

[One of Many Lessons to Learn From Egypt](#)

Posted on January 30th, 2011 by Dave Williams

On January 26, 2011, a day after a supposed holiday to commemorate the police forces, a police officer and protester were killed in Cairo, Egypt as anti-government demonstrators hurled rocks and firebombs. These two days were the beginning of massive civil unrest in Egypt. In response to the unrest, on January 27, 2011 the Egyptian government shut down the Internet. That's right, according to [Jim Harper](#) of the Cato Institute:

In response to civil unrest, the Egyptian government appears to have ordered service providers to [shut down all international connections](#) to the Internet. According to the blog post at the link just above, Egypt's four main ISPs have cut off their connections to the outside world. Specifically, their "BGP routes were withdrawn." The [Border Gateway Protocol](#) is what most Internet service providers use to establish routing between one another, so that Internet traffic flows among them.

The Internet is the portal to information for people around the world. From posting silly Facebook updates or silly Tweets, the Internet is "fun." The unrest in Egypt has also shown us that the Internet is a way to see the world unfiltered and to follow the plight of Egyptians as they battle the forces of a repressive government. Governments have also recognized the impact of the Internet and when the Egyptian government shut down the Internet we should be reminded of the dangers of net neutrality here at home.

Net neutrality is loosely defined as a system that allows information on the Internet to move freely without regard to content. The truth is that Sens. Joe Lieberman (I-Ct.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) have shown us that net neutrality is about regulation and government control. According to [Jim Harper](#):

The U.S. government has proposed both directly and indirectly to centralize control over U.S. Internet service providers. C|Net's Declan McCullagh reports that an "[Internet kill switch](#)" proposal championed by by Sens. Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) will be reintroduced in the new Congress very soon. The idea is to give "kill switch" authority to the government for use in responding to some kind of "cyberemergency."

The Egyptian crisis has shown us that net neutrality and government control of the Internet could have dire consequences. Politicians and bureaucrats always say that they do things in the interest of the citizen. Having the ability to unilaterally shut down the Internet is in the interest of nobody.

We wish the best for the people of Egypt and hope that this can be lesson for the United States.