

CDT Statement on Google's New Approach to China

January 12, 2010

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CDT President Leslie Harris

Washington—In reaction to Google's decision to [take a new approach](#) [1] to its business operations in China, and in response to increasing government demands for censorship and the extremely serious revelation that Google and other companies have suffered a cyberattack that threatens advocates of human rights in China, the Center for Democracy & Technology issued the following statement from its President Leslie Harris:

"Google has taken a bold and difficult step for Internet freedom in support of fundamental human rights. No company should be forced to operate under government threat to its core values or to the rights and safety of its users. We support Google for being willing to engage in this very difficult process.

"We have always supported the presence of Western companies in these difficult markets because we believe that they can provide more access to information and can be more protective of human rights than domestic providers. Having said that, we've also stressed that companies have to constantly evaluate whether the demands placed on them and the activities of the governments themselves simply make it impossible to operate ethically and in a way consistent with human rights norms.

"Google has done the right thing in bringing to light the human rights risks it faces, and leaving its door open to discussing with China whether there is a basis for operating in an uncensored manner. If that is not possible, Google will have to make the difficult decision on whether it should discontinue its operation in China. Google is a founding member of the Global Network Initiative. It is precisely this kind of hard assessment of the balance between human rights risk and opportunity that the GNI principles say all companies should engage in worldwide."

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