

Why does Obama want to shut down the Internet?

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The Islamic Republic of Iran and Communist China's dictators regularly shut down the Internet to stop their people from being exposed to the truth.

Barack Obama now is about to get that same power, according to Senator Joe Lieberman.

"Right now China, the government, can disconnect parts of its Internet in case of war and we need to have that here, too," Lieberman told CNN's Candy Crowley.

"The Internet is abuzz with news that the U.S. Senate has approved a bill that apparently gives the President authority to shut down the Internet," reports conservative author Chuck Baldwin.

According to the usually non-political website TechWorld.com: "The Senate approved a wide-ranging cyber-security bill that some critics have suggested would give the U.S. president the authority to shut down parts of the Internet."

Are they just fear-mongering? Not according to Lieberman, who sponsored the bill.

China and Iran both regularly block any website that is critical of government policies. Both also cut off access to such social networking sites such as FaceBook and Twitter – since dissidents were using them to spread word of political rallies or protest marches.

In the U.S., the new law is written to establish a White House Office for Cyberspace Policy and a National Center for Cybersecurity and Communications. Both would work with private U.S. companies to create security requirements for America's electrical power grid, for the Internet and other critical infrastructure.

"President Obama will be handed the power to shut down the Internet for at least four months without Congressional oversight," says conservative commentator Alex Jones. "The 'Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act,' would hand absolute power to the federal government to close down networks and block incoming Internet traffic from certain countries under a declared national emergency."

Should we be alarmed? Yes, according to Baldwin, who says "the Center for Democracy and Technology as well as 23 other privacy and technology organizations sent letters to Lieberman and other backers of the bill expressing concerns that the legislation could be used to stifle free speech. Nevertheless, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved the bill for a vote on the Senate floor."

"Fears that the legislation is aimed at bringing the Internet under the regulatory power of the U.S. government in an offensive against free speech," writes Jones, "were heightened further when Lieberman revealed that the plan was to mimic Communist China's policies of policing the web with censorship and coercion."

"The president would need congressional approval to extend a national cyber-emergency beyond 120 days under an amendment to the legislation," writes conservative columnist Grant Gross.

Wayne Crews, vice president for policy and director of technology studies at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, said the bill will hurt the nation's security, not help it.

The legislation lacks any definition of just what constitutes a crisis, complains the Center for Democracy and Technology, in a letter also signed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Frontier Foundation. The letter also raised concern that Obama would have too much

power over “elements of the Internet that Americans rely on every day to engage in free speech and to access information.”

“While media and public attention is overwhelmingly focused on the BP oil spill, the establishment is quietly preparing the framework that will allow Obama to bring down a technological iron curtain,” wrote Baldwin, “that will give the government a foot in the door on seizing complete control over the Internet. My friends, if you have any love for liberty left in your heart, one thing is critical: the Internet must remain free – absolutely, totally unrestricted and free.”

Baldwin went on to call the Internet “the last bastion of free and unfiltered news and information.”

What about all the misinformation and pornography on the Internet? Increasing amounts of propaganda are showing up – such as extremist Islamic recruiting videos.

“That is the price of freedom,” said Baldwin. “The individual must be given the liberty to discern right from wrong for himself. As a Christian, I believe this is why God provided the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. And I for one do not need the federal government to try and replace either. And as far as objectionable material being available to children is concerned, this is what parents are for! Good grief! It is bad enough that the federal government has turned into Big Brother; are we going to allow it to become Big Momma and Big Daddy as well?”

Baldwin went on to say that the bill should provide “ample warning for anyone who believes that the federal government can be trusted with any authority it is granted beyond that which is rightly ascribed to it via the U.S. Constitution.

“Plus, given the propensities of the federal government these days, how long before the definition of ‘objectionable content’ includes your freedom of speech and mine? In plain language, the federal government has no business restricting anything that the Constitution does not permit it to. If we cede the authority to restrict and regulate the content of the Internet to the federal government, we are also ceding to it the power to completely shut down the Internet. And this is exactly what Lieberman’s bill does.”

Indeed, Baldwin points out that the mainstream liberal media would still be controlling the flow of information to the American people were it not for the Internet.

“Mark it down,” adds Baldwin. “If the federal government ever shuts down the Internet, it will be business as usual for Washington, D.C., and its fellow travelers.

“We the People will be out of business, and so will freedom. Regardless of what side of any issue you and I may come from, it is critical that the Internet remains absolutely and totally free.”