

US bankrolls 'shadow Internet for dissidents' abroad

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An Iranian youth wears a green ribbon as a support sign for reformist presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi at an internet cafe in Iran. The US government is financing the development of "shadow" Internet systems to enable dissidents abroad to get around government censors, The New York Times reported.

The US government is financing the development of "shadow" Internet systems to enable dissidents abroad to get around government censors, The New York Times reported on Sunday.

The newspaper said the covert effort also includes attempts to create independent cellphone networks inside foreign countries.

The operation involves a fifth-floor shop on L Street in Washington, where a group of young entrepreneurs are fitting deceptively innocent-

looking hardware into a prototype "Internet in a suitcase," the report said.

Financed with a \$2.0 million State Department grant, the suitcase could be secreted across a border and quickly set up to allow [wireless communications](#) over a wide area with a link to the global Internet, the paper noted.

Some projects involve technology being developed in the United States while others pull together tools that have already been created by hackers from the so-called liberation technology movement, The Times said.

The [State Department](#) is financing the creation of stealth [wireless networks](#) that would enable [activists](#) to communicate outside the reach of governments in countries like Iran, Syria and Libya, the paper said.

The US government has also spent at least \$50 million to create an independent cellphone network in Afghanistan using towers on protected military bases inside the country, The Times said.

It is intended to offset the Taliban's ability to shut down the official Afghan services, the report noted.

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