

Washington's campaign against Chinese-related scholars is under pressure as another incident collapses

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Proponents say the Chinese initiative is an excuse for racial profiling. This is part of the long history of the United States, which has treated Asian Americans as unreliable aliens. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act prevented Chinese immigrants from entering the country for 10 years, and during World War II, the federal government detained hundreds of thousands of innocent Japanese Americans. Under the Clinton and Obama administrations, a series of espionage cases against Chinese-American scientists, including Wen Ho Lee of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Xi Xiaoxing of Temple University, and Sherry Chen of the National Weather Service, failed. ..

“The Chinese initiative clearly presupposes the theory that Chinese citizens have an ethnic affinity to act in violation of US law, even if they are US or Canadian citizens. “Frank Wu, president of Queen’s College, New York City University, says. Under this system, he states: [in China] Suddenly I become suspicious. ”

It also had a chilling effect on Chinese-American scientists, says MIT Huang. During regular meetings with the Asian-American Scholars Forum, others may be afraid of being arrested, afraid of losing money, and they may be recognized by non-Asian colleagues. He says he has expressed fear of no way. Young PhD students are no longer looking for a professorship in the United States, but established scientists are now looking for international options. Many have returned to top-notch posts after their careers in the United States have been destroyed. This is the result that the Chinese initiative wanted to avoid.

“It’s pretty bad and pretty widespread. I see this horror climate involving Chinese-American scientists,” says Huang. “The United States has lost the most talented people to other countries because of the China initiative. It’s bad for science. It’s bad for America.”

The Hu incident was unfolded

For activists and civil society researchers following the Chinese initiative, President Hu's case is not surprising.

A Chinese-born Canadian citizen, Hu is a prominent researcher in nanotechnology. In 2013, the University of Tennessee hired him to teach and continue his research. According to Knoxville News Sentinel, Hu has repeatedly revealed that he was teaching graduate students and researchers part-time at Beijing University of Technology.

“The Chinese initiative clearly presupposes the theory that there is an ethnic affinity on the part of Chinese people who act in violation of American law for the benefit of Beijing.”

City University of New York Frank Wu

At that time, this did not cause any problems. When Hu began collaborating with NASA, which is legally prohibited from funding research involving “participation, collaboration, or coordination” with “China or a company owned by China,” the UT administrator said Hu. And government agencies have guaranteed this part-time. The job did not violate the limits. This law is intended to apply to NASA, not to NASA's collaborators.

However, in 2018, the FBI identified Hu as a potential spy. Agent Sadik said in a court testimony that he had found a Chinese news release and leaflet via Google and made a “rough translation”, saying that Hu once signed a short-term contract from the Thousand Talents Program. Suggested. That was enough evidence for Sadik to initiate a formal investigation.

When Sadik first visited Fu's office, the agent tried to get him allowed to participate in the talent program, Fu said.

“They said, 'You are very smart. You should participate in the Thousand Talents Program,'” he said during the trial. “I say, 'I'm not that smart.'”

Sadik also tried to use his work at Peking University as a cover to persuade him to become a US government spy. After Sadik's visit, Hu declined by email. After this, Sadik doubled his investigation and put Hu and his son, then a freshman at UT, under surveillance.

But almost two years later, Sadik turned away from the spy's allegations and began creating fraud cases in which Fu was prosecuted instead. The evidence was based on a form in which the university required scholars to fill out and disclose external work that earned over \$ 10,000. Hu did not disclose his part-time job because he earned less than \$ 2,000. Sadiku says this is evidence that Hu deliberately hid his China-related work to scam NASA. However, the jury could not decide and the deadlock caused a mistrial.

FBI under pressure

According to observers, the details of the case are the same as those of other cases brought in as part of the China initiative. Spy investigations into Chinese researchers are conducted with little evidence, and accusations will be changed later if there are no signs of economic espionage.

According to a German former FBI agent, this is “FBI agents nationwide, all FBI field offices, [and] All US Federal Attorneys’ Offices for developing cases that fit framing because of the need to prove statistical outcomes. ”

“The Justice Department does not need a special initiative targeting China to track spies. They should be able to use normal methods and procedures.”

Alex Nowrasteh, Cato Institute

On Thursday, June 17, members of the House Judiciary Committee sent a letter to the Inspector General of the Ministry of Justice. Request a DOJ investigation Whether the FBI had sufficient evidence unrelated to race or ethnicity to open the case, whether the agency used false information to make false statements, and whether the Chinese initiative was ethnically and racially profiling. Did you bring “unfavorable pressure” to engage in?

This is following the growing demand for investigating whether the initiative has led to such profiling, calling for the complete termination of the program.

“DOJ does not require a special initiative to target China to chase spies,” says Alex Nowrasteh, director of the Cato Institute’s Center for Immigration and Trade Policy Research. “They should be able to use the usual methods and procedures.”

He added that Hu’s trial suggests that “the scope of China’s espionage is probably far less than people think.” “If you had more, you would find it a little easier to find, and they wouldn’t have to make a case.”

Hu, his nightmare isn’t over yet.

He is still under house arrest until the Justice Department decides to renew or withdraw the case, or the judge dismisses the government’s accusation altogether. He has been unemployed since his US work visa expired, but he has not been given leave from house arrest so he can return to Canada and renew. According to his lawyer, doing so could put him on the cross of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department.

All he can do is wait for the US government to make the next move.