

140 Years of Siemens in Iran: From Railroads to Deep Packet Inspection

HISTORY

- “Siemens and Iran have close business relations based on nearly 140 years...regular business activities between Iran and Siemens date back to 1924.”¹

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- “The company [Siemens] acknowledged last week at its annual stockholder meeting in Munich... that it conducted €438 million in trade with Iran in 2008, and that its 290 Iran-based employees will remain active in the gas, oil, infrastructure and communications sectors....

US & OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS TO SIEMENS

- “Some 23 initiatives were approved nationwide last week that will inject \$75 billion into transportation systems... The election results are good news for companies that are big players in the mass-transit business, such as Siemens. Siemens, which makes train equipment for both light rail and high-speed rail, plans to bid on many of the recently approved projects, and expects its annual revenue from light-rail projects in the U.S. to grow 50% to \$300 million in coming years...”²
- Since 2005, Siemens had done more than \$900 million worth of business with the U.S. government and employs about 70,000 people in the United States. Nokia is one of the leading mobile handset providers in the United States.
- “German industrial conglomerate Siemens AG said it expects to land about \$21 billion globally in new orders as governments seek to help industries cut energy consumption. The company could receive \$8 billion in revenue from the U.S. stimulus spending plan alone.”³

SIEMENS – NOKIA & DEEP PACKET INSPECTION

- Siemens and its joint partner, Nokia, had delivered state-of-the-art communications surveillance technology to Iran last spring. Information-technology experts say that the companies' "monitoring centers" are used to track mobile and land-line telephone conversations, and that their "intelligence platform" systems allow the Iranian secret service to track financial transactions and airplane movements. The technologies could also be used to monitor persecuted minority and dissident groups in Iran.”⁴

¹ Siemens Iran “Past & Future” (<http://www.siemens.ir/en/Past%20and%20Future.html>)

² Christopher Conkey and Paul Glader, “Mass-Transit Projects Fared Well at Polls” November 12, 2008 (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122645311762919469.html>)

³ Paul Glader, “Siemens Expects to Land \$21 Billion From Global Stimulus Spending” June 22, 2009 (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124562853514335757.html?mg=com-wsj>)

⁴ Benjamin Weintal, “Feeding Iran’s Bomb” February 5, 2009 (http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123379548035950207.html?mod=dist_smartbrief)

- Two European companies - a major contractor to the U.S. government and a top cell-phone equipment maker - last year installed an electronic surveillance system for Iran that human rights advocates and intelligence experts say can help Iran target dissidents. Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN), a joint venture between the Finnish cell-phone giant Nokia and German powerhouse Siemens, delivered what is known as a monitoring center to Irantelecom, Iran's state-owned telephone company.⁵
- “The Iranian government appears to be engaging in a practice often called **deep packet inspection (DPI)**, which enables authorities to not only block communication but to monitor it to gather information about individuals, as well as alter it for disinformation purposes... The monitoring capability was provided, at least in part, by a joint venture of Siemens AG, the German conglomerate, and Nokia Corp.
- This looks like a step beyond what any other country is doing, including China.’the arrangement depends on the cooperation of all the service providers.”⁶
- (DPI) is effectively allowing the Iranian government to control what its people are viewing on the internet and how they are communicating with the rest of the world. A recent *New York Times* article describes how the man who filmed the death of Neda Agha-Soltan avoided DPI and “e-mailed the two-megabyte video to a nearby friend, who quickly forwarded it to the Voice of America, the newspaper The Guardian in London and five online friends in Europe.”⁷
- Deep packet inspection (DPI) facilitates the Iranian regime’s comprehensive crackdown on dissidents like students, women, and journalists.
- In its quarterly report on human rights, *The Center for the Defense of Human Rights in Iran* cited government harassment including arrest and jail sentences for university students, journalists, teachers, and political and social activists.⁸
- “Ben Roome, a spokesman for NSN, said, ‘we provided the monitoring center to Irantelecom. We are not going to comment on the use of it....’ But William Daly, a former CIA signal-intelligence officer for the agency's Office of Science and Technology who retired in 2000, said the monitoring center in Iran will be used to ‘monitor dissidents and those ayatollahs who oppose the Supreme Leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei].’”⁹
- Coupled with the sheer brutality of the Basij, the Iranian paramilitary force, DPI is creating gross human rights violations in the Islamic Republic. Amnesty International has recently called on the Iranian government to “allow peaceful demonstrations, to exercise restraint in the policing of any further demonstrations, to stop using the Basij militia to police protests, and to ensure that firearms are not used except as a last resort and where strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.”¹⁰

⁵ Eli Lake, “Fed contractor , cell phone maker sold spy system to Iran,” *Washington Times*. April 13, 2009. (<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/13/europe39s-telecoms-aid-with-spy-tech/>)

⁶ Christopher Rhodes and Loretta Chao, “Iran’s Web Spying Aided by Western Technology,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 22, 2009. (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124562668777335653.html>)

⁷ Brian Stelter and Brad Stone, “Web Pries Lid of Iranian Censorship,” *New York Times*, June 22, 2009. (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/23/world/middleeast/23censor.html?_r=1&hp)

⁸ “Rights Violations in Iran,” *Voice of America*, November 24, 2008.

⁹ Lake, *Op.Cit.*

¹⁰ Amnesty International, “The Right to Peaceful Protest” (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/iran-election-unrest>)