

Registration Open for Inaugural Webinar on "China Initiative"

Registration is now open for **The Human and Scientific Costs of the “China Initiative”** webinar on September 30, 2020 starting at 8:00 pm EDT/5:00 pm PDT: <https://bit.ly/3cov3jV>

This is the first of a series of webinars to examine the ramifications of the U.S. Justice Department’s “China Initiative” on the civil rights and security of Chinese Americans, Chinese immigrants, and Chinese Nationals working in the U.S., as well as the consequences for the broader American society.

The inaugural webinar is designed to provide policy-makers, journalists, attorneys, and community advocates with an overview of the “China Initiative” and the efforts civil rights advocates and the scientific community are making to protect the rights of those investigated and targeted under this discriminatory framework.

The participating experts include Nobel Laureate, former U.S. Secretary of Energy, and Stanford University professor of physics Steven Chu; Seton Hall University School of Law professor Margaret Lewis; and Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC president and executive director John Yang. The discussion will be moderated by Michael German, fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School.

Space is limited. Read more and register: <https://www.apajustice.org/forumsevents.html>

"Black Eye" of The Department of Justice

On September 23, 2020, the Wall Street Journal reported that an economic espionage case against a visiting scientist from China, Haizhou Hu, at the University of Virginia was dismissed because it was found that he had permission to access some of the files that he was accused of stealing.

According to the article, “[t]he development is a black eye for the Justice Department in its recent series of cases against Chinese military linked researchers studying in the U.S.”

Prosecutors abruptly moved to drop all criminal charges against Haizhou Hu after the university acknowledged the scientist was authorized to access some of the material. The court granted the dismissal on September 21, 2020.

Read more about the Hu case at: <https://www.apajustice.org/haizhou-hu.html>

"The Man Who refused to Spy"

On September 14, 2020, the New Yorker published [the story of Professor Sirous Asgari](#), an Iranian materials scientist whose children are American citizens. FBI tried to recruit Professor Asgari as an informant. When he balked, the payback was brutal.

He was indicted in 2017 and charged for trade secret theft, wire fraud, and visa fraud. "Each time, he refused to enter a guilty plea or to become an informant. The F.B.I. grew increasingly frustrated and angry with him—and he began to understand that rebuffing the Bureau's overtures would cost him. The government was prepared to prosecute him, even with a threadbare indictment. According to the report, "the F.B.I. had secured the wiretap warrants based on little more than Asgari's nationality."

The presiding judge accepted the motion to dismiss by Professor Asgari in late 2019. No sooner had the judge departed the courtroom than a marshal seated in the gallery approached the defense table to haul Asgari into custody by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). "By all appearances, the government was acting out of vindictiveness."

"The day Asgari was cleared of all charges, he began a seven-month descent down a spiral of squalor, into a vast carceral system beyond the reach of the U.S. judiciary. Within the realm of ICE, there would be no public documents, no legal hearings. His federal defenders could not help him." He was infected by the coronavirus while in detention, and was fortunate to recover while one of his guards died of COVID-19.

Professor Asgari spent two years in the federal court system and five months in the clutches of ICE. He concluded that he was a victim of American law enforced by Soviet-style procedures after refusing to become a FBI informant.

Read more about "The Man Who Refused to Spy" and the Asgari case docket at: <https://www.apajustice.org/sirous-asgari.html>

History and Latest on the Ban of WeChat

On August 6, 2020, President Donald Trump signed an executive order seeking to ban U.S. "transactions" with WeChat in 45 days. This was followed by the U.S. Department of Commerce's announcement that it would prohibit U.S. business transactions with WeChat starting September 20, citing national security and data privacy concerns.

Earlier on August 21, 2020, the U.S. WeChat Users Alliance (USWUA) filed a civil lawsuit against the government's ban and obtained a temporary injunction against the

WeChat ban on September 19, 2020.

Advancing Justice | AAJC issued a blog statement on September 19, 2020, while 122 Chinese American organizations submitted a letter asking the White House to rescind its Executive Order on the WeChat Ban on September 16, 2020.

Read more about the latest developments on the WeChat ban at: http://bit.ly/AAJA_Current_State

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