

Press Statement on the Wen Ho Lee Case

The Committee of 100 lauds the recent settlement of Dr Wen Ho Lee's violation of privacy lawsuit against the US government and five news organizations including Associated Press, the American Broadcasting Corp. (ABC), the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times and the Washington Post.

While we are pleased that the government and the media companies have paid Dr Lee US\$ 1.6 million, most of which will go towards his legal expenses, we are disappointed that he has yet to receive the public apologies due him.

A dedicated scientist working at a national laboratory, Dr Lee had his career and reputation – his life – destroyed by faulty reporting, innuendo and lies. No charge of espionage was ever brought against Dr Lee. He was held without bail in solitary confinement for 278 days until he agreed to plead guilty to mishandling classified information as part of an agreement with US prosecutors to secure his release.

Since Dr Lee's arrest in 1999, the Committee of 100 has maintained that the cause of national security should not be used to violate the rights and freedoms of any individual. "We recognize that all Americans must be alert to any threat to our national security," said Committee of 100 Chairman John L. Fugh, Major General, US Army (Retired). "But at the same time, we must be vigilant to any threat to our rule of law and the freedoms guaranteed us under the Constitution." Added Henry Tang, a co-founder, Governor, and former chairman of the Committee of 100: "While this landmark case of injustice may have ended, we must acknowledge the damage done to Dr Lee, his family, life, career and reputation. The government and media's wrongdoing was serious and its impact will be long lasting. Dr Lee deserves the honor and respect accorded all innocent Americans."

According to Brian A. Sun, Dr Lee's lead counsel and a member of the Committee of 100, Dr Lee believes that the settlement of his lawsuit "will send a strong message that there will be accountability for unlawful leaks by government officials." Sun said that Dr Lee appreciates the support he received throughout his case from the Chinese American community, particularly from the Committee of 100 and other organizations. "Many observers of this case, including many Asian Americans, believe that Lee was singled out because of his Chinese heritage," Committee of 100 member Helen Zia, who co-authored the book "My Country Versus Me" with Wen Ho Lee, wrote in an essay published in the San Francisco Chronicle on June 6, 2006. "What happened to Wen Ho Lee stands as a cautionary tale for all Americans."

Founded in 1989 by architect I.M. Pei and other prominent Chinese Americans, the Committee of 100 is an independent, non-profit membership organization composed of Chinese American leaders in a broad range of professions. Based in New York City, the Committee of 100 has a dual mission: to encourage stronger relationships between the people of the U.S. and Greater China and to promote the full participation of Chinese Americans in all aspects of American life.

Contact:

Ms. An Ping
Public Relations Director
Committee of 100
Tel. +1 212 371-6565
Email: ping_an@committee100.org
www.committee100.org