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Title:

**Marking the Enemy, Marking the Other: The intersection of
National Security and Diversity**

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In recent years, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has alternately been criticized for being too cozy with foreign scientists and too quick to scapegoat or profile workers with foreign ancestries. In the wake of the investigation of alleged espionage that focused on Taiwanese-born American nuclear scientist Wen Ho Lee, political leaders and the news media questioned the Lab's commitment to security and the wisdom of its close collaborations with foreign scientists. Wen Ho Lee was of course an American citizen and not a foreign scientist, and many of his supporters felt that his Asian ancestry made him too convenient of a target in a case focused on Chinese espionage. Thus, charges of racial profiling and scapegoating were also aimed at the Lab, the Department of Energy, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the wake of the controversy some Asian American groups have been encouraging a boycott of the national laboratories run by the Department of Energy, and at Los Alamos, the number of Asian Americans applying for jobs, post docs, and student positions is substantially down.

Like most employers, LANL is very concerned about treating all of its employees fairly and has diversity programs in place to promote fairness and discourage mistreatment. As the term "affirmative action" has fallen out of favor, "diversity" has gained acceptance as a term that attempts to convey common sense respect for other human beings. A glossary of terms linked to the LANL diversity web page offers two definitions of diversity:

Diversity is everyone. It is all the dimensions of how we identify and connect with each other either in visible (race, gender, ethnic, etc.) or less visible (job level, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) ways. [Lisa Gutierrez, LANL Diversity Office Director]

The unique contributions of an individual to the group. [Norm Johnson, LANL theoretical division]

The first definition describes diversity as a background condition—i.e., we're all here and we're all different. The second definition suggests a more task oriented definition that ties into LANL's history as a research institution that brings together experts with different specialties to solve big problems.

The primary mission of LANL, however, is to safeguard American national security, and this mission may supercede the Lab's commitment to diversity. LANL's vision statement is:

We serve the nation by applying the best science and technology to make the world a safer and better place.

LANL's mission statement is:

- Ensure the safety and reliability of the U.S. nuclear deterrent

- Reduce the global threat of weapons of mass destruction
- Solve national problems in energy, environment, infrastructure, and health security

In looking further at LANL's statements on diversity, it is apparent that American national security is the lab's primary mission, and if there were a conflict between the two, national security would come out on top. In January of 2001, LANL Director John Brown issued a policy statement on the Lab's Affirmative Action Program. Brown states,

To successfully accomplish our mission, we must be able to compete for the best employees, which, in turn, requires us to strive for a more diverse workforce.

He adds,

Our goal is to unify and strengthen our diverse workforce and to foster an environment of mutual respect and fairness for each member of our workforce.

A few paragraphs later he spells out the Lab's policy on non-discrimination.

It is the policy of the Laboratory not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person employed by, seeking employment with, or working at the Laboratory because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, age, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, status as a covered veteran (Vietnam era veteran or special disabled veteran, or veteran who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized), or on the basis of citizenship, within the limits imposed by federal law, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulations, or the Department of Energy. This policy applies to all employment practices including recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, merit increase, salary, training and development, demotion, and separation. This policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws and University policies.

For the most part this statement reads like a non-discrimination statement that any employer might use. The underlined section, however, shows that while non-discrimination is Lab's "policy," and that this policy is "intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws and University policies," there are other statutory and regulatory restrictions and obligations that potentially limit how the Lab may be able to adhere to this intended policy. For example, many jobs at LANL require a security clearance. Security clearances are limited (except for a few very rare instances) to U.S. citizens with clean backgrounds. If you are unable to attain or retain a security clearance, your chances of employment and promotion are substantially limited. Security clearances are required at LANL because Lab employees routinely work with national secrets on a daily basis. Thus if your diversity takes certain forms (foreign

citizenship, mental handicap, etc.) the lab may be required to deny you a clearance and thus deny you employment or certain opportunities as an employee.

So, at an institution like LANL, a commitment to diversity may sometimes be sacrificed in the name of national security. I argue further that the concept of national security has always been intertwined with issues of ethnicity and nationality. To a large extent Americans have historically used the markers of ethnicity and nationality to differentiate between friends and enemies, and also to differentiate between those who belonged as Americans and those who did not. The concept of "American national security" suggests that America is a coherent nation with coherent borders and a coherent set of citizens. Likewise there are other coherent nations in the world, some friends some enemies, and those enemies pose a potential threat to American national security.

Those enemies may be a threat to American international interests, they may be a military threat to America as a coherent nation, they may be an espionage threat by seeking American secrets, or as immigrants they may be a threat to "the American way of life." Nationality and ethnicity have always played a key role in the identification of enemies. While America has long considered itself a melting pot of many peoples, the early usages of that term were often meant to suggest a cauldron where the impurities of ethnicity and foreignness were burned off as immigrants assimilated to American ideals and culture. American ideals and culture are taken to be those of the protestant Europeans who settled the first colonies in this country. While America's founding fathers were themselves immigrants, they quickly formed an identity as Americans and attempted to exclude and stigmatize foreigners who might come to this country. Legislators sought to restrict the entry of immigrants, for example, from Ireland, Italy, Slavic countries, China, and Japan, as well as Catholic and Jewish immigrants. American immigration laws have always reflected a racist and xenophobic bent, putting quotas on "undesirable" groups or banning them outright. In 1927, congressman Albert Johnson proclaimed

Instead of a well-knit homogeneous citizenry, we have a body politic made up of all and every diverse element. . . . Our capacity to maintain our cherished institutions stands diluted by a stream of alien blood. . . . It is no wonder, therefore, that the myth of the melting pot has been discredited. . . . The United states is our land. . . . The day of Unalloyed welcome to all peoples, the day of indiscriminate acceptance of all races, has definitely ended. (quoted in Daniels, 143).

When Johnson proclaims that "The United states is our land" he of course means to suggest that the country belongs to white people of European descent and that the introduction of others spoils the greatness of America. This resentment of immigrants, termed "nativism" by historian Roger Daniels, reflects several types of resentment.

- Economic resentment: fears that immigrant workers will take "American" jobs or that successful immigrant business will take money away from "American" owned businesses.

- Cultural resentment: fears that the presence of other cultures in a community will undermine traditional “American” values.
- Racial resentment: fears of imagined biological differences and the possibility of “race mixing.”
- Political resentment: fear that the political beliefs of immigrants may undermine “American” democracy.

The manifestation of these nativist fears is the representation of immigrants as either inferior, uneducated, stupid, unclean, lazy, bestial, unfit to breed, and generally undesirable; or as scheming, deceptive, subversive, and dangerous.

Daniels describes a belief widely held in America in the late 1800s and early 1900s that “the Catholic Church was a menace to American democracy, and that Catholics buried a rifle under the local church altar for every Catholic boy born, part of a long-standing conspiracy which some day would seek to overthrow the Republic” (131). Congressman Albert Johnson (quoted above) conspired with like-minded American consuls in Europe to fabricate warnings that “the United States was in danger of being overrun by hordes of ‘abnormally twisted’ and ‘unassimilable’ Jews, ‘filthy, un-American and often dangerous in their habits’” (132-3). America was drawn into World War I partially by British propaganda that reported that Germans had crucified a Canadian soldier, a report that “emphasize[d] their ‘otherness’ in relation to Western civilization” (78). The report was easily believed and the German-American community greatly suffered as a result of the demonization of European Germans. Likewise, Congressman Leland Ford writing to the U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull advocating the internment of Japanese Americans following Pearl Harbor stated, “Nevertheless, these are war times and I do not believe we could be any too strict in our consideration of the Japanese in the face of the treacherous way in which they do things, not only to this country, but in the accomplishment of any end they may have in view.”

At this juncture of national security and our perception of/relationship with *others* there is substantial room to justify the actions we take. Ignorance, hatred, and prejudice can too easily slip into justifications of national security. As we moved to justify retaliatory attacks on groups in Afghanistan, we were also shown pictures of poor brown people living in squalid conditions and we were told how they didn’t value human life or free enterprise or democracy or civil rights. We weren’t overtly targeting a race or religion, but those markers were a part of the identification of groups who were of that race and religion and who were acceptable targets.

Discursively, this is how peoples mark their enemies, and this is how they mark “others” who come into their communities. Once marked, they can justify practically any treatment against them. And the code of marking is broad enough to cover any side. One Californian citizen advocating the internment of Japanese remarked on their sneakiness, another remarked that they lived in shacks on their farms—suggesting that their habits were un-American. Past characterizations of a Jewish threat also usually involve a dual indictment of inferiority and devious scheming.

In the wake of the more recent charges of Chinese espionage in our country a Washington Post reporter wrote:

[T]he Chinese employ a diffuse and maddeningly patient espionage strategy far different from the Cold War paradigm of moles, agents and payoffs. China's spying, they say, more typically involves cajoling morsels of information out of visiting foreign experts and tasking thousands of Chinese abroad to bring secrets home one at a time like ants carrying grains of sand. (Vernon Loeb, Chinese Spy Methods Limit Bid to Find Truth, Officials Say, Washington Post, March 21, 1999, Page A24)

The “they” in the quote and the “Officials” in the title of the article are not specifically identified other than quoting one Defense Intelligence Agency analyst Nicholas Eftimiades who has written extensively on Chinese espionage. The Article quotes Eftimiades as writing: The [Chinese Ministry of State Security] co-opts vast numbers of Chinese citizens living or traveling overseas . . . to carry out specific operational activities.” The news reporter adds “among them 15,000 Chinese graduate students arriving in the United States annually, tens of thousands of government representatives and businessmen, and 1,500 Chinese diplomats and commercial representatives.” Ray “Diceman” Semko, a specialist in counter espionage now with the Interagency OPSEC organization, has extended this cloud of suspicion to naturalized U.S. citizens of Chinese and Taiwanese ancestry at past seminars he’s given at government facilities.

The discursive marking of this enemy follows the historical racist cultural perception of Asian people as inscrutable. They can’t even be trusted to play the espionage game by the accepted rules. They are “maddeningly patient” and are like an army of ants gathering little pieces of information. The army of ants image along with the vast numbers of potential spies identified by Eftimiades and Semko creates an expectation that all “true” Americans should be suspect of all Chinese people or Chinese Americans. It indict them as all being spies and untrustworthy.

When these statements and marking patterns are explicitly made visible, it is easy for us to recognize that they don’t make a lot of sense. But they are so much a part of our cultural baggage that they can easily creep in without our noticing. Once in, these patterns easily perpetuate because they are self-confirming—if you look for inferiority, you can find it; if you look for scheming, you can find it. But no matter what you find it will be evidence of some type behavior that justifies marking and mistreatment.

Consequently we have to be cautious and cognizant in matters of national security. We must work hard to discern prudent action or accurate perception of a threat from nativist, racist, or unconscious lapses into these destructive marking strategies. This cognizance is even more important in an increasingly globalized world. In Robert Reich’s book “The Work of Nations,” he points out that corporations now transcend national borders in such a way that the idea of an American company, making American cars, for the American market, with American raw materials and parts, employing American workers, for the benefit of the American economy just does not make sense any more (Reich). If “American car” has become a slippery concept, “American” has even more so.

In a world where ethnicity is no longer a reliable marker of nationality or loyalty, in an America that would no longer allow the internment of a specific ethnic group, we still rely on our cultural baggage and our historical marking strategies to figure out who

our friends and enemies are. At a laboratory whose mission is to preserve American national security and that also strives for a diverse workforce the intersection of these issues are important to keep in mind.

Marking the Enemy, Marking the Other: The intersection of National Security and Diversity

Greg Wilson, Statistical Sciences

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Problem Scenario

In recent years, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has alternately been criticized for being too cozy with foreign scientists and too quick to scapegoat or profile workers with foreign ancestries. In the wake of the investigation of alleged espionage that focused on Taiwanese-born American nuclear scientist Wen Ho Lee, political leaders and the news media questioned the Lab's commitment to security and the wisdom of its close collaborations with foreign scientists. Wen Ho Lee was of course an American citizen and not a foreign scientist, and many of his supporters felt that his Asian ancestry made him too convenient of a target in a case focused on Chinese espionage. Thus, charges of racial profiling and scapegoating were also aimed at the Lab, the Department of Energy, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the wake of the controversy some Asian American groups have been encouraging a boycott of the national laboratories run by the Department of Energy, and at Los Alamos, the number of Asian Americans applying for jobs, post docs, and student positions is substantially down.



Definitions from LANL Diversity Web Page

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American National Security

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Resentment of Immigrants Encompasses Several Features:

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National Security and *Others*

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Marking Example

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More Marking

For overseas intelligence, Eftimiades wrote, “the [Chinese Ministry of State Security] co-opts vast numbers of Chinese citizens living or traveling overseas . . . to carry out specific operational activities.” -- among them 15,000 Chinese graduate students arriving in the United States annually, tens of thousands of government representatives and businessmen, and 1,500 Chinese diplomats and commercial representatives.

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Conclusion

We have to be cautious and cognizant in matters of national security. We must work hard to discern prudent action or accurate perception of a threat from nativist, racist, or unconscious lapses into these destructive marking strategies. This cognizance is even more important in an increasingly globalized world. In Robert Reich's book "The Work of Nations," he points out that corporations now transcend national borders in such a way that the idea of an American company, making American cars, for the American market, with American raw materials and parts, employing American workers, for the benefit of the American economy just does not make sense any more (Reich). If "American car" has become a slippery concept, "American" has even more so.

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