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Internet Development and Information Control in the People's Republic of China

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Internet Development and Information Control in the People's Republic of China

Summary

Since its founding in 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has often been accused of manipulating the flow of information and prohibiting the dissemination of viewpoints that criticize the government or stray from the official Communist party view. The introduction of Internet technology in the mid-1990's presented a challenge to government control over news sources, and by extension, over public opinion. While the Internet has developed rapidly and increased the daily convenience of many Chinese citizens, freedom of expression online, as in the media, is still significantly stifled.

Empirical studies have found that China has one of the most sophisticated content-filtering Internet regimes in the world. The Chinese government employs increasingly sophisticated methods to limit content online, including a combination of legal regulation, surveillance, and punishment to promote self-censorship, as well as technical controls. U.S. government efforts to defeat Internet "jamming," include funding through the Broadcasting Board of Governors to provide counter-censorship software to Chinese Internet users to access Radio Free Asia (RFA) and Voice of America (VOA) sites available to Chinese users. There is considerable debate, however, on whether developing and implementing counter-censorship software is the most effective U.S. strategy to combat information control on the Internet in China.

Since China's market-oriented reforms in 1979, the United States and China have had increasingly strong economic ties. Many U.S. observers, including government officials, believe that Internet growth and economic openness will bring about greater freedom of expression and political openness in China. However, contrary to facilitating freedom, some private U.S. companies have been charged with aiding or complying with Chinese Internet censorship. Private U.S. companies that provide Internet hardware, such as routers, as well as those that provide Internet services such as web-log (blog) hosting or search portals, have been accused of ignoring international standards for freedom of expression when pursuing business opportunities in the PRC market.

In the 108th Congress, the provisions of the "Global Internet Freedom Act" (H.R. 48) were subsumed into the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 2004-05 (H.R. 1950) and passed by the House on July 16, 2003. Christopher Cox reintroduced the bill (H.R. 2219) to the 109th Congress in May 2005. If passed, the act would authorize $50,000,000 for FY2006 and FY2007 to develop and implement a global Internet freedom policy. The act would also establish an office within the International Broadcasting Bureau with the sole mission of countering Internet jamming by repressive governments.

This report will not be updated.

Contents

Internet Development and Use in China 1
Censorship and Content Control of the Internet 2

Methods of PRC Internet Censorship and Content Control 3
Legal Regulations 3
September 25, 2005 Regulations 4
Technical Methods of Content Filtering 5
Cyber-Police, Punitive Action, and Self-Censorship 6

U.S. Private Sector Involvement in PRC Internet Censorship 7
Yahoo and Shi Tao Case 8

U.S. Government Efforts to Promote Unrestricted Internet Access in China 9
Administration Views and Reactions 9
Congressional Action 10
International Broadcasting Bureau 10

Issues for U.S. Policy 11

List of Tables

Table 1. International Broadcasting Bureau Funding for Counter-Censorship Technology 11

Internet Development and Information Control in China (PRC)

The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) places strict limitations on its domestic and foreign news media. Information that is considered "politically sensitive" or that conveys organized dissent and criticism of the Communist Party is not tolerated.[1] As a result, information or objective reporting on subjects such as China's human rights record, Tibetan independence, Falun Gong, Taiwan, or the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, among other topics, are largely absent in China. Journalists have allegedly been harassed, sometimes with violence, and jailed for reporting content that is undesirable or that implicate government officials in corruption. In addition to reporting that is critical of the government, PRC leadership actively suppresses coverage of events that it considers a threat to social stability. State coverups of the early spread of AIDS, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in April 2003, and fatal industrial disasters are notable examples of issues that have been censored in the Chinese media.[2]

Internet Development and Use in China

In the early stages of its development, the Internet presented a challenge to Chinese government control over information flows and public opinion. In pursuit of economic growth and modernization, however, the government actively promoted Internet development. Because it is subject to PRC censorship, yet continues to spread news across national borders, the Internet has played a role in bringing international attention to issues forbidden in China, including PRC censorship itself.

Since the country's first connection in 1993, the Internet has experienced exponential growth in China.[3] According to a government sponsored report, the number of Chinese Internet users (not including Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan) reached 103 million by July 2005. The official report also finds that over half of the users have broadband access (51%), are educated (55% had completed at least

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[1] OpenNet Initiative, "Internet Filtering in China in 2004-2005: A Country Study," April 2005, [http://www.opennetinitiative.net/studies/china/].

[2] He Qinglian, "Media Control in China," November 4, 2004, *China Rights Forum*, [http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/8991].

[3] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, "Wired for Modernization in China" in *Open Networks Closed Regimes*, 13 (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2003). For an overview of the earlier development of China's Internet industry, see CRS Report RL30636, *China's Internet Industry*, by Thomas Lum.

college), male (60%), or young (71% were under age 30).[4] Another study estimates that there are currently up to 134 million Chinese Internet users, approximately a fivefold increase from 23 million in 2001.[5] Although 103 million or 134 million would account for only 8% or 10% of China's population, respectively, Internet usage is expected to rise as China continues to promote Internet development and enjoy rapid economic growth.

As in the United States, the Internet has already transformed the daily lives of many people in China. Chinese citizens are able to use the Internet to communicate with others, find entertainment, engage in commercial activities, and obtain permissible information.[6] Chinese studies have found that the majority of Internet users in China use the Internet for entertainment purposes.[7] Notwithstanding, the PRC government strictly controls news and political content online, which has drawn the attention and criticism of many analysts and U.S. policymakers.

Censorship and Content Control of the Internet

During the early days of the Internet in China, some observers hoped that greater access to information brought about by this new technology would also encourage political expression and democracy in China. Although there has been a documented expansion in the scope of permissible private speech in recent years, the Chinese government has also intensified efforts to monitor and control use of the Internet and wireless technologies (e.g. cellular phones).[8]

An often cited empirical study by the OpenNet Initiative (a collaboration between Harvard Law School, University of Toronto Citizen Lab, and Cambridge Security Program) found that China has the most sophisticated content-filtering Internet regime in the world.[9] Compared to similar efforts in other countries, the Chinese government effectively filters content by employing multiple methods of regulation and technical controls. The PRC-sponsored news agency, Xinhua, stated that censorship targets "superstitious, pornographic, violence-related, gambling and

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[4] China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), *16th Statistical Survey Report on the Internet Development in China*, July 2005. Latest data can be found at [http://www.cnnic.net.cn].

[5] "Net User Tally in China Nears 134 million," *South China Morning Post*, February 4, 2005, at [http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=20477]. Kalathil and Boas, op. cit., 23.

[6] "China: News agency reports on role of internet in people's lives," *Xinhua News Agency*, October 7, 2005, accessed via BBC Monitoring Media.

[7] Guo Liang, *Surveying Internet Usage and Impact in Twelve Chinese Cities* (Beijing: Research Center for on Social Development, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2005).

[8] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2004 — China* (February 2005).

[9] OpenNet Initiative, op. cit., 3.

other harmful information."[10] However, many observers are concerned about the pervasive filtering of any content that the Communist Party of China views as politically objectionable. Informational websites, including that of the BBC, Voice of America, and the public encyclopedia, Wikipedia, have been blocked in China.[11]

In addition to censorship of news reports that may present the government in a negative light, the Internet is used to channel and influence public opinion, especially in support of nationalistic sentiments. *The People's Daily*, a state-sponsored newspaper, has an online bulletin board called the "Strong Nation Forum," intended for discussion on how to make China a stronger nation. The forum hosted angry anti-Japanese postings in April 2005, during a political fallout between China and Japan concerning Japan's alleged re-writing of wartime atrocities in its history textbooks.[12]

Earlier that year, however, when users visited the forum to mourn the death of former Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, moderators promptly removed messages of condolence. Zhao, stripped of his government position for sympathizing with Tiananmen student protesters in 1989, had been held under strict house arrest until his death, which received only muted attention in the national media. Some observers interpret this as reflecting government sensitivity to calls for the rehabilitation of those condemned during the protests.[13] crsphpgw

Methods of PRC Internet Censorship and Content Control

In order to suppress politically sensitive or undesirable content online, the PRC has adopted two main strategies. First, the Chinese government employs a complex system of regulations, surveillance, and punitive action to promote self-censorship among the public. Second, the government uses technology and human monitors to physically filter unwanted content.

Legal Regulations

Since the commercialization of the Internet in 1995, the PRC government has issued extensive regulations regarding Internet usage. Because these regulations often overlap, are regularly updated, and are created and carried out by multiple government agencies, the legal infrastructure regarding Internet usage in China is extraordinarily complex. At least 12 different government agencies are involved in

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[10] Chen Siwu and Yu Hong, "China Holds Forum on 'Cleaning' Internet," *Xinhua News Agency*, October 17, 2005 (BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific).

[11] "China Blocks Access to Internet Encyclopedia," *Kyodo News*, October 26, 2005, Open Net Initiative, op. cit.

[12] "China, Japan Eye Textbook Tension," *BBC World Monitoring*. April 11, 2005.

[13] "Muted Goodbye to Chinese Reformer," *BBC News*, January 29, 2005.

Internet regulation, which are directed at Internet service and content providers, cyber-café operators, and Internet users themselves.[14]

Internet service providers (ISPs) must obtain an operating license from the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) and record each customer's account number, phone number, IP address, sites visited, and time spent online. Internet content providers (ICPs) that publish information, operate electronic bulletin boards, or engage in journalism must record all content made available and the date it was issued. For both service and content providers, these records must be maintained for 60 days and surrendered to relevant government agencies upon request.[15] After obtaining permission to open an Internet café, café operators are required to install software that blocks pornographic and "subversive" content, keep detailed logs linking users to the pages they visited and record visits to any blocked pages, and report these to the Public Security Bureau.[16] As with ISPs and ICPs, cafes must retain this information for 60 days. PRC authorities reportedly closed 47,000 unlicensed Internet cafes in 2004 while installing monitoring software in others.[17]

In addition to regulations directed at Internet service and content providers, this complex legal infrastructure is also extended to Internet users themselves. The Ministry of Public Security took initial steps to control Internet use in 1997 when it issued comprehensive regulations governing internet use. Selected portions of three key sections, Articles 4-6, are presented here:

> Individuals are prohibited from using the Internet to: harm national security; disclose state secrets; or injure the interests of the state or society [4]. Users are prohibited from using the Internet to create, replicate, retrieve, or transmit information that incites resistance to the PRC Constitution, laws, or administrative regulations; promotes the overthrow of the government or socialist system; undermines national unification; distorts the truth, spreads rumors, or destroys social order; or provides sexually suggestive material or encourages gambling, violence, or murder [5]. Users are prohibited from engaging in activities that harm the security of computer information networks and from using networks or changing network resources without prior approval [6].[18]

September 25, 2005 Regulations. On July 1, 2005, Chinese authorities shut down thousands of websites that had not registered with the government. Following this stringent measure, in September 2005, the PRC State Council and the MII announced new rules regarding the administration of the Internet. These new rules formalized interim provisions enacted in 2000, which established general

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[14] OpenNet Intiative, op. cit., 8. For complete list of these agencies, see Appendix 2.

[15] *Measure for the Administration of Internet Information Services*, September 25, 2000, translation available at [http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/exp/explaws.php].

[16] OpenNet Intiative, op. cit., 11.

[17] "China Closes 47,000 Internet Cafes in 2004," *Xinhua News Agency*, March 1, 2005 (BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific).

[18] *Computer Information Network and Internet Security, Protection and Management Regulations*, translation and summary in OpenNet Initiative, op. cit.

Internet content regulations and a mandatory system of licensing and registration for those engaged in "Internet information services."[19]

In addition to combining and clarifying earlier provisions, the new rules both tighten control over online news services and define them more broadly. They stipulate that private individuals or groups must register as "news organizations" before they can operate websites or e-mail distribution lists that spread news or commentary. Because a news organization is required to employ experienced staff, have registered premises, capital, and a transparent system of operation whereby writings can be attributed, approval will likely be difficult for many individuals and private groups.[20] Websites and popular Internet portals such as Sina.com or Sohu.com must publish only news items, without commentary, even though commentary is often a staple of Web-logs, or "blogs."[21] According to the PRC news agency, Xinhua, electronic bulletin board systems (BBS) and cell-phone text messages that contain news content are also subject to these regulations.[22] In addition, two new stipulations indicate increased Communist government concerns about civil unrest. The first bans Internet news services from inciting illegal assemblies, marches and demonstrations; the other prohibits activity on behalf of illegal civil groups.[23]

The complex legal infrastructure governing Internet usage in China also includes punitive measures for those who violate the regulations. Under the September 2005 rules, websites that distribute news without government authorization are under the threat of closure and fines of up to 30,000 yuan (US$3,700).[24] Similar penalties and fees exist for website operators who fail to register with the government, and, in serious cases, their network access would be terminated.

Technical Methods of Content Filtering

China censors the Internet through website blocking and key word filtering, primarily at the router level. Routers are devices through which packets of data are directed until they reach their final destination. In China, routers are programmed to channel Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) through proxy servers, which look for politically sensitive words such as "falun" (as in "www.faluninfo.net" of the banned

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[19] *Rules on the Administration of Internet News Information Services*, translation available at [http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=24396].

[20] "China Internet: Government Tightens Controls Again," *Economist Intelligence Unit*, October 12, 2005.

[21] Joseph Kahn, "China Tightens its Restrictions for News Media on the Internet," *New York Times*, September 26, 2005.

[22] "China Tightens Supervision over Online News Services," *China Daily*, September 26, 2005.

[23] Anick Jesdanun, "China Targets Tech-savvy Protesters," *Contra Costa Times*, October 2, 2005.

[24] "China Internet: Cracking down as China Opens up" *Economist Intelligence Unit*, October 4, 2005.

Falun Gong spiritual movement), and send back an error message (e.g., "file not found") to the Internet user who requested the page. Internet search results are similarly blocked. For example, although the phrase "Taiwan independence," may not be part of a website URL, entering this phrase into a search engine would result in a URL followed by those words (i.e., www.google.com/search?Taiwan+ Independence), which would trigger the router to filter and block the search results.[25] The OpenNet Initiative found that China tolerates occasional over-blocking as the price of preventing access to prohibited sites.[26]

Cyber-Police, Punitive Action, and Self-Censorship

For those websites that bypass automated filtering, China's Ministry of Public Security (MPS) reportedly employs 30,000 human monitors, or "cyber-police," to monitor Internet content.[27] This cyber-police force, established in 2000, operates as a division within the police departments of 700 cities and provinces in China. Along with investigating online crimes, such as spreading viruses, pornography, or attempting financial fraud, the cyber-police monitor websites and e-mail content and remove objectionable or subversive material.[28]

In addition to an established Internet police force, the Chinese government solicits help from citizens themselves to monitor Internet content. In July 2004, the MPS established a network of online reporting centers accompanied by a rewards component that encourages citizens to report "illegal" or "harmful" information.[29] Xinhua News Agency disclosed that by October 2004, 50 citizens were rewarded 500-2,000 yuan ($62-$247) for reporting pornography and 18 citizens were rewarded 3,000 to 10,000 yuan ($370-$1,235) for reporting illegal online gambling. Although Xinhua did not disclose statistics for citizens who reported "subversive" political content, the guidelines on the cyber-police website state that citizen vigilance should not be limited to reporting pornography, but should extend to online political activities as well.[30]

As of May 2004, Reporters without Borders, an international press freedom group, stated that 61 PRC citizens had been arrested and detained for posting

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[25] Testimony of Kenneth Berman, Director of Information Technology, International Broadcasting Bureau, before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, April 14, 2005.

[26] OpenNet Intiative, op. cit., 51.

[27] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *op. cit.*; Traci E. Carpenter, "Great Firewall," *MSNBC.com*, July 21, 2005.

[28] Testimony of Xiao Qiang, Director of China Internet Project, UC Berkeley, before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, April 14, 2004; and Steven Cherry, "The Net Effect," *Spectrum*, June 2005.

[29] Foreign Broadcasting Information Service (FBIS), "Analysis: PRC Solicits Citizen Help in Controlling Internet Content," August 19, 2005.

[30] [http://cyberpolice.cn].

messages or articles on the Internet that were considered subversive.[31] Amnesty International stated that some "cyber dissidents" were charged with revealing state secrets or endangering state security and received prison sentences of two to twelve years.[32] Although the government generally does not prosecute citizens who receive dissident e-mail publications, forwarding such messages sometimes results in detention. Some contend that the detainment of Internet political writers reflects Chinese repression of free media in general; at the end of 2004, 42 journalists reportedly were imprisoned in the PRC.[33] Since prohibited material like "state secrets" have not been clearly defined by PRC authorities, many reporters, writers, and Internet users exercise self-censorship to avoid the risk of losing their jobs or facing criminal liability.[34]

U.S. Private Sector Involvement in PRC Internet Censorship

Within the United States, there has been considerable debate surrounding the alleged complicity of private U.S. companies in the development and maintenance of PRC Internet filtering. Some contend that when presented with large profit potential, U.S. corporations are willing to overlook violations of freedom of expression in China. Others argue that, despite problems with censorship, U.S. investment in China's Internet industry will eventually lead to a more open environment for information flows.

Analysts suggest that China's sophisticated Internet infrastructure would not be possible without technology and equipment imported from U.S. and other foreign companies. For China's latest network upgrade, "CN2," which began in mid-2004, two U.S. companies, Cisco Systems and Juniper Networks, were granted four out of six contracts. Cisco Systems, a U.S. telecommunications equipment company, has previously faced allegations that it assisted China in developing censorship capabilities.[35] In its recent router contract for CN2, Cisco will provide China with its 12000 Series routers, which are equipped with filtering capability typically used to prevent Internet attacks (i.e., worms and viruses). This technology can also be used by PRC authorities to block politically sensitive content.[36] Derek Bambauer, a researcher at the OpenNet Initiative, believes that without this upgrade, routers in China are not searching deeply within packets of data for banned keywords, because it would put an enormous load on the routers. Some contend that Cisco routers and the CN2 network upgrade may enable Chinese authorities to employ more

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[31] "Internet Under Surveillance 2004," *Reporters Sans Frontieres*, at [http://www.rsf.org].

[32] "Controls Tighten as Internet Activism Grows," *Amnesty International*, January 28, 2004.

[33] Testimony of Frank Smyth, Representative from the Committee to Protect Journalists, before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, on April 14, 2005.

[34] He Qinglian, op. cit.

[35] Ethan Gutman, *Losing the New China: A Story of American Commerce, Desire, and Betrayal*, Encounter Books, 2004.

[36] The OpenNet Intiative, op cit.

sophisticated keyword filtering.[37] Cisco denies allegations that it has altered its products to suit the objectives of PRC cyber-policing. Cisco has declared that it does not tailor its products to the China market, and the products it sells in China are the same as those to other countries.[38]

In addition to U.S. companies, such as Cisco, that provide hardware, a number of U.S. software and Internet service providers, such as Yahoo, Google, and Microsoft, have been accused of complying with censorship in China.[39] In 2002, Yahoo was heavily criticized by human rights groups for voluntarily signing a pledge of "self-discipline," promising to follow China's censorship laws. In June 2005, Microsoft's blog-hosting service, MSN Spaces, began removing words like "democracy" and "human rights" from use in Chinese blog titles and postings.[40] Google also prevents Chinese Internet users from accessing sites that Chinese authorities deem politically sensitive. When asked about their role in Chinese censorship, most companies maintain that they must follow the laws of the host country in which they are doing business.[41]

Yahoo and Shi Tao Case. Yahoo has come under fire for giving the personal e-mail address of a Chinese journalist, Shi Tao, to PRC government authorities, which led to his criminal conviction and sentence of 10 years in prison. In April 2004, Shi, who was an editor at *Contemporary Business News* based in Hunan province, attended an editorial meeting in which government officials read an internal document outlining media restrictions before the 15th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown in June 2004. Shi sent copies of his notes via his personal Yahoo e-mail account to a pro-democracy organization in the United States. PRC state security authorities later requested information from Yahoo that enabled them to identify Shi and use it in his conviction. Jerry Yang, co-founder and senior executive of Yahoo, confirmed that his company gave Chinese authorities information and described the company's ultimate compliance as part of the legal burden of doing business in China.[42] Human rights groups and others contend, however, that Yahoo and other U.S. companies seem too willing to accommodate the Chinese government in order to pursue business opportunities in the huge Chinese market.[43]

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[37] Steven Cherry, "The Net Effect," *Spectrum*, Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (EEEI), June 2005.

[38] Kevin Poulsen, "Critics Squeeze Cisco Over China," *Wired News*, July 29, 2005, at [http://www.wired.com].

[39] Tina Rosenberg, "Building the Great Firewall of China, with Foreign Help," *The New York Times*, September 18, 2005; Fang Yuan, "Microsoft Filters 'Democracy' in China" *Radio Free Asia*, June 20, 2005.

[40] "Microsoft Censors Chinese Blogs," BBC News, June 14, 2005.

[41] Peter S. Goodman, "Yahoo Says it gave China Internet Data," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2005.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Reporters Without Borders, "Information supplied by Yahoo! Helped journalist Shi Tao (continued...)

U.S. Government Efforts to Promote Unrestricted Internet Access in China

Administration Views and Reactions

In the past, cabinet-level U.S. officials have expressed their belief that growth of the Internet and other information technologies will bring about wide-scale democratization abroad.[44] Since the 1990's U.S. policy has emphasized a belief that increased contact through trade will encourage greater exchanges of information and create the conditions for significant political and cultural change. This view is reflected in a speech President Bush delivered on November 16, 2005 in Kyoto, Japan:

> Economic liberalization in Taiwan helped fuel its desire for individual political freedom — because men and women who are allowed to control their own wealth will eventually insist on controlling their own lives and their future... As China [PRC] reforms its economy, its leaders are finding that once the door to freedom is opened even a crack, it cannot be closed. As the people of China grow in prosperity, their demands for political freedom will grow as well.[45]

The Bush Administration has made efforts to bring human rights concerns to the table. In September 2005, President Bush presented a list of political prisoners that the U.S. government believes to be wrongly persecuted by the PRC. When President Bush visited China in November 2005, however, none of the journalists, business leaders, or political dissidents mentioned had been released.[46] U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, has also made statements on the importance of political freedoms in China: "Every society has to be vigilant against another type of Great Wall ... a wall that limits speech, information, and choices."[47] The State Department has censured the Chinese government by including an explanation of the PRC's media and Internet controls and related persecution of political dissidents in its annual human rights report. However, aside from diplomatic rebukes of China's restrictions on freedom expression, U.S. actions to combat Internet censorship in China have primarily been in the form of Congressional funding for anti-censorship software.

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[43] (...continued)
get 10 years in Prison," September 6, 2005, at [http://www.rsf.org]

[44] Former U.S. Secretaries of State , James A. Baker and Madeleine Albright, are quoted as supporting Internet and information technologies in foreign countries as a way to support their eventual democratization. Randolph Kluver, "US and China Policy Expectations of the Internet" *China Information*, 29, no. 2 (2005) 308.

[45] George W. Bush, Speech in Kyoto Japan, November 16, 2005.

[46] David E. Sanger and Joseph Kahn, "Chinese Leader Gives President a Mixed Message." *The New York Times*, November 21, 2005.

[47] Thom Shanker, "Rumsfeld Urges Openness in China." *Houston Chronicle*, October 19, 2005.

Congressional Action

In early 2003 Christopher Cox introduced The Global Internet Freedom Act (H.R. 48, 108th Congress), a bill to develop and implement a global strategy to combat state-sponsored Internet jamming and persecution of those who use the Internet. Though it was not passed on its own, the provisions of the Global Internet Freedom Act were subsumed into H.R. 1950, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 2004-2005, which was passed by the House in July 2003. The act would have authorized $8,000,000 for FY2004 and FY2005 to the Broadcasting Board of Governors for the establishment of the "Office of Global Internet Freedom." In the 109th Congress, Representative Cox reintroduced the Global Internet Freedom Act as H.R. 2216 in May 2005. At the time of this report, November 2005, the bill has been referred to the U.S. House Committee on International Relations.

International Broadcasting Bureau.[48] The U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), which oversees the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), has promoted Internet freedom in China by focusing on its Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) websites, which are regularly blocked by Chinese authorities. In 2001, the BBG provided $100,000 to Safeweb Inc., a government contracted company that had also been briefly funded by the CIA, to provide proxy servers to help Chinese Internet users access prohibited information.[49] However, within a year, Safeweb's technology was reportedly unsuccessful in protecting user identities.[50]

Since 2003, the IBB has primarily funded Dynamic Internet Technology (DynaWeb) and UltraReach, which have each developed software to enable Chinese Internet users to access VOA and RFA websites (see table). DynaWeb's website is difficult to block because of "anonymizing" technology that regularly changes its numerical Internet Protocol (IP) address. Dynaweb president, Bill Xia, disclosed that earlier efforts to provide Chinese Internet users with unblocked IP addresses through an e-mail subscription service had failed because censors had also subscribed to the service, and quickly blocked those sites as well.[51] According to Xia, DynaWeb must evolve according to how China censors the Internet, and that "both parties can always implement new technologies to stay ahead and sustain the advantage." However, in testimony before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Xia stated that censors have a "brighter future," because China purchases the most advanced censorship technology from Western companies and has more resources than counter-censorship efforts in the United States.[52]

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[48] Thomas Lum, Specialist in Asian Affairs, contributed this section.

[49] Murray Hiebert, "Counters to Chinese Checkers," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 7, 2002.

[50] Oxblood Ruffin, "Great Firewall of China," *New Scientist* (London), November 9, 2002.

[51] Bill Xia, president of DynaWeb, "China's Cyber-Wall: Can technology Break Through?" *Testimony before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China*, November 4, 2002.

[52] Ibid.

Table 1. International Broadcasting Bureau Funding for Counter-Censorship Technology

	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005
Dynaweb	$497,700	$806,326	$685,000
UltraReach	$3,000	$21,000	$42,003
Total	**$500,700**	**$827,326**	**$727,003**

Source: Broadcasting Board of Governors.

As of April 2005, Dynamic's homepage was viewed about 90,000 times per day, while UltraReach allows approximately 4,000 visits and 30,000 page views for VOA and 2,600 visits and 28,000 page views for RFA daily.[53] Visits to these sites reportedly rise when PRC censorship tightens, such as during the SARS outbreak of 2003. The BBG disseminates Chinese-language news summaries, some of which contain critical opinions or stories about China, to recipients in China via e-mail. These e-mails employ techniques that circumvent censorship and include IP addresses of proxy servers through which users may view VOA and RFA reports.[54]

Issues for U.S. Policy

There is considerable debate on whether U.S. support of censor-circumventing software is effective. Some experts believe that if freedom of expression in China is the goal, counter-censorship technology alone will not be enough. U.S. companies face no legal and little political pressure to avoid supplying foreign governments with advanced technology or services that may be used to suppress freedom of expression. Moreover, some experts believe that there needs to be more demand from Chinese people themselves to obtain uncensored information.[55] They posit that if demand for free information is great enough from within China, the government will be more inclined to loosen its grip on Internet information controls.[56] When the popular search engine, Google, was blocked in 2002, some scholars believe that the Chinese government gave into pressure and lifted the block after only 10 days because of the flood of complaints received from Chinese researchers and Internet users.[57]

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[53] James C. Mulvenon, DGI Center for Intelligence Research and Analysis, "Breaching the Great Firewall," *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, April 14, 2005.

[54] Kenneth Berman, Director of Information Technology, International Broadcasting Bureau, "China's State Control Mechanisms and Methods," *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, April 14, 2005.

[55] Xia, op. cit.

[56] Ibid.

[57] November 2005, Interview by author with prominent Chinese researcher, who prefers to (continued...)

Another view is that the U.S. development of counter-censorship software and strategies for Chinese Internet users is effective and requires additional funding from the U.S. government.[58] In addition to greater political openness and freedom of expression for Chinese people, many assert that uncensored information in China will have significant international impact. In the face of pandemic health threats, like a potential outbreak of Avian Flu, many U.S. policymakers may find it imperative to continue to support freedom of expression and open media in China. Whether counter-censorship is most effective at the technological level, however, is at question. In addition to developing software to fight Internet censorship, some suggest that diplomatic pressure and increased dialogue can be used to encourage greater openness and freedom on the Internet and in the media. According to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "the President and the Congress should urge the Chinese government to eliminate prior restraints on publishing, cease detaining journalists and writers, stop blocking foreign news broadcasts and websites, and specify precisely what kind of political content is illegal to publish."[59] Additionally, some suggest that encouraging or requiring a code of conduct for U.S. companies doing business in foreign countries may help guide business practices when human rights issues are concerned. Frank discussion between U.S. and PRC leaders on freedom of expression and China's definition of "sensitive" information and "state secret" may also be another U.S. option, one that may be more effective than using software technology to try to directly subvert China's blocking of RFA and VOA websites.

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[57] (...continued)
be unidentified.

[58] Jennifer Lee, "Guerrilla Warfare, Waged with Code," *New York Times*, October 10, 2002.

[59] Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2005, October 11, 2005.