

Censorship Firewalls

- ◆ Internet subscribers have been asked to register with the police and to sign regulations that ban producing or retrieving information considered pornographic or “harmful to the security of the nation,” *South China Morning Post* (SCMP) reported. All computer networks with links to databases abroad can only use lines provided by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and equipped with software to filter information, UPI said. In September 1996, over 100 World Wide Web sites were blocked by the Chinese authorities, SCMP reported. They include the home pages of AI and TIN and of the Taiwan Government Information Office. Also censored were U.S. media outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*, as well as pornographic sites.
- ◆ Journalists were asked by the head of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) Propaganda Department, Ding Guangen, in October to back the CCP and to give priority to “positive news,” SCMP said. “It is necessary... to firmly guide public opinion,” the *People’s Daily* quoted Ding as saying. As part of the “spiritual civilization” campaign launched by President Jiang Zemin, Hebei Province issued new regulations requiring journalists to educate the public on “patriotism, collectivism and socialism.”
- ◆ The publisher of the *Beijing Youth Daily*, Cui Enqing, was asked to resign because the paper was considered too radical, SCMP said. Last summer the newspaper had published an article denouncing a state-owned beverage factory that had sold poisonous yogurt drinks which had caused the deaths of some Anhui children. After the company complained about the exposé’s effect on its business, propaganda authorities forced Cui to resign.
- ◆ Publication of the Shenzhen magazine *Focus* has been suspended since a Hong Kong paper reported an article in the magazine marking the anniversary of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, a topic banned by propaganda authorities. Beijing-based *Orient* faces a similar setback after publishing reviews of the works of Gu Zhun, whose ideas on the rule of law and civil rights angered the CCP before his death during the Cultural Revolution, Reuters reported.
- ◆ The U.S.-financed Radio Free Asia (RFA) was accused by Foreign Ministry official of interfering in the internal affairs of Asian countries under the “pretense of freedom of speech,” UPI reported. In late September RFA launched a 30-minute program in Mandarin. Broadcasts in Tibetan are scheduled to start later.

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