

This text is an excerpt from our 2015 Shortwave Frequency Guide. Its basic idea has first been published on our website as the

libya.pdf

file under the title

4 April 2011 ...

Internet, SATCOM and HF Radio in Libya

Your comments are welcome.

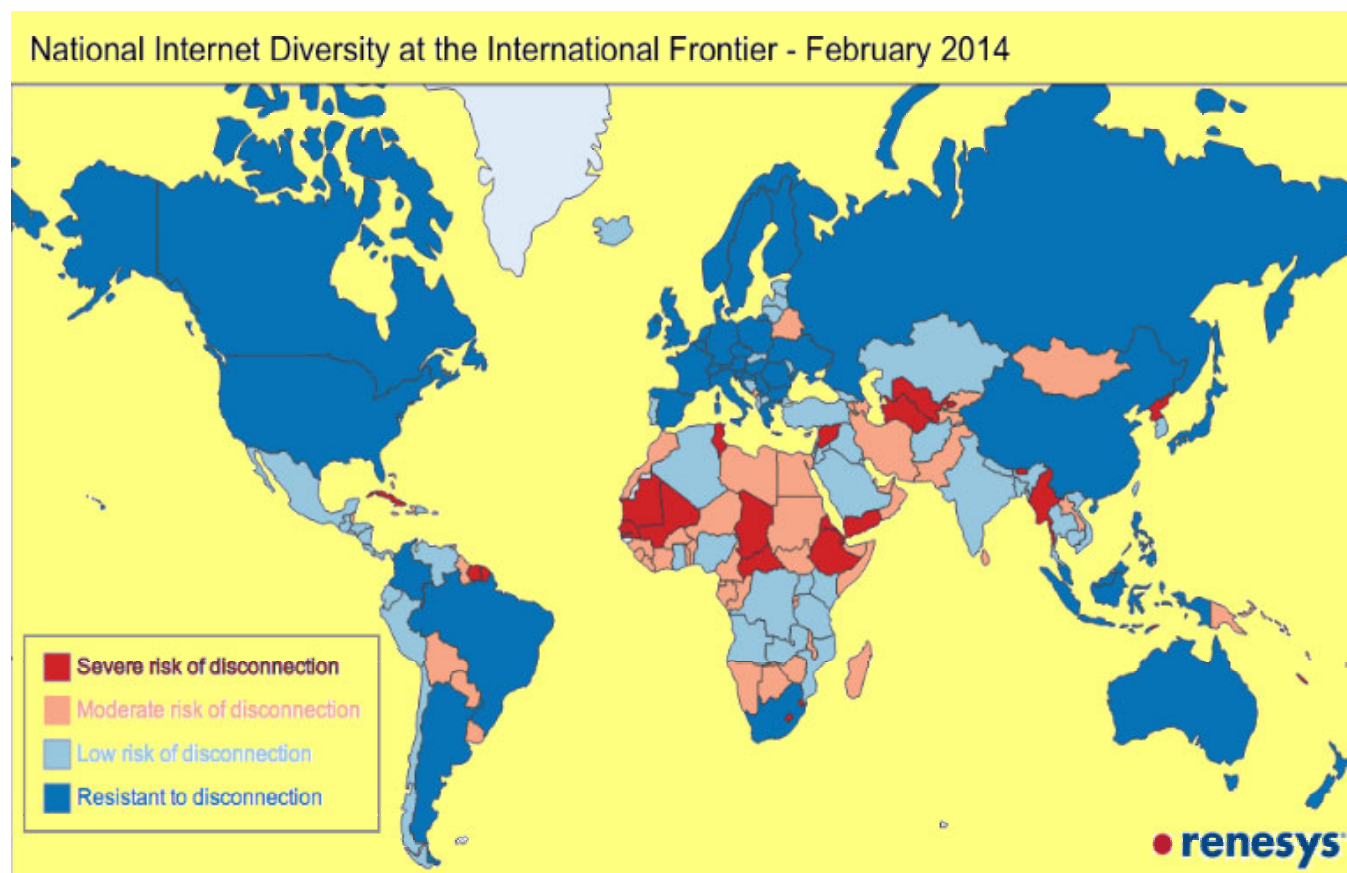
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4.4 Internet, SATCOM and HF Radio in dictatorships: censorship of the Internet and restricted online access vs. free worldwide shortwave reception for everybody

Just for the record, international and worldwide communication such as phone calls, fax messages, e-mail, SMS, data exchange, Internet access and so on relies on

- landline connections;
- submarine cables;
- satellite communication (SATCOM);
- high frequency (HF) / shortwave radio (SW).

Internet is certainly not some mystic new medium descending from Nirvana to Earth. In reality, it is merely some type of computer - e.g. a PC, a smartphone, a laptop, a tablet computer and the like - linked to a communication line: if the latter fails for whatever reason, there is no Internet at all, and that was that. No net $\Rightarrow$ no Internet, e basta, ragazzi! Connectivity e.g. between Africa and Europe depends totally on the reliability of a few submarine cables and telecommunication satellites. If dictators such as Mr Qaddafi ☞ ☺ used to shut down the Internet plus all terrestrial mobile phone networks, this left only SATCOM and HF for ordinary Libyans wishing to communicate with the rest of the world.



Risk of Internet disconnection worldwide

Courtesy Michael J Miller on 21 AUG 2013 www.renesys.com • research.dyn.com

Sure, SATCOM works perfect and everywhere, but it is pretty expensive, and not every buddy has a friend with an Inmarsat Isat or Iridium 9555 or Thuraya XT mobile phone just around the corner. This goes particularly for brutal dictatorships such as Communist China that kills thousands of so-called "dissidents" per year, the so-called "People's Republic" of North Korea, and so on, where the allotment of Inmarsat and Iridium and Thuraya and similar equipment is extremely restricted - if available at all.

In the case of an emergency or a revolution, **that leaves only HF** for ordinary people like you and us. Innovative nations such as the United States of America routinely fall back on the **amateur radio service as an officially recognized emergency communications medium** - as we've seen only recently during and after Hurricane Sandy. After the installation of a HF transceiver, or after the purchase of a cheap 50 Dollars HF radio for listening to SW transmissions from all over the world - i.e. once the initial investment in equipment is made - there are no call costs or ongoing monthly communication line or equipment rentals. Even better: **HF cannot be "switched off"**, and it is very difficult to block - let alone censor! - broadcasts from abroad. What's more, shortwave is not only "terrorist-proof", but "revolution-proof" as well: a mobile communication station using a cheap laptop computer, connected to a radio transceiver operating from a car battery and feeding a simple wire antenna, is much less vulnerable to an attack from outside than high-tech telecom switchboards, cellphone-repeater antenna farms on rooftops of high buildings, and satellite ground stations with large dish antennas. Remember Haiti and Katrina, the Thai and Japanese Tsunamis, and - only recently - supercyclone Yolanda / Haiyan that totally destroyed the Province of Leyte in the Philippines, with a death toll of ~ 5,000+? **HF radio is vital!**

The importance of international shortwave transmissions directed towards the poor people "governed" by brutal dictatorships should never be underestimated. **Internet? Forrrrrrrgeddddddded!!!** Remember what happened to the "mighty" Soviet Union? The Economist, 18 May 2013, regarding Com-munist Undemocratic Korea: "One intelligent move would be to re-examine how the West undermined the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc, and start doing the same. Sponsoring radio stations that broadcast into North Korea and offering scholarships for refugees would be a good start. Both these would cost relatively little and would help North Koreans when they face the coming calamity. Unfortunately, for the moment Western politicians prefer grandstanding." What a shame!

Says Fred Osterman N8EKU in his 800-pages 3-kilograms masterwork **SHORTWAVE RECEIVERS PAST AND PRESENT** (4th edition September 2014, ISBN 978-1-882123-02-5, www.universal-radio.com): "Shortwave communication still has a role to play. A quarter of the world's population does not enjoy reliable electricity, much less Internet connectivity. Unfortunately, bureaucrats in many world capitals (except Beijing) have prematurely abandoned shortwave. Do these decision makers believe that people without Internet access simply 'don't count', or do they think everyone in Sudan or the Solomon Islands has an iPad? Do they understand that local regimes can disconnect or filter the web at will? Shortwave radio, and shortwave radio alone, can provide reliable, economical communications largely immune from censorship by oppressive governments."

Says *The Economist* on 18 October 2014: "600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to mains electricity."

Says Keith Perron from PCJ Radio International on 23 April 2014, in an open letter to the Broadcasting Board of Governors on <http://bbgwatch.com>, with an appeal for continuing and improving Voice of America radio broadcasts: "Shortwave is still the only true effective way to get your message across borders without censorship. If you really want to save money, don't take it out of shortwave. I would suggest you take it out of television. VoA TV really has no point. It's amateurish and is a total waste of US tax payer money. Shortwave is excellent money for value."

Says the author of the book in hand: Exactly the same goes for those dull bureaucrats at Deutsche Welle. No buddy watches their boring and stupid DW TV. What we really do need in the jungles of Malaysia, or on top of the mountains of Rimella, is a shortwave broadcast in German - and nothing else!

Now consider the absurd decision by leading international broadcasters to drastically reduce their worldwide shortwave transmissions ... or to shut down HF completely! Under the difficult situation described above: just how do BBC, DW, VoA and the like get their message - and mission! - across the border to the poor people that is most in need of independent information - and international support???

Your comments are welcome!