Investigative Report on How Internet Is Used to Persecute Falun Gong Practitioners in China

During the past year, the foundation work for Golden Shield Project has been finished. The Chinese security system starts to purchase some complicated surveillance technology from western enterprises. Ultimately the aim is to integrate a gigantic online database with an all-encompassing surveillance network – incorporating speech and face recognition, closed-circuit television, smart cards, credit records, and Internet surveillance technologies.


The preliminary work of Golden Shield Project cost US$800 million, equivalent to 6,400 million RMB.

---Channel 4 of CCTV, 2002

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of people detained or sentenced for Internet-related offences, such as circulating pro-democratic information or supplying publications that are critical of the Chinese government, an increase of 60 per cent in 2003 as compared to the previous year's figures. Presently, at least 54 people have been detained for sending e-mails, establishing website or exchanging Falun Gong information.

---Amnesty International, Jan.28, 2004

According to incomplete statistics, 97 Falun Gong practitioners have been detained or jailed in forced labor camps, and three died of persecution because of browsing on internet, from July 1999 to April 2004. Li Changjun, a Falun Gong practitioner and a Master Degree holder from Huazhong University of Science & Technology, was born in 1968. He was an employee of Wuhan Land Tax Bureau, Hubei Province. On May 16, 2001, Li was illegally taken into custody by police, together with some other Falun Gong practitioners when they were preparing truth-clarifying literature (at least six Falun Gong practitioners, who were also holding Master’s Degrees or even doctorates were arrested at the same time.) After more than 40 days of brutal torture, Li Changjun died at 10:08 p.m. on June 27, 2001. When his family saw his body later, they found it emaciated and seriously disfigured. His face, neck, and many other areas of his body had turned purple and black from bruising. His hands were held tightly into fists, his teeth were deformed, and his back was so severely burned that it looked as though the flesh had been cooked. It was a truly tragic sight. Chen Qiulan, a Falun Gong practitioner, was from Daqing City, Heilongjiang Province. In July 2001, she was abducted for pasting Falun Gong literature on internet and tortured to death in Daqing Detention Center on August 24, 2001. She was only 47 years old when she died. Bai Xiuhua, a Falun Gong practitioner from Acheng City, used to work as a census taker, employed by the police substation in Jiancheng Sub-Plant, Harbin City. She was arrested the third time for learning to hook onto internet and to prepare Falun Gong literature which clarifies the truth of Falun Gong on July 2002. She was taken into custody in Detention No.2 of Department No.7, Harbin Public Security Bureau. Later, she was transferred to the Wanjia Forced Labor Camp in Harbin City. She was tortured to death on August 28, 2002. Her family was not informed until after her body was cremated.

---World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong, May 2004

“Air has freedom and water has freedom, why couldn’t the internet be open to all??”

“I’ve got your software again today and appreciate the development of the technology very much. You provide us with a thread of ‘fresh air’. Under high pressure, people are close to suffocation. How much we need your help!”

--- Messages left on “Garden Website” by Chinese internet users after blocking through the internet block
Part I Golden Shield Project, an investment over 6,000 million RMB, is used to violate human rights and support suppression

From Sept.26 to 27, 2002, Li Runsen, a member of the Golden Shield Project executive team, said at the Public Security Scientific & Technology Information Conference held in Beijing, that “Golden Shield Project is a project of informationizing the nation-wide public security system, and the electronic police construction of the public security departments across the country’ including the establishment of a strong ‘network police team’. Li Runsen specialized at the meeting that, “Jiang Zemin stressed that ‘information and network safety relate to the safety of the country’. “ In 1998, Golden Shield Project was put forward by the Chinese Public Security Department and is to be completed around 2006. [1]

In October 2001, a 39-page investigation report by International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Canada indicated that, “the Chinese Security System announced an ambitious project to set up a nation-wide digital surveillance network which connects to national, regional or local security organizations and displays an overall picture of network in China. Beijing intends to establish a remote-control surveillance system driven by a database, which is capable of obtaining the registration record of every Chinese citizen in real time; meanwhile, connecting to enormous camera network to guarantee the speed-up of response time from police to demonstrations.”

“The telecommunication safety system named ‘Golden Shield’ reveals how Chinese police and security departments make use of technologies developed for commercial purpose by transnational companies in shadowing and suppressing people with different opinions from the Chinese government. The system equips the Chinese authorities with unprecedented power in monitoring and tracing activities of human rights and democratic activists.” [2]

The author of the report, Greg Walton, expressed while being interviewed by the “Voice of America” that, “‘the Golden Shield’ system is able to distinguish sound and tell an internet user’s identity, location and interest in browsing internet. In fact, it makes possible the function of the so-called ‘huge firewall’ used by the Chinese government extended to millions of personal computers. Undoubtedly, it is harmful to Chinese citizens’ right of privacy and freedom of speech.” [3]

In the report of Amnesty International, with its headquarters in London, on January 28, 2004, it is mentioned that there has been a dramatic rise in the number of people detained or sentenced for Internet-related offences, such as circulating pro-democratic information or supplying publications that are critical of the Chinese government, an increase of 60 per cent in 2003 as compared to the previous year's figures. Presently, at least 54 people have been detained for sending e-mails, establishing website or exchanging Falun Gong information. In addition, numerous people were arrested for circulating the truth of SARS epidemics on internet. Those arrested include students, political dissidents, Falun Gong practitioners, workers, authors, lawyers, teachers, state public service clerks, former government officers, engineers and businessmen. They are put in jail mainly because they signed online appeal; they appealed to punishment of corruption; they planned to set up democratic movement organizations; they exposed the truth of SARS epidemics; they had connection with overseas organizations; they opposed the suppression of Falun Gong; or they asked for rehabilitation of the democratic movement in 1989. Most of them were imposed a “crime of subversion” or a “crime of endangering state security” and were sentenced to 2 to 12 years of prison. Most of the arrested are young. [4]

The Amnesty International United Kingdom Branch Chair Kate Allen said, “All those arrested because peacefully expressing their opinion on the web are prisoners of conscience, and should be released immediately without condition. At the same time, we urge all business who are selling web censorship equipments to China use their power of influence, let Chinese government allow freedom of speech on the web, release those arrested because publishing different opinion on the web, due to their basic human rights have been violated. [5]

In February 2003, the Carnegie International Peace Foundation issued a research report on relationships between totalitarian governments and the Internet. The report pointed out that it is not like people expected the Internet would damage dictator’s information control. In facts, many totalitarian countries, including China, have effectively limited people’s ability to access information through the Internet. China developed a system of websites that use technology to block different political opinions, or they filter off all information that not benefiting Chinese government. [6]
According to CCTV’s report, the Golden Shield Project has cost $0.8 billion, which is 6.4 billion yuan RMB. This amount are mainly used on artificial intelligent to monitor the web, such as sound distinguishing, face distinguishing, etc. One of the important targets of the Golden Shield Project is public location all over the country. For instance, establish a closed nation wide TV or CCTV camera web on the Tiananmen Square, and major streets in each Provincial Capitol.

The Open Magazine in Hong Kong published an article in its December, 2003 issue, and “the most terrifying part is the Golden Shield Project intending to digital closely monitor the whole country. Once this system into practice, all public areas in the nation would monitored by hidden cameras, all telephone, Internet communication, financial transactions, personal activities, train or airplane international travels would collected into this huge database, so that people every move would be under the monitoring of the government. China would truly become a terrifying Brother Empire like described in the book “1984.”

2. Jiang Mianheng Involved in the Planning of Golden Shield Project

Jiang Mianheng is the first son of Jiang Zemin. After Jiang Zemin was in power, his son was assigned as Director of Shanghai City Metal Institute of Chinese Science Academy, then appointed as Vice President of Chinese Science Academy in November, 1999. Later he was the Board Member of China Net Communication Limited (CNC), Shanghai Vehicle Industry Inc., and Shanghai Airport Inc., etc.

Jiang Mianheng is deeply involved in the development of Chinese telecommunication industry. After 2000, Jiang Mianheng started involving into the Golden Shield Project. The World Weekly Journal said in June, 2002, Jiang Mianheng expressed, “China must to haze a nation wide network, independent from the Internet.” This project would include a nation wide closed monitoring TV or CCTV camera net, plus Internet monitoring system. A Chinese American lawyer, Mr. Zhang Jiadun, who lived in China more than 10 years wrote in his book China is About to Collapse, Jiang Mianheng is pushing to establish a Chinese Web that independent to the WWW, which means to establish an huge firewall to filter foreign information.

Jiang Mianheng had many talks about this Project at many occasions. He personally visited many technology institutes within the Chinese Science academy. In September, 2002, Jiang Mianheng went to check on Computer Network Center of the Chinese Science Academy, listened to their report, gave positive commends, and further instructed their working directions. We learned that he specially mentioned the monitoring technology. Currently, the Chinese Science Academy is fully working according to his instructions. According to Beijing Morning News report on October 23, 2003, “Marketing Department Chair, Ms. Liu Yuzhu of the Culture Ministry said, an Electronic Web-bar Monitoring System” is building nation wide, where part of the system in Sichuan and Guangxi Provinces are done. The whole nation wide Cultural Marketing Information Monitoring System will be finished in 2005.

In January 2000, a secret document passed down called “Secret Managing Rules of the Computer Information System Network with Internet.” The new rules said, the secret rules of managing is ‘Who ever go online, who ever be responsible.’ Who ever provide or post information on the Internet, must secretly go through approval procedures.” The document also regulated, who ever host bulletin, chat room, web news, must be approved by certain secret working offices, is clear on
responsibilities. Any work unit or individual are not allowed to post, talk or spread State secrets on web bulletin, chat
rooms, or web news groups.

While some Analysts pointed out, the definition of State Secret is very blurry. The Chinese government has the right to
define exactly what is State Secrets, which means all governmental information can be defined as State Secrets. BBC’s
report on January 26, 2000 pointed out, this rule indicates China is tightening its control over the Internet.

The Reporters Without Borders head quartered at Paris, issued a report in 2003, “In China, there jailed the most people who
are in prison because publish on the web.” This revealed how tightly Chinese government control people’s speech on the
Internet.

Fig. 1. Jiang Mianheng visiting the Computer Network Center.

3. Other major participants in the Golden Shield project

Currently, the major members in the leadership group for the Golden Shield project include Minister of Public Security,
Zhou Yongkang, Director of the Science Council, Ministry of Public Security, Li Lunsen, and Assistants to Minister of
Public Security, Zhang Xinfeng and Zhu Entao.

Among them, Zhou Yongkang is former governor of Sichuan Province. He gained Jiang Zemin’s favor due to his tough
suppression of Falun Gong in Sichuan Province and later got became the Minister of Public Security. On December 9, 2003,
newly inaugural Minister of Public Security Zhou Yongkang continued to promote the policy of suppressing Falun Gong in
a meeting with the principal officials from various departments and/or bureaus under the Ministry of Public Security, saying
“cracking down hard on Falun Gong is the focus of work in Chinese public security system.”

In his speech in the 4th meeting of Science Council, Ministry of Public Security, Li Lunsen pointed out that one of items in
the Golden Shield project was the establishment of the information security monitoring system in the public network. He
said that the establishment of this specialized project has played an important role in fighting “Falun Gong” and other
enemies.

In addition to the offices inside the Ministry of Public Security, the Golden Shield project has leadership groups and staff in
all provinces and cities. According to partial statistics, there are more than 350 key persons in all the Golden Shield project
offices throughout China.

On December 6, 2002, 300 people in charge of the Golden Shield project from 31 public security departments in various
provinces and cities throughout China participated in the 4-day inaugural “Comprehensive Exhibition on Chinese
Information System.” In the exhibition, many high-tech products centering around the solution strategies for the Golden
Shield project are displayed, which included the information system for population administration, information system for
criminal detection, mobility system specially designed for traffic police, video monitoring solution schemes, human face
recognition, internet security, comprehensive system for public law enforcement, fiber optic broadband internet LAN
solution schemes, internet modem and data exchange projects, etc.

To investigate the criminal conduct of all institutions, organizations, and individuals involved in the persecution of
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to full closure; to exercise fundamental principles of humanity; and to restore and uphold justice in society.
Also, the Golden Shield project has been given a special regard by a member of the “Jiang’s gang”, vice premier of the State Council Huang Ju. On September 2, 2003, he met personally the national delegates of the Golden Shield project in the Great People’s Hall. Zhou Yongkang attended the meeting.

4. Huge internet monitoring and control systems for the public security and national security and hundreds of thousands of internet police

The operation of the entire internet monitoring and control system falls in the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Security and the Department of National Security.

The emphasis of the Ministry of Public Security is to monitor and control the Internet within China, which includes crackdown on the “opposition” websites as well as filtering and blocking undesirable information. The tasks are carried out by the Bureau for Public Information Network Surveillance under the Ministry of Public Security. Similarly, this is a gigantic bureaucracy. It has established offices in the capital cities of all provinces and cities on various levels. Currently, there are more than 300,000 internet police enlisted in the Ministry of Public Security. They consist mainly of young employees who have internet expertise and computer skills. In addition to the enlargement of the internet surveillance police, the authority has also established the Internet enforcement forces formed by personnel chosen from the governments on various levels, in order to enhance the monitoring and control of the networks. The main responsibility of the Internet enforcement forces is to log onto the Internet from time to time and then check, correct or delete any “secret-leaking”, “rule-defying” or “erroneous” information on the Internet.

The emphasis of the Department of National Security is to “completely prevent any overseas propaganda to Chinese Internet users, as well as block the overseas communications with Chinese Internet users.” The Department of National Security even proposed to disallow the Chinese Internet users to use any free overseas email accounts and block all overseas search engines. Currently, there are also over 30,000 national security personnel specialized in monitoring and controlling the Internet. Their main responsibility is to monitor the content of the Internet traffic and block websites, in order to prevent the “harmful information” from spreading and distribution. In the meantime, they also periodically check the Internet cafes that are popular in China nowadays.

According to the sources inside China, about Internet information blockade issue, a serious conflict occurred between the Chinese public security units which were responsible for Internet information security and the Chinese national security units which were responsible for national security in August 2003. The national security units complained that the public security police’s controls over Internet information security were “full of loopholes”, “slow down”, “probably sympathized with hostile elements abroad in private,” etc. In the beginning of September, the Depart of National Security formally issued a document which generally blamed the public security police for their poor work. This aroused the annoyance of officials in the public security department who were responsible for Internet information security. Afterwards, the Central Government’s Political and Legal Committee, the top level unit which both the public security and national security units belong to, issued the instructions which demanded the national security units to further cooperate with various public security units for Internet supervision, and be ready to take over some duties of the public security police.

The following lists some public security’s Internet monitoring units:

Fig. 3. Chinese police are checking the Internet, controlling the Internet café through the monitoring system.

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Photo 4: There are 12 network monitor and control departments in Qingdao City, Shandong province.

5. All Kinds of Blockade and Monitoring Technologies
- must use the ID card to access the net, "truthful" "compassion" and so on phrases are prohibited in the chat room

In recent years, China has invested more and more strengths in the national gateway blockade, and exploited all sorts of technologies to prevent the information circulation and monitoring. It includes:

- Filter national rank key words. The first is website filtering, namely filters the key words in the network address.

- Filter web page contents. The key words are mainly 6.4, Falun Dafa etc.

- Domain name hijack. It is an illegal technology disregards the international pledge regulation, which changes other user’s IP address to a fake one within its network, causes all the users in the network scope unable to visit others' address.

- Block the IP from websites with different political views. Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and Falun Gong’s Minghui etc are all on the fixed blockade list. The Chinese authority also adopted some high-tech methods, include: blocking the website, monitoring and filtering emails, attacking objection public figure and Falun Gong websites, monitoring and tracking users etc.

- in order to strengthen the supervision and management of the internet bar, some cities network police have specially developed special software, installed it in the internet bar server. The software can not only automatically filter and cut off some known bad information, moreover may automatically record and track the user's operation, and can send out the warning to the net police, prompts the police to investigate.

- Track sensitive wording. At the connection point with overseas, the mainland network police besides "force out" any overseas website, causes the mainland users unable to find and view the website, the net police may also install the special equipment. The software carried by the equipment has automatic reconnaissance and recognition function, and can be setup at will. It is similar to the internet automatic search, which is used to monitor 100 million emails and each kind of information every day. For example, after the software is set up, when the emails or information include "Falun Gong", "6.4" and other sensitive phrase, the software namely can track automatically and recording user's name, IP (address) and so on, the net police then follow the information to find the user that breaking a prohibition. Many overseas user are not clear about it, talk to their friends in China about some "reactionary and sensitive" topics in emails, actually it is all within the network police's monitor.

In addition, the network supervision department has also established all kinds of management and regulations which aim at the internet bar and ordinary internet users. The following report is about internet users in China have to use their ID card to access the net, so the net police can monitor and track.
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On March 5, 2003, while the internet users nationwide are criticizing the Institute of Acoustics after publishing of “Falun Gong content examination system” on February 18, Jiang Mianheng visited the institute. With the benefit enticement, he requested the Institute of Acoustics to continue the scientific research project which violates the human rights and is unpopular. The web site of Chinese Academy of Sciences reported, after listened to the work report from Tian Jing, the manager of Institute of Acoustics, Jiang has made a speech. “He says, in the recent years, the Institute of Acoustics has yielded the innovation result which cannot be substituted, under the joint effort of the institute management and all the staff. The Academy’s high-tech bureau is extremely satisfied with the work of the Institute of Acoustics. I hereby express the regards, the thanks and the congratulation to all staff of the Institute of Acoustics. Taking this opportunity, I want to discuss several views. Firstly in the aspect of the national strategy demand, the working direction of the Institute of Acoustics is accurate, and its function is not replaceable.”

7. The Following is A List of the Well-known Websites that are blocked in China

网络媒体
看中国 大纪元 人民报 明慧网 大参考 博讯新闻 轻舟
网络杂志
《北京之春》 《新世纪》 《中国事务》 《开放杂志》
在线报纸
中央社 中国时报 苹果日报 世界日报
西方媒体
美国之音 自由亚洲电台 英国广播公司 美国参考
音频视频
音像下载特区 新视觉 新唐人电视台 天音 放光明 希望之声
人权组织
燕玲论坛 宗教迫害调查 追查国际 中国人权 字明 全球公审江泽民
技术网站
自由网络联盟 自由网 花园网 无界浏览 清心论坛 Google
资料网
网上精（禁）篇 话说核心 法网恢恢
大文件
《六四真相》《六四真相》带图片 法轮功资料 《远华案》

Block Google is the idea of Jiang Mianheng: Inspected on August 2, Blocked Google on August 31

According to the information provided by an insider of an information industries department, the person in charge of the network exportation, the internet administrative center (CNNIC) and so on of the Academy have been to information industries department 502, and watched the second-generation high speed internet demonstration report. One of the contents is to test the data retrieval speed. The reporting personnel possibly wanted to flatter Jiang Mianheng, therefore searched for “Jiang Zemin” on Google, but did not expect the top news of the first page was “Evil Jiang Zemin” from Clearwisdom website, the forth news was “Jiang Zemin’s Illegal Way to the emperor” from Epoch Times, the ninth one was “The further report on Jiang Zemin perishing the party and betraying the country” from Renminbao website. There were ten news in total, however three news were from websites associated with Falun Gong. Jiang Mianheng was very angry. The people there instantly felt that Google had to be in trouble. At the end of August, it really finished. (Information industries department insider) Boxun News boxun.com (5) http://www.peacehall.com/news/gb/china/2002/09/200209051251.shtml