Re Robert Scheer's July 11 commentary on the Wen Ho Lee case: As a historian I have often taught the McCarthy period in American history, but, not having lived through it myself, I did not really know how it felt until the Wen Ho Lee case burst onto the national scene last year. To be sure, this is not another large-scale Red Scare, but the parallels are disturbing: the same domestic paranoia generated by international politics; the same drive for sensational reporting in the media; the same about-face that turns past legal-- and often officially encouraged--activities into suspicions; the same tendency to view scientists, especially nuclear scientists, as security risks and, above all, the same partisan politics that fuel security investigations.

The Lee case also reminds me of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which I have taught and actually lived through. One of the common tactics of Mao Tse-tung's feared Red Guards was to accuse an intellectual or scientist of being a spy or agent of the West because he or she had "overseas relations," meaning that he or she was educated in the West or had relatives living abroad. I do not know whether Lee is guilty or innocent of the charges against him, but I hope that he is not persecuted for his "overseas relations."

ZUOYUE WANG
Claremont

[Reference]
Message No: ..ACCN: 00067123