

U. S. Technology, “Chinese Espionage,” and Chinese American Communities

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Situating the increasing U.S. media exposure on “Chinese espionage” in the contexts of the U.S. pivot back to Asia and the rise of China, I argue that such coverage reflects a new level of anxiety that the U.S. nation-state has experienced in its own technological superiority and the unpredictability of Chinese technological and cultural influences. Not only has such an anxiety been framed in terms of U.S. national security and foreign policy, but it has also evolved into an ethnicity issue, the backlash of which continues to impact Chinese American communities.

In reading Wen Ho Lee’s autobiography *My Country versus Me* in juxtaposition with the late Iris Chang’s biography, *Thread of the Silkworm* (1995), which documents the persecution and deportation of the world-class rocket scientist, Qian Xue-sen, during McCarthyism in the 1950s, I argue that Chinese Americans should reconsider their roles against the background of China’s rise and changing U.S.-China relations. First, I discuss what lessons Chinese Americans should draw from the cases of Lee and Qian, and explore how we move beyond Asian American identity politics of the 1960s to accommodate the changing demographics of Chinese America. Second, I examine the new roles Chinese Americans should play in U.S.-China relations, from educating U.S. general public to promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries. I conclude by examining how Chinese Americans should help prevent a new cold war from formation and champion for global peace.

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