

Harvard Chemistry Chair & Two Chinese Nationals Arrested For Lying About China Ties, Smuggling "Biological Material"



by Tyler Durden

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Will this Harvard Chemistry Department Head be remembered as the Aldrich Ames of the [modern-day 'Cold War'](#)?

In a shocking revelation made Tuesday afternoon – a revelation that will almost certainly rattle the US-China relationship at an already fragile time – a federal court unsealed indictments against Harvard professor and Chemistry Department Head Charles Lieber, along with two Chinese nationals. One is a Boston University researcher who was once a lieutenant in the People's Liberation Army, according to prosecutors, and the second was a cancer researcher **who tried to smuggle 21 vials of biological materials in his sock – allegedly**. Lieber has been arrested, though it's not clear if he's still in custody.

Though the official charge was lying to investigators, Lieber's actions look like an unvarnished attempt at espionage, complete with an extremely seductive monetary reward.



Professor Lieber

Lieber was reportedly paid \$50,000 a month by Wuhan University of Technology for participating in its "Thousand Talents" program, and was given more than \$1.5 million to establish a lab and do research at Wuhan University of Technology, according to federal prosecutors in Boston, according to [WSJ](#).

According to prosecutors, Lieber deliberately lied to defense department officials about his "foreign research collaborations."

When Defense Department investigators asked Mr. Lieber in 2018 about his foreign research collaborations, he told them he had never been asked to participate in the Thousand Talents

Privacy

Program, the complaint said. But Mr. Lieber had signed such a talent contract with Wuhan University in 2012, the complaint said.

NIH also asked Harvard about Mr. Lieber's affiliation with Wuhan that same year, the complaint said. After interviewing Mr. Lieber, Harvard told NIH in January 2019 that Mr. Lieber had no formal affiliation with Wuhan after 2012 and that he had never participated in the Thousand Talents Program, even though Mr. Lieber had a formal relationship with the university through 2017, the complaint said.

In conjunction with the program, Mr. Lieber became a "strategic scientist" at Wuhan University of Technology, according to the complaint. For "significant periods" from 2012 to 2017, his contract called for a \$50,000 a month salary on top of \$150,000 in living expenses paid by WUT, it said. He was also awarded more than \$1.5 million by WUT and the Chinese government to set up a research lab, it said.

"The charges brought by the U.S. government against Professor Lieber are extremely serious," a Harvard spokesman said Tuesday. "Harvard is cooperating with federal authorities, including the National Institutes of Health, and is initiating its own review of the alleged misconduct. Professor Lieber has been placed on indefinite administrative leave."

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The Trump Administration has made cracking down on Chinese academic and corporate espionage a priority, and has made several arrests of Chinese nationals working in critical roles funneling info back to China. But this is probably the most high-profile case to date, since one of the suspects is a pioneering American scientist.

Interestingly enough, not long after news of the arrests hit the press, another report surfaced claiming China had rejected President Trump's offer of assistance to contain the coronavirus – even as Wuhan is in desperate need of supplies.

Is that just a coincidence?

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