(Q1) *Briefly summarize one controversy or ethical dilemma related to this topic.*

One ethical dilemma related to whistleblowers and freedom of speech is the release of confidential information to the public. While this exists in the private sector, I feel this dilemma is more strongly associated with classified government information (e.g., 1971 Pentagon Papers and whistleblowers such as Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden). In order to gain access to classified information, a person must go through a security clearance investigation. Part of that process requires signing the Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement (SF-312: https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/SF312-13.pdf), which states that "special confidence and trust shall be placed in [the security clearance holder] by the United States Government" (Section 1). Even with such confidence and trust, should there be circumstances where a security clearance holder can leak classified information?

(Q2) *Clearly, concisely, and charitably summarize one of the leading positions on the controversy you discussed in Question 1.* **(Q3)** *State two of the strongest (in your opinion) arguments in favor of the position in Question 2.*

One of the leading positions is that security clearance holders should not in any circumstances leak classified information to the public. Secrecy is required in order to protect against foreign intelligence agencies, terrorist organizations, and other entities hostile towards the United States. Arguments in favor of this position:

Deontological Ethics	
Premise 1:	SF-312 is a legally-binding document.
Premise 2:	SF-312 prohibits unauthorized disclosure of classified information.
Premise 3:	A security clearance holder has signed an SF-312.
Warrant:	If a person signed a legally-binding document, then that person must observe the clauses specified in that document.
Conclusion:	The security clearance holder must not disclose classified information to unauthorized people.

Virtue Ethics (specifically for software engineers)	
Premise 1:	A software engineer's client or employer is the government.
Premise 2:	An important interest for the government is national security.
Premise 3:	Unauthorized disclosure of classified information is a danger to national security.
Warrant:	"Software engineers shall act in a manner that is in the best interests of their client and employer" (IEEE-CS/ACM Software Engineering Code of Ethics).
Conclusion:	An ethical software engineer working for the government must not disclose classified information to unauthorized people.

(Q4) *Clearly, concisely, and charitably summarize the leading position that conflicts with the position in Question 2.* **(Q5)** *State two of the strongest (in your opinion) arguments in favor of the position in Question 4.*

In opposition to the position taken in Question 2, another leading position claims that there are specific circumstances where leaking classified information is ethical. Some people see whistleblowers as heroes, providing the people with evidence of government corruption, scandal, cover-ups, etc. that might infringe on freedoms and rights. Arguments in favor of this position:

Consequential Ethics	
Premise 1:	The government is doing something illegal or unconstitutional.
Premise 2:	The classified information provides evidence of the illegal or unconstitutional practice.
Premise 3:	No extraneous harm will occur after the classified information is leaked.
Warrant:	If the classified information *would just* expose the government's illegal or unconstitutional practice, then the leak was ethical.
Conclusion:	The leak was ethical.

Consequential Ethics	
Premise 1:	The government is doing something illegal or unconstitutional, causing harm.
Premise 2:	The classified information provides evidence of the illegal or unconstitutional practice.
Premise 3:	No extraneous harm will occur after the classified information is leaked.
Warrant:	If the classified information *would just* prevent harm, then the leak was ethical.
Conclusion:	The leak was ethical.

(Q6) *Show how each of the arguments you summarized above can be said to align (or not align) with the recommendations made in the IEEE-CS/ACM Software Engineering Code of Ethics.*

The position and arguments stated in Questions 2 and 3 are in alignment with Principle 2.05: a software engineer should "keep private any confidential information". Even though this principle also states that "such confidentiality is consistent with public interest", the wording is vague and can be interpreted to mean both implicit and explicit interests. One such implicit interest could be national security, stemming from the explicit desire to keep American society and families safe. Moreover, as stated in SF-312, a special confidence and trust is placed on every security clearance holder. In order to maintain integrity (e.g., "keeping one's word"), this confidence and trust should not be violated.

The position and arguments stated in Questions 4 and 5 seem to be out of alignment with Principle 2.09. Even though the IEEE-CS/ACM Software Engineering Code of Ethics do not say that compromised ethics in the workplace should not be voiced, it does not provide for the release of confidential information to the public. Rather, the recommendations seem to point software engineers to internal authorities instead. On the other hand, depending on the interpretation, we might be able to see the position and arguments as in alignment with Principle 4.05. If "conflicts of interest" are interpreted to be internal authorities refusing to do something about unethical, illegal, or unconstitutional practices, then this principle might allow for a software engineer to disclose information to the people, a "concerned party".

(Q7) *Think critically and carefully about the arguments you selected for Questions 3 and 5. How do they compare? Are the arguments for one side stronger than the other? On what basis can you compare these arguments?*

By structuring my arguments using the premise-warrant-conclusion format, I can see weaknesses in my argument structures. In particular, for the arguments in Question 5, both warrants seem to be weak because both warrants seem to be abusing Premise 3. (For context, I italicized "would just" as I was writing this response.) Premise 3 only prevents harm from being caused by the leak, but other effects may arise due to the disclosure of confidential information. On the other hand, I cannot see weaknesses for the arguments in Question 3 (albeit, my biases and pre-conceived notions might be blinding me there).

This comparison is based on the "strength" of each argument, where a "strong" argument has less counter-arguments or ways to attack the argument than a "weak" argument.