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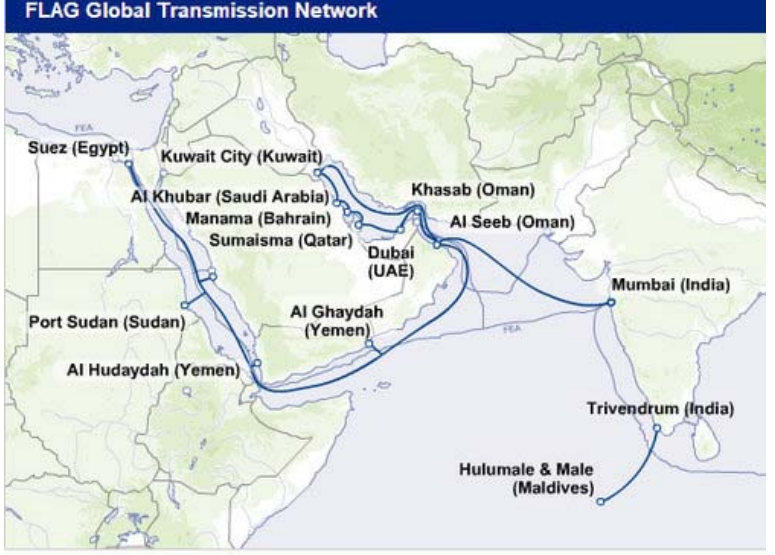
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3rd FLAG Undersea Cable Cut, Now Between UAE and Oman

Posted: 2008/02/02
From: Mathaba



Two days after cable cuts which "cut off Iran" and affected the rest of the Middle East and West Asia but left communications in Israel and Iraq "intact", another cable owned by the same British company is severed, once again plunging the region into "Internet darkness".
Image: FLAG's Europe-Asia "FEA" undersea cable network

Omar Sultan, chief executive of Dubai's Internet Service Provider "DU", said on Friday that an undersea cable had been cut in the Persian Gulf, causing severe phone line disruptions and making worse the [already existing Internet outage across large parts of the Middle East and West Asia](#) after two other undersea cables owned by the same

British company were cut this week in the Mediterranean Sea 8.3 kilometers (5 miles) north of Alexandria, Egypt.

Mr Sultan said that the incident was "very unusual." He said it was not known how the underwater cable, owned by British FLAG FALCON company, which runs between the United Arab Emirates and Oman, had been damaged. DU said in a press release that the cause of the incident "had not yet been identified."

The owner of the FALCON cable, U.K. FLAG Telecom said the cable was cut at 05:59 UTC on Friday, 56 kilometers (35 miles) off the coast of Dubai and that a "repair ship has been notified and expected to arrive at the site in the next few days." The British company is also the owner of one of the undersea cables linking Egypt (Alexandria) with Italy (Palermo) that were sliced Wednesday in the Mediterranean Sea. That damage triggered wide Internet outages, hampering businesses and private usage across the Middle East and West Asia, and cutting off Iran "completely", according to reports.

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The only 2 countries that were unaffected were Israel and Iraq, the only two close Anglo-American allies in the region, both remaining completely unaffected by the cable cuts, leading to theories for the causes of the cuts, which have so far been given as having been caused by ships dragging their anchors across the cables. The fact that two rare incidents have happened in the same week, and both with cables owned by the same company, on either sides of Israel and the importance of the Internet to telecommunications and business, lends suspicion to the events.

Agency reports state that a FLAG official in India, speaking on condition of anonymity because of company policy, said workers were still trying to determine how the Persian Gulf cable was cut. Earlier Friday, FLAG said that a repair ship was expected to arrive Tuesday at the site of the damaged cables off the coast of Alexandria, and that repair work would likely take a week, but gave no explanation why repairs would take so long.

FLAG Europe Asia (FEA) is the world's longest privately funded submarine cable. [FLAG Telecom](#) owns undersea communication cables across the United States of America, to England, West Europe and the Middle East, onward to South Asia and the Far East, and again across to the United States thus spanning the northern world.

Egypt's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Tarek Kamil on Friday said the reason behind Wednesday's cut undersea cable would only be determined once repair teams with their robot equipment reach the damaged cables. --mathaba

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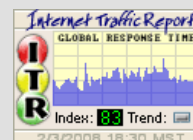
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[Qatar Telecom \(Qtel\) said on Sunday the cable was damaged between the Qatari island](#)

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