



Committee of 100

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Committee of 100 Denounces Broad Brush Stereotyping and Targeting of Chinese Students and Academics

(New York, NY, February 16, 2018) — In recent remarks to the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, FBI Director Christopher Wray opined that Chinese academics or “non-traditional collectors” — “professors, scientists, students” studying and working in the United States in “basically every discipline” — may be covertly gathering intelligence for the Chinese government. The Committee of 100 (C100), a non-partisan organization of illustrious Chinese Americans committed to promoting constructive dialogue and relationships between the peoples and leaders of the U.S. and China, and the full inclusion of Chinese Americans in the U.S., finds these comments to be disturbing and prejudicial. To target a whole group of people as being subject to greater suspicion, based purely on race and national origin, and in advance of any facts or evidence, goes against the fundamental American ideals of the presumption of innocence, due process and equal protection for all. It also fans the flames of hysteria.

We have seen instances in our history when Asian Americans have encountered such racial prejudice resulting in discriminatory laws and harmful actions, whether through the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 or the internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. These incidences have been shameful chapters in American history, ones that we must collectively, as a nation, commit to not repeating. We need to learn the lessons of history, we need to do better by one another.

The Committee of 100 is unequivocally committed to America’s national security and recognizes the importance of ensuring our nation is able to counteract perils from espionage. However, C100 supports fair and appropriate investigation, prosecution, and punishment of espionage that is based on the evidence and not on profiling or suspicion based on race, ethnicity, or national origin. Within the last two decades, we have seen this rush-to-judgement in the cases of Dr. Wen Ho Lee, Dr. Xiaoxing Xi, and Ms. Sherry Chen — all Chinese American scientists or federal employees who were unjustly prosecuted based on suspicion of their ancestry, but who were later found to be innocent of wrongdoing, though not before having their lives ruined.

“For over 160 years, despite the stereotype of being ‘perpetual foreigners’, Chinese immigrants, many of whom first arrived as students, have contributed immeasurably to the richness and success of the United States, including 8 Chinese Americans winning Nobel prizes in the sciences while working in America,” notes Frank H. Wu, Chairman of C100. “In every field from the arts to the sciences, business to entertainment, politics

to sports, Chinese Americans are loyal and hard-working citizens no different than their neighbors.”

At this time when there is great potential for polarization and misunderstanding, C100 cautions against stoking fears through broad-brush stereotyping of any group of people. As Americans, we need to speak up and renew our commitment to upholding our cherished principles of the presumption of innocence and due process for all.

The Committee of 100 (C100) is a non-profit leadership organization of prominent Chinese Americans in business, government, academia, and the arts. Founded by world renowned architect I.M. Pei and internationally acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma, among others, it is an institution for U.S. citizens of Chinese heritage to join by invitation based on their extraordinary achievements. For over 25 years, C100 has served as a preeminent organization committed to the twin missions of promoting full participation of Chinese Americans in all aspects of American life, and encouraging constructive relations between the peoples of the United States and Greater China. www.committee100.org

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