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IBPP Editor
bloomr@erau.edu

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Author: Editor

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Abstract. This article comments on allegations that various United States Government (USG) authorities have mishandled allegations that a Los Alamos computer scientist, Wen Ho Lee, has mishandled classified information bearing on USG nuclear weapons and may have committed espionage in the service of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

As of this writing, there have been a number of allegations that various USG security, intelligence, legal, and political authorities have mishandled allegations that Wen Ho Lee has mishandled classified information bearing on nuclear weapons design, construction, testing, and other parameters. As well, USG mishandling may also have included allegations that Mr. Lee may have committed espionage in the service of the PRC.

One class of allegations against USG authorities is that many were too quick to suspect Mr. Lee and settle on him as a prime candidate of nuclear weapons treachery because Mr. Lee is of Chinese (actually Taiwanese) ancestry. This class of allegations suggests that the USG authorities in question advanced a problematic rationale against Mr. Lee. The rationale? Because Mr. Lee is of Chinese ancestry and because the PRC does engage in espionage against the USG, then Mr. Lee must have mishandled classified information and/or transmitted or facilitated transmittal of this information to the PRC.

It is simply specious to suggest USG authorities are primarily motivated through this rationale. For example, as to mishandling classified information, (1) Mr. Lee had access to the classified information in question; (2) the nature, severity, and frequency of security violations committed by Mr. Lee seem to be quite severe based on information released by USG authorities; and (3) Mr. Lee and Mr. Lee's lawyer seem to have conceded that mishandling occurred. If anything, USG authorities may be properly accused of waiting too long to indict Mr. Lee--even if there may be extenuating circumstances of facilitating investigations and complying with the spirit and letters of laws protecting human and civil rights of suspects.

Matters appear somewhat more complex as to facilitating the transmittal of classified information to the PRC. However, against supporting allegations of USG authorities' mishandling allegations against Mr. Lee is that no formal charges of espionage against Mr. Lee have been made. Moreover, inappropriate transmittal of nuclear weapons-related classified information to the PRC may not have occurred and, if it has, the USG has not as yet gone public.

Yet another class of allegations against USG authorities is that Mr. Lee is being singled out for unusually severe handling. For example, as of this writing, he has been denied bail even though he would be under constant surveillance out of jail. The rationale for this class of allegations is that others--including a former Director of Central Intelligence--have done similar or worse with consequences tantamount to a slap on the wrist. To continue with this rationale, one would note that the plain truth of the matter is that too many (in the abstract, anything violating zero tolerance) recipients of security clearances and special access download classified information and transmit classified information from classified to unclassified venues. In the process, they often delete classified markings and destroy the information

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when finished with it--if, indeed, they don't literally forget about the information as they move on to new tasks. Is this plain truth an example of the dire perfidy of so many US citizens against their government? Hardly. Instead, the frequency of violating security reflects both a narcissistic sense of entitlement on the part of so many in the classified world who merely seek to do their jobs easier and the sincere need to best do their jobs. These needs, in turn, reflect the significance with which security procedures can impede the carrying out of one's duties. Of special note here is the (1) need to mix classified and unclassified information together to create yet additional operational, policy, and analytic products and (2) time deadlines that create a time pressure to (as unjustified as it may be) take work home and to other locations outside the classified work area. Mr. Lee's mishandling of information may possibly be an extreme version of these last factors and nothing more--as probably was the case with the former Director of Central Intelligence.

If, then, Mr. Lee is being treated as a special case of what is general misbehavior, what would be the relevant conceptual underpinnings? Or yet a better question. Others of Chinese ancestry and of other ancestries with access to classified information--both within and outside of Los Alamos National Laboratory--may in all likelihood have engaged in similar misbehavior (most to a lesser extent), so why the current handling of Mr. Lee? In the favor of the USG would be an attempt to set an example to deter unacceptable frequencies of security violations. Against the USG are the following: (1) The USG has a long history of initiating and supporting racist policy towards Chinese and other Asian-Americans in the context of national security. The Lee case may be the latest example. (2) The Lee case is being used as a grand political vehicle in an attempt to thwart or thwart the thwarting of the PRC's entry into the World Trade Organization and other examples of integrating the PRC into a community of so-called civilized nation-states. (3) The Lee case is being used as a less than grand political vehicle to destroy, save, or further careers within the USG security and intelligence agencies and among various elected officials. At Issue here are the various affective reactions of being "shocked, shocked" that security violations and possible espionage may be occurring in a world wherein both always occur. Some of these affective reactions may be attempts to mask or misdirect attention away from misbehaviors on the part of security, intelligence, legal, and political officials vis a vis the Lee case. Some of these affective reactions may involve misbehavior among these same officials and the same usual "suspects" concerning allegations of financial irregularities and improprieties relating to President Clinton's 1996 presidential campaign and PRC agents of influence. (4) The Lee case is also being used as a political vehicle by various Asian American groups, civil liberties organizations, and opponents of secret bureaucracies and developers and custodians of weapons of death for their own agendas--legitimate and illegitimate. In conclusion, on all these possibilities of racism and politics, the USG appears vulnerable to allegations of mishandling the Lee case.

The various USG authorities seem to be on firm ground as to allegations against Mr. Lee as to mishandling of classified information and as to no formal allegations concerning espionage. There is much more vulnerability as to Mr. Lee's treatment by the criminal justice system. (See Bonner, R. (December 11, 1999). The Los Alamos secrets case: The strategies. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Honts, C.R. (1992). Counterintelligence Scope Polygraph (CSP) test found to be poor discriminator. *Forensic Reports*, 5, 215-218; Johnston, D., & Risen, J. (December 11, 1999). The Los Alamos secrets case: The overview. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Sarbin, T., & Carney, R.M., et al. (1994). *Citizen espionage: Studies in trust and betrayal*. Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.; Sterngold, J. (December 13, 1999). Coalition fears an Asian Bias in nuclear case. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Stone, L.A. (1992). Canonical correlation between security clearance adjudication concerns and later motivational causes of espionage behavior. *Forensic Reports*, 5, 305-316.) (Keywords: Espionage, Intelligence, Los Alamos, Nuclear Weapons, Wen Ho Lee.)