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China: Reports from sources other than the Falun Gong and *The Epoch Times*, claiming that over one million members of the Communist Party of China have withdrawn since the publication of the "Nine Commentaries" (November 2004 - June 2005)

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Reports claiming the purported withdrawal of over 1 million members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) since *The Epoch Times* published its "Nine Commentaries on the Chinese Communist Party" ("Nine Commentaries") on 18 November 2004 were scarce among sources consulted by the Research Directorate other than the Falun Gong and *The Epoch Times*.

According to *The Epoch Times*, 60 non-governmental organizations formed the Global Alliance to Say Goodbye to the CPC in December 2004, and more than 200 forums and 25 rallies have been held in over 50 major cities around the world in support of the "Nine Commentaries" and the CPC withdrawals (31 May 2005). In a speech delivered in New York City on 23 April 2005 following such a rally, the Laogai Research Foundation congratulated *The Epoch Times* on its publication of the commentaries and the daily withdrawal of 20,000 CPC members (*The Epoch Times* 26 Apr. 2005). A similar rally was held in Toronto in May 2005, according to Canadian Press (21 May 2005). In its reportage of the event, the Canadian news agency quoted an organizer of the rally as saying that over 23,000 CPC members were announcing their withdrawal from the party each day (CP 21 May 2005). Most of the withdrawals were by expatriates (*ibid.*). However, *The Epoch Times* on 11 May 2005 had reported that most of the withdrawals were by members in China. The publication also alleged that in April 2005, the CPC began to arrest those who were leaving the party or speaking to *The Epoch Times* (11 May 2005).

People's Daily reported in May 2005 that, in figures released by the Party's Central Committee, the Chinese Communist Party claimed to have 69.6 million members at the end of 2004, 1.37 million more than the previous year (Xinhua 27 May 2005).

The "Nine Commentaries" is a series of essays claiming that the Chinese communist regime has engaged in corruption and "oppression" in the past six decades in China (CP 21 May 2005; see also Open Net Initiative 14 Apr. 2005). In a study of Internet filtering in China, the Open Net Initiative found that, in 90% of cases, Websites carrying content in Chinese on the "Nine Commentaries" were inaccessible (14 Apr. 2005).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Open Net Initiative. 14 April 2005. *Internet Filtering in China in 2004-2005: A Country Study*. <http://www.opennetinitiative.net/studies/china/ONI_China_Country_Study.pdf> [Accessed 31 May 2005]

Xinhua. 27 May 2005. "Xinhua Highlights Major Beijing-Based Newspapers for 24 May." (Dialog)

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International, *Asia Times* Online, *Asiaweek*, Association for Asian Research, *Beijing Review*, BBC, China Internet Information Center, CNN, *The Economist*, Human Rights in China, Human Rights Watch, Radio Free Asia.

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