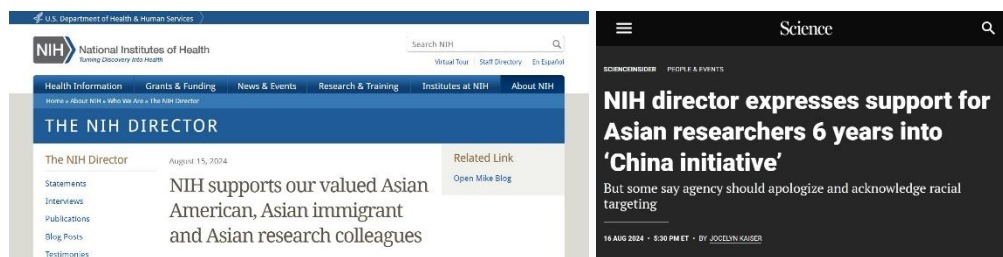


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NIH Support Statement Falls Short



On August 15, 2024, Dr. **Monica M. Bertagnolli**, Director of National Institutes of Health (NIH), issued a statement expressing support for Asian American, Asian immigrant and Asian research colleagues.

According to the statement, the NIH has taken steps to address serious threats to the integrity of NIH-funded research, particularly those linked to the government of the People's Republic of China. While these actions have reduced violations related to peer review confidentiality and reporting foreign support, they have also created an unintended difficult climate for Asian American, Asian immigrant, and Asian research colleagues.

NIH acknowledges the invaluable contributions of Asian researchers and is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive research community. The NIH emphasizes that its efforts to address foreign interference are applied in a nondiscriminatory manner and do not target individuals based on ethnicity, race, or national origin.

Moving forward, the NIH is working with stakeholders, universities, and professional organizations to repair relationships with Asian researchers. These efforts include research security training, guidelines for foreign talent program recruitment, and tools to protect the integrity of NIH-funded research while promoting international scientific collaboration.

Read the NIH statement: <https://bit.ly/4dFphIU>

APA Justice welcomes the NIH's commitment to work with the Asian scientific community to repair relationships. This action is long overdue.

However, NIH must also implement an open and fair due process and procedures to prevent administrators from overreacting and unjustly targeting researchers in the name of security or caution.

The China Initiative was launched in apparent coordination with the NIH's August 2018 warning to 10,000 grantee institutions about "threats to the integrity of U.S. biomedical research." The first wave of dismissals, some lacking due process and disproportionately targeting Asian researchers, began at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in the spring of 2019.

On March 23, 2023, *Science* reported on NIH's "China initiative" upended hundreds of lives and destroyed scores of academic careers: <https://bit.ly/3ZbJL4B>. According to NIH as of [June 9, 2024](#), it has identified more than 250 scientists, mostly of Asian descent, who it says have failed to disclose work in China that overlaps with their NIH-funded research or broken other rules. NIH says 112 scientists have lost their jobs as a result.

Despite the China Initiative ending two and a half years ago, the scientific community was once again shocked on July 10, 2024 by the tragic passing of a prominent Chinese American researcher in neurology and genetics after her lab at the Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine was shut down.

APA Justice takes exception to the choice word of "unintended" in the NIH statement. NIH made mistakes that had grave consequences to individuals, communities, and U.S. leadership in science and technology. A more direct acknowledgment of the impact without relying on "unintended" could demonstrate a stronger commitment to addressing the issue and ensuring that future actions are carefully considered to avoid similar outcomes.

Accountability, corrective actions, and a continuing dialogue with the Asian American communities are still needed from NIH.

On August 16, 2024, *Science* reported that the NIH director expressed support for Asian researchers 6 years into the "China initiative," but some say the agency should apologize and acknowledge racial targeting.

Gisela Kusakawa, Executive Director of Asian American Scholar Forum, said: "When policies are written down and specified, that helps increase transparency and reduce issues of racial biases."

Some scientists told *Science* that they are disappointed NIH denies any racial profiling and did not apologize or acknowledge that, in some cases, NIH's probe has needlessly destroyed careers and lives. Many of the instances investigated, says **Peter Zeidenberg**, an attorney who

represented some of the accused scientists, “were simple mistakes made out of ignorance of confusing and evolving reporting requirements for which NIH provided no training.”

“I am disappointed that Chinese American scientists whose labs were shut for 2 or more years or forced into early retirement because of [NIH’s] overzealous prosecution have not received any apology or compensation,” says **Yan Chen**, an information scientist at the University of Michigan.

University of Houston electrical engineer **Steven Pei** worries new guidelines aren’t enough. “NIH must also implement open and fair due process and procedures to prevent administrators from overreacting and unjustly targeting researchers in the name of security or caution,” says Pei, who co-leads the nonprofit Asian Pacific American Justice Task Force.

“This is a very important step toward rebuilding trust by Asian and Asian American scientists,” says Yale University pathologist **Qin Yan**. “I look forward to continued dialogue and measures to support the scientists who were unfairly impacted by the past actions of government agencies.”

The Committee of 100, a nonprofit group of prominent Chinese Americans, adds: “We commend the NIH for recognizing this harm and agree that moving forward, our focus should be on fostering an inclusive, welcoming, and collaborative environment for all scientists and researchers, including those of Chinese and Asian descent.”

Read the *Science* report: <https://bit.ly/4cCSBPG>

NYT Reports: Chinese Americans and Asian American Voters Carry More Weights

The *New York Times* recently published two articles highlighting the growing role of Chinese Americans and Asian American voters.

In one article titled [Asian American Voters Could Be Key Swing Voters of 2024](#), it pointed out that Asian American voters have historically leaned Democratic, but recent trends suggest a more nuanced and independent voting pattern. The 2020 election highlighted the significance of Asian American voters, particularly in battleground states. Both parties recognize the untapped potential within the Asian American electorate. However, despite growing outreach efforts, many Asian Americans report not being contacted by either party, indicating room for further engagement. As Asian Americans continue to grow in numbers and political influence, they are likely to play an increasingly pivotal role in future elections.

Another article [In the Race for San Francisco Mayor, Chinese Voters Take Center](#)

[Stage](#) examined how the upcoming mayoral election in San Francisco has prompted candidates to intensify their efforts to engage with Chinese American voters. In a city where people of Chinese descent make up over one-fifth of the population, mayoral hopefuls are vying for the attention and support of these voters, who have become more politically active in recent years. The Chinese community played a key role in two 2022 recall elections that removed progressive school board members and a liberal district attorney.

Mayor **London Breed**, who is seeking re-election, is making a concerted effort to win over Chinese voters. She has highlighted her administration's achievements, such as a decline in crime rates, including anti-Asian attacks, and her tough-on-crime agenda. Breed has also focused on improving relations with China, including lobbying for the restoration of direct flights to San Francisco and advocating for bringing giant pandas to the city's zoo.

Challengers to Breed, such as **Aaron Peskin** and **Ahsha Safai**, both members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, have also been working to secure support from Chinese voters. They have longstanding ties within the community and represent districts with large Chinese populations.

Juan Zhang, editor at US-China Perception Monitor, contributed this report.

The Pandas Are Back in San Diego and Coming to Washington DC



According to *San Diego Union Tribune*, *Washington Post*, and multiple media reports, a long line of admirers formed at the San Diego Zoo to greet the first two giant pandas to enter the United States in 21 years on August 8, 2024.

On loan from China, Yun Chuan, a 5-year-old male, and Xin Bao, a 4-year-old female, made their public debut to an adoring crowd. Yun Chuan's mother, Zhen Zhen, was born at the San Diego Zoo in 2007, and his grandmother Bai Yun was a mainstay of the zoo from her arrival in 1996 until her return to China in 2019.

Not only are the zoo's newest residents the "furriest, cutest San Diegans," according to Mayor **Todd Gloria**, these pandas are diplomats, symbolizing hope for future generations of their species. Chinese dignitaries and local elected officials, including Gov. **Gavin Newsom**, welcomed the pandas to San Diego with a private ceremony, complete with entertainment from traditional Chinese dancers and singers. Gov. Newsom declared August 8 as California Panda Day.

Their arrival marks a renewal of the "panda diplomacy" between China and the United States. For decades, China has sent pandas to zoos around the world, generally on limited loans, as a diplomatic tool to build alliances and goodwill. But relations between the two nations have soured in recent years. The last time China sent pandas to the United States was to the Memphis Zoo in 2003, and the National Zoo's famous pandas were recalled to China last year.

Lei Guang, executive director of the 21st Century China Center at the University of California at San Diego, cautioned that people shouldn't attach too much political or diplomatic significance to the animals. "The return of giant pandas is a positive development in what is otherwise still a bleak relationship between the U.S. and China. Instead, he saw the pandas as the symbol of what is possible when the two countries cooperate, allowing researchers to study the animals and work on their conservation.

The National Zoo in Washington DC will get two new adolescent pandas by the end of the year. The 2-year-old bears are named Bao Li and Qing Bao. Both were born at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Sichuan. Bao Li has D.C. roots, though: His mother, Bao Bao, was born at the National Zoo in 2013 and was a local celebrity before being sent to China in 2017. Bao Li's grandparents, Tian Tian and Mei Xiang, lived at the National Zoo for 23 years before being returned to China last year.

Read the *San Diego Union-Tribune* report: <https://bit.ly/3YP2JS9>. Read the *Washington Post* report: <https://wapo.st/3M9Bj1q>.

Foreign Affairs: How Everything Became National Security

FOREIGN AFFAIRS Q

How Everything Became National Security

And National Security Became
Everything

By **Daniel W. Drezner** September/October 2024

Published on August 12, 2024

According to a *Foreign Affairs* opinion, labeling something a matter of “national security” in American politics automatically elevates its importance. Of course, not everyone agrees on which issues fall into the national security bucket. And the American definition of national security has fluctuated wildly over time.

In the years between the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and the 9/11 attacks of 2001—an era in which the United States seemed to have few immediate rivals—even security scholars had difficulty defining the meaning of national security. Unsurprisingly, they could not reach a consensus. Since the subsequent “war on terror,” however, the national security bucket has grown into a trough. From climate change to ransomware to personal protective equipment to critical minerals to artificial intelligence, everything is national security now.

It is true that economic globalization and rapid technological change have increased the number of unconventional threats to the United States. Yet there appears also to be a ratchet effect at work, with the foreign policy establishment adding new things to the realm of national security without getting rid of old ones. Problems in world politics rarely die; at best, they tend to ebb very slowly.

But if everything is defined as national security, nothing is a national security priority. Without a more considered discussion among policymakers about what is and what is not a matter of national security, Washington risks spreading its resources too thin across too broad an array of issues. This increases the likelihood of missing a genuine threat to the safety and security of the United States. Whoever is sworn in as president next January will need to think about first principles in order to rightsize the definition of national security. Otherwise, policymakers risk falling into a pattern of trying to do everything, ensuring that they will do nothing well.

Read the *Foreign Affairs* opinion: <https://fam.ag/4dlk2P3>

TIME: The Perils of Vilifying Chinese Migrants



HISTORY • MADE BY HISTORY

The Perils of Vilifying Chinese Migrants

8 MINUTE READ

According to *TIME* on August 13, 2024, with intense political debate focused on the U.S. southern border, an unexpected trend has captured a great deal of attention. Chinese migrants are among the fastest growing national populations crossing the border, and their numbers have increased exponentially since 2022. In 2023, approximately 37,000 Chinese nationals entered the United States this way, compared to less than 2,000 the year before. In the first five months of 2024, over 24,000 Chinese migrants were apprehended on the Southern border. The journey over land through Mexico—or via a complex, multi-stop route that leaves them in Baja, Calif.—is not easy.

But many migrants say they are motivated to undertake it because of the economic challenges facing middle-class Chinese citizens and small business owners in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and China's strict Zero-COVID policy. Others highlight increasing political oppression, stemming both from increased monitoring of dissidents connected to Hong Kong or opposition movements as well as increased controls over public discourse since President **Xi Jinping** began his unprecedented third term in power.

In the United States, conservative media, think tanks, and politicians increasingly question these stated motives, expressing concerns instead that the Chinese Communist Party is “sending” migrants as spies, to form an army, or to otherwise sabotage U.S. national security.

None of this rhetoric about a Chinese “invasion” or “threat” is new. There is a long history of anti-Chinese and anti-Asian rhetoric in the United States. In the past, such rhetoric has led to violence and discrimination. Using it now—despite the lack of evidence that China or the CCP is using the border to “infiltrate” the country—threatens to stoke backlash against Chinese migrants and Asian Americans, as well as further damage the U.S. diplomatic relationship with China.

The assumption that Chinese Americans were unique and different from other ethnic groups in the United States kept the “perpetual foreigner” syndrome alive, allowing many Americans to assume that people of Chinese descent, citizens or not, would always remain more loyal to China than the United States.

The assumption that Chinese Americans or Chinese migrants with access to technical and scientific information must be using it on behalf of China has not declined in the last three decades.

In 2018, the U.S. Department of Justice launched its “China Initiative,” seeking to uncover unlawful technology and scientific transfers to China, investigating ethnic Chinese professors and researchers in the United States and subjecting them to what was often unwarranted scrutiny. The program was ended in 2022 with the admission that it frequently targeted ethnic Chinese people and subjected them to suspicion and harassment without clear evidence that they had done anything wrong.

Protecting U.S. national security is important, and immigration law and policy can play an important role in that. However, it is possible to manage even irregular entries on the Southern

border without resorting to the language of “invasion” and peril that has done so much damage to Chinese immigrant and Chinese American communities in the past and present.

Read the *TIME* report: <https://bit.ly/3SNh5yz>

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar



Upcoming Events:

- 2024/08/19 APIAVote DNC Convention Reception
- 2024/08/20 APIAVote DNC Convention Briefing
- 2024/09/01 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
- 2024/09/09 APA Justice Monthly Meeting
- 2024/09/19 1990 Teachers Workshop: Asian American Identity
- 2024/09/19-20 AANHPI Unity Summit
- 2024/10/06 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
- 2024/10/07 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

The Community Calendar has moved. Visit <https://bit.ly/3XD61qV> for event details.

2. AAGEN: SES Leadership Development Program Class of 2024-2025



Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) promotes, expands, and supports Asian American and Pacific Islander leadership in government by holding leadership workshops, senior executive service (SES) development programs, and one-on-one mentoring and coaching sessions. Learn more about us - [Link](#). CFC #45979



The Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) Senior Executive Service (SES) Leadership Development Program is accepting applications for its 2024-2025 Class through September 10, 2024. The program offers executive development courses, coaching in mock interviews, individual mentoring, and career counseling for candidates to gain the skills to effectively compete for SES positions. Each candidate will be assigned an SES mentor who will provide guidance throughout the program.

The next class will commence December 9-11, 2024 and the program will continue through September 2025. The training sessions will be held in the Washington, DC metro area. Participants should expect a quarterly time commitment of 2-3 days of classes and other sessions, plus at least one mentoring session. Additional activities, as assigned by the SES mentor and trainers, will be completed on the participant's own time.

For more information about the AAGEN program, please visit <http://www.aagen.org/SESDevelopmentProg>

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