

Management was not aware of these things. We needed to make it known."

So Ng joined with Joel Wong, an industrial hygienist at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory near San Francisco, to give Energy Secretary Bill Richardson a short list of recent incidents of ethnic insensitivity reported by coworkers who wished to remain unnamed. Richardson, who oversees the labs, said that he considers the reports to be generally true, even if some particulars remain unverified.

In one account, snickering and hushed laughter broke out in a roomful of computer users as a person with a Chinese surname was introduced to lead a session on computer security. In another, a lab manager told an Asian American employee that "personal characteristics" would determine a person's career opportunities in the wake of recent disclosures of security breaches, implying that ethnicity was one such characteristic.

Then there was the teasing. Someone wondered aloud whether an Asian American employee got "rich" by selling classified information, according to Ng and Wong. Someone else said he was wary of sharing information with a colleague of Asian descent who might be a "spy."

Two Chinese American lab employees who insisted on anonymity recounted similar incidents in separate interviews with a Times reporter. One said he had been asked at work whether he had "dual loyalties."

CONCERNS RAISED IN LABS AND ELSEWHERE

Whether an ethnic backlash actually is occurring to any significant degree is hard to determine. But concerns about possible ethnic stereotyping are rising and not just among national lab employees. The subject comes up in government circles, in the scientific community, in the ethnic Asian media, in high-tech business groups and among Asian American civic leaders who fear a replay of the uproar directed at Asian American political donors after revelations of attempts by foreign interests to influence the 1996 elections.

Prominent Asian Americans have met with Richardson four times and once with White House Chief of Staff John Podesta to seek assurances that scientists and engineers in U.S. labs would not be subject to discrimination.

"Asian Pacific Americans are concerned that their loyalty and their patriotism are being challenged," Richardson acknowledged in a speech April 30. "And that's because of racism."

The Energy secretary vowed to protect the rights of all laboratory workers and to visit the labs in person to drive the point home.

In Congress, Reps. Tom Campbell (R-San Jose) and David Wu (D-Ore.), who is the first Chinese American member of the House, are drafting a resolution expressing support for Chinese Americans.

Wu said there is "widespread concern in the Chinese American community and particularly the Chinese American scientific community. These are folks who work very, very hard. They are Americans. By all accounts that I know of, they work hard and play by the rules."

Campbell said that some scientists and engineers in Silicon Valley now worry about traveling to professional conferences in mainland China for fear that they will be suspected of leaking technological secrets to the Communist regime.

Still, many lawmakers assert that the United States must raise its guard against Chinese espionage and set new limits on scientific exchange with China and other countries seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Their campaign is likely to gain considerable momentum with the release of a House investigative panel's report citing evidence of widespread leakage of sensitive military technology to China. The committee's bipartisan findings are expected to be made public next week by its chairman, Rep. Christopher Cox (R-Newport Beach).

Asian American scientists, engineers and civil leaders hasten to condemn espionage. But they content that some Republican leaders in Congress, aided by unbalanced media reports, have cast a cloud over Chinese Americans—and Chinese nationals—doing legitimate scientific work in the weapons labs and elsewhere.

SENATOR REFERS TO "VERY CRAFTY PEOPLE"

Asked about the extent of Chinese espionage on the NBC program "Meet the Press," Sen. Richard C. Shelby (R-Ala.), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said in March: "We've got to remember the Chinese are everywhere as far as our weapons systems, not only in our labs that make our nuclear weapons and development, but also in the technology to deliver them. We've seen some of that. They're real. There here. And probably in some ways, very crafty people."

A spokeswoman for the senator, Andrea Andrews, said that Shelby was referring to Chinese spies, not to Chinese Americans in general. But other read more into his statement. Charles Sie, vice chairman of the Committee of 100, an influential Chinese American group whose founders include the architect I.M. Pei and the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, called Shelby's words a "ridiculous" example of ethnic stereotyping.

Also "ridiculous," said Jeff Garberson, spokesman for Lawrence Livermore, was the request he recently received from a national newsmagazine for a generic photo of an Asian American employee at work "to illustrate a story on espionage." The request was refused.

Leading science periodicals are closely monitoring the espionage issue, especially the possible fallout for foreign-born scientists who may be U.S. citizens, permanent U.S. residents or distinguished visitors. A headline in the June issue of Scientific American read: "Explosive Reactions: A Backlash From a Nuclear Espionage Case Might Hurt Science and Do Little to Bolster National Security."

Many of the top scientists in America in this century have been foreign-born, including some from mainland China or Taiwan. Many more, including several Nobel Prize winners, are of Asian heritage.

Asian American engineers also have been deeply involved in the U.S. defense industry. According to the National Science Foundation, more than 300,000 people of Asian descent were working in the United States as scientists and engineers in 1995, the latest year for which figures are available. That's about 10% of all scientists and engineers and far more than any other ethnic minority. Many Chinese American scientists said that they are most concerned about lasting damage the espionage allegations could have on the career prospects of promising graduate students in engineering or the physical sciences, a significant number of whom are foreign-born or Asian American.

"What one is afraid of are possible future actions with regard to employment promotion, retention of top Chinese American scientists," said Cheuk-Yin Wong, who is chairman of the Overseas Chinese Physics Assn., which has about 400 members nationwide. He is no relation to Joel Wong.

Lab administrators said that they want to prevent such consequences. C. Paul Robinson, head of Sandia National Laboratories, recently told Chinese American employees that they should not be judged responsible for a particular espionage case so long as white Americans, like himself, were not held equally responsible for the disastrous Aldrich Ames spycase.

"Can we all please think extra hard about that?" Robinson implored in an electronic newsletter. "Our work is important; we need all the good brainpower that we can bring to bear in our work and we certainly must not mistreat loyal Americans."

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, but certainly all Members are invited to submit statements for the RECORD in terms of the experiences of their own individual districts and the participation in these social, economic, educational and political life of Asian Pacific Americans in their districts.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ORTIZ (at the request Mr. GEPHARDT), for today and Tuesday, May 25, on account of official business in the district.

Mrs. CARSON (at the request Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of official business in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. McNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 60 minutes, today.

Mr. UNDERWOOD, for 60 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. LARGENT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SCHAFFER, for 5 minutes, on May 25.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM, for 5 minutes, today.

A BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee did on the following date present to the President, for his approval, a bill of the House of the following title:

On May 21, 1999:

H.R. 1141. Making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.