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Human Fallacies and Personnel Security: James Deutch and Wen Ho Lee

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Abstract. This article describes psychological phenomena that can easily subvert personnel security standards in government, the military, and business.

The recent disclosure of a classified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Inspector's General report on security violations of Mr. John Deutch, a former CIA director, highlights psychological phenomena that can easily subvert the most carefully crafted personnel security standards. (The following analysis is based solely on descriptions of the report from The New York Times.)

First, Mr. Deutch may have decided not to have computer support (that could more safely handle classified information) installed at his private residence. As well, he may have decided not to have CIA security officers assigned to his home. Both decisions seem suspect given that Mr. Deutch was filling a position that requires "being on-call" 24 hours per day and that requires quick access to classified information. The decisions could suggest a naiveté about his position: believing that he would not be working with classified information at home. The decisions also could suggest a sense of entitlement that he did not have to follow appropriate security procedures or experience the inevitable inconveniences of following such procedures. (Both senses of entitlement could be associated with the positive work ethic--that classified work would occur day and night as necessary.) As well, the decisions could suggest that he was intentionally planning to misuse classified information for espionage or other purposes.

Second, Mr. Deutch may have decided to engage in highly sensitive work at home as opposed to headquarters so that other CIA officials would not see what he was writing. This decision could suggest that his work was too "high-quality" and did not need to be vetted by others, that his work was too controversial to be shared with others who might then seek to sabotage it, that his work was "not up to snuff" and could not stand up to vetting, and that his work was geared towards hurting CIA and the United States (US).

Third, Mr. Deutch--after he announced that he was resigning from CIA--may have decided to keep his CIA-obtained unclassified computers. He may have decided this because he was using them for his personal banking. And he may have decided to legitimize keeping the computers by setting up a no-fee consulting contract with CIA--a contract that may have had little to do with any actual consulting or that may have had to do with consulting that would not require the computers in question. These decisions not only suggest both types of senses of entitlement described above but seem to explicitly relate to violating policies on legitimate uses of federal government property and the intent of consulting relationships with the federal government. And again, the decisions would facilitate activities related to these computers that might intentionally harm CIA and the US.

Fourth, Mr. Deutch may have decided to access the Internet with his unclassified computers through unsecured services such as America Online--thus vastly increasing the vulnerability of classified information on his computers to others. Again, there are suggestions of senses of entitlement, apparent ignorance (since Deutch is quoted as stating that he "never considered the information on his home

computers to be at risk"), violations of federal government policy (the work-relatedness of Internet access), and intent to harm the CIA and the US.

Fifth, Mr. Deutch may have decided to delete over 1,000 files from his computers--after he had been visited by a CIA computer security specialist. He also may have refused to be interviewed by CIA security staff--but eventually allowed one security staffer to review all the computer files at his (Mr. Deutch's home.) Again, there are suggestions of senses of entitlement, policy and even criminal violations (e.g., obstruction of justice), and intent to harm CIA and the US.

Compared to Mr. Wen Ho Lee, the former Los Alamos National Laboratory computer scientist accused of gross mishandling of classified information, Mr. Deutch had access to a greater breadth and depth of sensitive information. Moreover, Mr. Deutch had a political system of enablers that apparently facilitated mishandling of classified information and impeded a timely and comprehensive investigation into actual and alleged mishandling. Yet, Mr. Lee is being held without bail and is awaiting trial, while Mr. Deutch is not. Why? Some US Government (USG) officials claim that Mr. Lee had an intent to aid a foreign country, while Mr. Deutch did not--even though the latter may have been electronically contacted at home by at least one Russian scientist.

This demarcation of intent that would support such radically differential treatment has not been publicly supported by reasonably convincing data. While concerns to protect intelligence sources, methods, findings, and the viability of a successful prosecution might support this position, an epiphenomenal degradation of personnel security compliance and the rule of law throughout the Intelligence Community might merit a reevaluation of disparate impact. (See Akhtar, S.S., Khan, A., & Ansari, S.A. (1989). Perceived need deficiency among government officers. *Journal of Personality and Clinical Studies*, 5, 115-120; Brown, A.D. (1997). Narcissism, identity, and legitimacy. *Academy of Management Review*, 22, 643-686; Inwald, R.E., & Brockwe II, A.L. (1991). Predicting the performance of government security personnel with the IPI and MMPI. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 56, 522-535; Moses, R., & Moses-Hrushovski, R. (1990). Reflections on the sense of entitlement. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 45, 61-78; Risen, J. (February 1, 2000). C.I.A. inquiry of its ex-director was stalled at top, report says. *The New York Times*, p. A1; A16.) (Keywords: Counterintelligence, John Deutch, Espionage, Wen Ho Lee, Personnel Security.)