutting down telecommunications networks…Financed with a $2 million State Department grant, the suitcase could be secreted across a border and quickly set up to allow wireless communication over a wide area with a link to the global Internet. The American effort, revealed in dozens of interviews, planning documents and classified diplomatic cables obtained by The New York Times, ranges in scale, cost and sophistication…”

“The Pentagon and State Department were soon collaborating on the project to build a “shadow” cellphone system in a country where repressive forces exert control over the official network. Details of the network, which the military named the Palisades project, are scarce, but current and former military and civilian officials said it relied in part on cell towers placed on protected American bases. A large tower on the Kandahar air base serves as a base station or data collection point for the network, officials said…”

1) The Obama administration is leading a global effort to deploy "shadow" Internet and cellphone systems. In one such project, $50 million has been spent to create an independent cellphone network in Afghanistan to offset the Taliban’s ability to shut down the official Afghan services. At left, an Afghan policeman kept watch near a telecommunications tower that was attacked by Taliban insurgents in Ghazni.

2) The mobile antenna of a telecommunications tower outside Ghazni that was attacked by Taliban militants this month. Page 2:


4) Afghans from Fab Lab worked to install a FabFi wireless mesh radio with parts from a recycled oil canister. http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/06/12/world/20110612-INTERNET-ss-4.html

5) Three generations of a teaching family near Jalalabad, shown in 2009, discovered Wikipedia on a laptop from the One Laptop Per Child program. Their Internet access was facilitated by a FabFi network. http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/06/12/world/20110612-INTERNET-ss-5.html

6) Malik Ibrahim Sahad, center, talked with friends at an office in Benghazi, Libya, where he is considering setting up an Internet connection. Mr. Sahad, whose father fled Libya in 1979, went to the country for the first time to contribute to the revolution against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi.
7) A case filled with enough equipment to set up an autonomous, metropolitan WiFi network. The New America Foundation, a nonpartisan research group, is developing a portable, WiFi-based network that could be carried into contested regions and allow dissident groups to set up networks independent of a government-controlled network.


http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/world/12internet.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha2

Rosalind Note June 12, 2011: The implications for use to move our own interests vs the interests of other governments is enormous. Also it opens the door for spying and other types of interceptions of communications or implanting U.S. Government communications in place of communications between American citizens…it opens the door to U.S. Government spying even more on every U.S. citizen.