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No company likes to be told it is contributing to the moral decline of a nation. "Is this what you intended to accomplish with your careers?" Senator Robert Dole asked Time Warner executives last week. "You have sold your souls, but must you corrupt our nation and threaten our children as well?" At Time Warner, however, such questions are simply the latest manifestation of the soul-searching that has involved the company ever since the company was born in 1990. Its a self-examination that has, at various times, involved issues of responsibility, creative freedom and the corporate bottom line. At the core of this debate is chairman Gerald Levin, 56, who took over for the late Steve Ross in 1992. On the financial front, Levin is under pressure to raise the stock price and reduce the companys mountainous debt, which will increase to \$ 17.3 billion after two new cable deals close. He has promised to sell off some of the property and restructure the company, but investors are waiting impatiently. The flap over rap is not making life any easier for him. Levin has consistently defended the companys rap music on the grounds of expression. In 1992, when Time Warner was under fire for releasing Ice-Ts violent rap song Cop Killer, Levin described rap as lawful expression of street culture, which deserves an outlet. "The test of any democratic society," he wrote in a Wall Street Journal column, "lies not in how well it can control expression but in whether it gives freedom of

thought and expression the widest possible latitude, however disputable or irritating the results may sometimes be. We won't retreat in the face of any threats." Levin would not comment on the debate last week, but there were signs that the chairman was backing off his hard-line stand, at least to some extent. During the discussion of rock singing verses at last month's stockholders meeting, Levin asserted that "music is not the cause of society's ills" and even cited his son, a teacher in the Bronx, New York, who uses rap to communicate with students. But he talked as well about the "balanced struggle" between creative freedom and social responsibility, and he announced that the company would launch a drive to develop standards for distribution and labeling of potentially objectionable music. The 15-member Time Warner board is generally supportive of Levin and his corporate strategy. But insiders say several of them have shown their concerns in this matter. "Some of us have known for many, many years that the freedoms under the First Amendment are not totally unlimited," says Luce. "I think it is perhaps the case that some people associated with the company have only recently come to realize this." 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com