

Human Rights Record of the US in 2007

**The Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of
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Foreword

The State Department of the United States released its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 on March 11, 2008. As in previous years, the reports are full of accusations of the human rights situation in more than 190 countries and regions including China but mention nothing of the widespread human rights abuses on its own territory. The Human Rights Record of the United States in 2007 is prepared to help people around the world understand the real situation of human rights in the United States and as a reminder for the United States to reflect upon its own issues.

I. On Life, Property and Personal Security

The increase of violent crimes in the United States poses a serious threat to its people's lives, liberty and personal security.

According to a FBI report on crime statistics released in September 2007, 1.41 million violent crimes were reported nationwide in 2006, an increase of 1.9 percent over 2005. Of the violent crimes, the estimated number of murders and nonnegligent manslaughters increased 1.8 percent, and that of robberies increased 7.2 percent (FBI Release its 2006 Crime

Statistics, FBI, www.fbi.gov/pressre1/pressre107/cius092407.htm). Throughout 2006, U.S. residents age 12 or above experienced an estimated 25 million crimes of violence and theft. The violent crime rate was 24.6 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, for property crimes it was 159.5 per 1,000 households. Males experienced 26 violent victimizations per 1,000 males age 12 or older; females, 23 per 1,000 females age 12 or older. Blacks experienced 33 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, higher than 23 for whites (Criminal Victimization 2006, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). In the United States, one violent crime was committed in every 22.2 seconds, one murder committed in every 30.9 minutes, one rape in every 5.7 minutes, one robbery in every 1.2 minutes and one aggravated assault in every 36.6 seconds (FBI Release its 2006 Crime Statistics, FBI, www.fbi.gov/pressre1/pressre107/cius092407.htm).

A survey by the Police Executive Research Forum in 163 U.S. cities shows that 65 percent of them reported increases or no changes in homicides during the first half of 2007, 41.9 percent of cities reported increases or no changes in aggravated assaults, 55.6 percent reported increases or no changes in robberies (Survey Shows Shift in Violence, USA Today, October 12, 2007). In New Orleans, 209 homicides were recorded in 2007, a 30 percent increase over that of 2006 (New Orleans Homicides up 30% Over '06 Level, USA Today, January 3, 2008). Washington D.C. recorded 181 killings in 2007, jumping 7 percent over 2006 (Killings in D.C. up After Long Dip, The Washington Post, January 1, 2008). Baltimore recorded 282 homicides last year (City Marks First '08 Slaying. The Baltimore Sun, January 2, 2008) and 428 killings were logged in New York by the end of November (City Homicides Still Dropping, to Under 500, The New York Times, November 23, 2007). From January to September, Chicago recorded 119,553 criminal offences including 341 murders and 11,097 robberies (Chicago Police Department, <http://egov.cityofchicago.org>). From January to November, 737 people were murdered in Los Angeles, namely two were killed every day (World Daily, December 4, 2007). In Detroit, rampant violent crimes have forced many residents to find new homes elsewhere, and the city's population has declined by nearly 1 million since 1950, according to the Census Bureau (Study: Detroit Most Dangerous City, the Associated Press, November 18, 2007).

The United States has the largest number of privately-owned guns in the world. Frequent gun violence poses a serious threat to people's life and property

security. There are an estimated 250 million privately-owned firearms in the United States. Almost every American, even ex-criminals with felony records and minors, has firearms. The Associated Press reported on January 29, 2007 that about 410,000 Floridians were licensed to carry hidden guns, including 1,400 who had pleaded guilty or no contest to felonies, thanks to loopholes, errors and miscommunication of authorities.

In the United States, about 30,000 people die from gun wounds every year (Update 2-Senate Passes Gun Bill in Response to Rampage, Reuters, December 19, 2007). The USA Today reported on December 5, 2007 that gun killings have climbed 13 percent overall since 2002. An estimated 25 percent of all violent crime incidents were committed by an armed offender. The presence of a firearm was involved in 9 percent of these incidents (Criminal Victimization 2006, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). According to a report by the U.S. Department of Justice on December 2007, among students ages 12-18, there were about 1.5 million victims of nonfatal crimes at school in 2005. In the same year, 8 percent of students in grades 9-12 reported being threatened or injured with a weapon in the previous 12 months. From July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, among youth ages 5-18, there were 17 school-associated violent deaths (Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2007, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). On April 16, 2007, the Virginia Tech University witnessed the deadliest shooting rampage in modern U.S. history with 33 killed and more than 30 others injured (AFP, April 17, 2007). On February 12, 2007, two separate gun killings in the Salt Lake City and Philadelphia claimed eight lives and injured several other people (The Associated Press, February 13, 2007). On June 9, in Delevan, Wisconsin, a gunman killed four adults and two infants (Chicago Tribune, June 11, 2007). On October 31, a 38-year-old pregnant woman was caught in gang gunfire while returning home after trick-or-treating with her children on Halloween night. She was shot in head and killed (Chicago Tribune, November 2, 2007). On December 5, a man opened fire at a shopping mall in Omaha, Nebraska, killing eight people and injuring five others. The man then killed himself (The Associated Press, December 5, 2007). On December 7, three separate gun killings took place in San Jose, the acclaimed "safest city" in the United States. Four people were killed by guns in the city in less than one month. (Ming Pao, December 9, 2007). On December 9, two separate gun killings in churches killed five people and injured other five in Colorado (Reuters, December 9, 2007). On December 24 and 25, at least nine people were killed in

several gun killings in New York City (www.chinesenewsnet.com, December 26, 2007). On December 26, bodies of six people died from gun wounds were discovered at a residential building in eastern Seattle (www.chinesenewsnet.com, December 27, 2007).

II. On Human Rights Violations by Law Enforcement and Judicial Departments

The abuse of their power by law enforcement and judicial departments in the United States has seriously violated the freedom and rights of its citizens.

Cases in which U.S. law enforcement authorities allegedly violated victims' civil rights increased by 25 percent from fiscal year 2001 to 2007 over the previous seven years, according to statistics from U.S. Department of Justice (Police Brutality Cases Up 25%; Union Worried Over Dip in Hiring Standards, USA Today, December 18, 2007). The national average among large police departments for excessive-force complaints was 9.5 per 100 full-time officers (The New York Times, November 14, 2007). But the majority of law enforcement officers accused of brutality were not prosecuted in the end. From May 2001 to June 2006, 2,451 police officers in Chicago received four to 10 complaints each, 662 of them received more than 10 complaints each, but only 22 were punished. Furthermore, there were officers who had amassed more than 50 abuse complaints but were never disciplined in any fashion (The Chicago Police Department's Broken System, University of Chicago, www.law.chicago.edu). On August 17, 2006, a 52-year-old Chicago woman named Dolores Robare was nearly struck by a speeding police car when she was crossing the road. The officer stopped and asked her to produce her identification. She was brutally beaten by the police when she asked them why it was taking so long (The Chicago Tribune, May 1, 2007). On December 15, 2006, four businessmen were beaten by six off-duty officers at a bar for no apparent reasons (The Chicago Tribune, June 9, 2007). On August 3, 42-year-old African American Geoffrey Johnson was killed at his home by the police using a taser gun. On August 6, 18-year-old black youth Aaron Harrison was shot in the back and killed by police pursuing him (The Chicago Tribune, August 9, 2007). On May 1 when Latino immigrants were campaigning for the rights of illegal immigrants at MacArthur Park in downtown Los Angeles, police officers abused their power by clubbing demonstrators and journalists and shooting them with rubber bullets (The Los Angeles Times, October 9, 2007). On November 12, five police officers fired 20

bullets at 18-year-old youth Khiel Coppin, eight hitting him, in front of his mother's house, after mistaking a comb he was brandishing as a gun (The China Press, New York, November 19, 2007). According to a report released by the U.S. Department of Justice in October 2007, 47 states and the District of Columbia reported 2,002 arrest-related deaths between 2003 and 2005. Among these, 1,095, or 55 percent, were killed by gunfire of state or local police (Death in Custody Statistical Tables, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs).

The United States of America is the world's largest prison and has the highest inmates/population ratio in the world. A December 5, 2007 report by EFE news agency quoted statistics of U.S. Department of Justice as saying that the number of inmates in U.S. prisons has increased by 500 percent over the last 30 years. By the end of 2006, there were 2.26 million inmates in U.S. prisons, up 2.8 percent from a year ago. The number is the highest over the last six years. The U.S. population only accounted for 5 percent of the world total, but its inmates made up 25 percent of the world total. There were 751 inmates in every 100,000 U.S. citizens, far higher than the rates in other Western countries (EFE news agency, December 5, 2007). Among the inmates, 96 percent were serving sentences of more than one year, which equaled about one in every 200 U.S. citizens serving a sentence of more than a year (Prisoners In 2006, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). Since the September 11 attacks, reincarceration rate has been rising in the United States. According to statistics, about two thirds of the inmates would commit a second crime within three years after releasing. Two out of three inmates would be caught again after their release and 40 percent would be put behind bars again.

Abusing the inmates is commonplace in U.S. prisons. According to a report released by U.S. Department of Justice in December 2007, an estimated 60,500 inmates, or 4.5 percent of State and Federal inmates, experienced one or more incidents of sexual victimization, 2.9 percent of the inmates reported an incident involving prison staff, 0.5 percent said they had been sexually victimized by both other inmates and staff, 0.8 percent of the inmates were injured as a result of sexual victimization (Sexual Victimization in State and Federal Prisons Reported by Inmates, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). The U.S. government acknowledged in a January 16, 2007 report that suspected illegal immigrants were mistreated in five prisons, breaching the principle of humane custody (The Washington Post, January 17, 2007). The Washington Post

reported on December 17, 2007 that juvenile inmates in a West Texas youth prison were sexually assaulted or beaten and denied medical care. Those who reported the crime got revenged upon and the situation remained unimproved months after the scandal was brought to light. (Dad Dismissed Prison Reform, The Washington Times, December 17, 2007). In January 2008, seven prisoners in Georgia State filed a class-action lawsuit accusing guards and other corrections officers of abusing and torturing them between October 2005 and August 2007, including beating them with batons and special black leather "beating gloves" and ramming inmates' heads against the wall. Media reports said some 40 inmates in other Georgia prisons complained of similar cases, in which guards strapped nude inmates to iron beds or iron chairs, denying them of food, water or access to bathroom for as long as 48 hours, and causing the death of two inmates (International Herald Tribune, January 8, 2008). Guards in American prisons regularly use taser guns. According to a 2007 report from Amnesty International, 230 Americans have died from taser guns since 2001. In July 2006, a prison in Garfield County, Colorado was accused of regularly using taser guns or pepper sprayers on inmates, and then tying them to chairs in awkward positions for hours. In August, prison guards in Arapahoe County of Colorado strapped inmate Raul Gallegos-Reyes to a restraint chair for yelling and knocking on his cell door. He died after being repeatedly stunned with a taser gun.

U.S. prisoners often die from HIV/AIDS infection or inadequate medical service. A report released by the U.S. Department of Justice in September 2007 said there were 22,480 state and federal inmates who were HIV infected or had confirmed AIDS at yearend 2005, 5,620 inmates had confirmed AIDS. During 2005 an estimated 176 state and 27 federal inmates died from AIDS-related causes (HIV in prisons 2005, U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). According to a report by the Los Angeles Times on September 20, 2007, 426 death cases took place in California prisons in 2006 due to belated treatment. Among them, 18 deaths were found to be "preventable" and an additional 48 were found to be "possibly preventable". On April 14, 2007, 41-year-old diabetic prisoner Rodolfo Ramos died after being left alone and covered in his own feces for a week. Prison officials failed to get medical treatment for him despite knowing of his condition (The Associated Press, April 27, 2007).

The justice of U.S. judicial system was increasingly put in question. Survey finds that since the first DNA exoneration in 1989, there have been 209 post-conviction

DNA exonerations in the United States. The average length of time served by exonerees is 12 years. The average age of exonerees at the time of their wrongful convictions was 26, and 15 of the 209 people exonerated through DNA served time on death row (Facts on Post-Conviction DNA Exonerations, Innocence Project, www.innocenceproject.com). The Associated Press reported on January 3, 2008 that Charles Chatman of Texas was proved innocent by DNA evidence after spending 26 years in prison. In 1981, he was sentenced to 99 years in prison after convicted of committing serious sexual assaults. He was the 15th inmate exonerated by DNA evidence in Dalas since 2001 (Texas Man Exonerated by DNA After 26 Years, the Associated Press, January 3, 2008).

III. On Civil and Political Rights

The freedom and rights of individual citizens are being increasingly marginalized in the United States.

The House of Representatives and the Senate of the U.S. Congress passed the Protect America Act of 2007 on August 3, and August 4, 2007, respectively. The act enables the U.S. administration to eavesdrop terrorist suspects in the United States without court approval. It also permits intelligence services to conduct electronic surveillance on digital communications between terrorist suspects outside the United States if the communications are routed through the country (The so-called Protect America Act, <http://public.findlaw.com>, August 10, 2007). According to a report by the Washington Post on March 10, 2007, the FBI improperly obtained personal information on more than 52,000 people without court oversight through the use of national security letters (NSLs) from 2003 to 2005. Verizon Communications, the second largest telecom company in the United States, disclosed that the FBI sought information identifying not just a person making a call, but all the people that customer called, as well as the people those people called. From January 2005 to September 2007, Verizon provided data to federal authorities "on an emergency basis" 720 times. The records included Internet protocol addresses as well as phone data. In that period, Verizon turned over information a total of 94,000 times to federal authorities armed with a subpoena or court order. The information was mainly used for a range of criminal investigations including counter-terrorism investigations (The Washington Post, October 16, 2007). In August 2007, the United States' National Intelligence Director Mike McConnell revealed that fewer than 100 people inside

the United States are monitored under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrants. However, he said, thousands of people overseas are monitored (The Associated Press, August 23, 2007). The FBI is embarking on a 1 billion U.S. dollars effort to build the world's largest computer database of peoples' physical characteristics, called Next Generation Identification, a project that would give the government unprecedented abilities to identify individuals in the United States and abroad. The increasing use of biometrics for identification is raising questions about the ability of Americans to avoid unwanted scrutiny (FBI Prepares Vast Database Of Biometrics, The Washington Post, December 22, 2007). Statistics show that the government's illegal dragnet electronic surveillance has put sensitive personal information from millions of people at risk. 477 breaches into government databases were found in 2006 alone. More than 162 million records were reported lost or stolen in 2007, triple the 49.7 million that went missing in 2006 (USA Today website, December 10, 2007). In July 2007, the Homeland Security Department granted more than 4 million U.S. dollars to install 175 video cameras on the streets of cities including St. Paul, Madison (Wisconsin State) and Pittsburgh. The Boston Globe estimated that up to hundreds of millions of dollars were being spent by the department to install new surveillance systems around the country, accelerating the rise of a "surveillance society" (The Boston Globe, August 12, 2007).

Workers' right to unionize has been restricted in the United States. It was reported that union membership fell by 326,000 in 2006, bringing the percentage of employees in unions to 12 percent, down from 20 percent in 1983. Employer resistance stopped 53 percent of nonunion workers from joining a union (Sharp Decline in Union Members in '06, The New York Times, January 26, 2007). According to a report by the Human Rights Watch, when Wal-Mart stores faced unionization drives, the company often broke the law by, for example, eavesdropping on workers, training surveillance cameras on them and firing those who favored unions (Report Assails Wal-Mart Over Unions, The New York Times, May 1, 2007).

In the United States, money is "mother's milk" for politics while elections are "games" for the wealthy, highlighting the hypocrisy of the U.S. democracy, which has been fully borne out by the 2008 presidential election. The "financial threshold" for participating in the U.S. presidential election is becoming higher and higher. At least 10 of the 20-strong major party candidates who are seeking

the U.S. presidency in general elections in 2008 are millionaires, according to a report by Spanish news agency EFE on May 18, 2007. The French news agency AFP reported on January 15, 2007 that the 2008 presidential election will be the most expensive race in history. The cost of the last presidential campaign in 2004, considered a peak for its time, was 693 million U.S. dollars. Common estimates of this year's total outlay have tended to come in at around 1 billion U.S. dollars, and Fortune magazine recently upped its overall cost projection to 3 billion U.S. dollars. An important presidential candidate of the Democratic Party raised a total of 115 million U.S. dollars in 2007, and another important candidate of the Party raised 103 million U.S. dollars. A Republican candidate said his campaign has 12.7 million U.S. dollars, and another Republican White House hopeful, a wealthy businessman, has already dished out 17 million U.S. dollars of his own. The New York Times said on November 26, 2007 that confronting an enormous fundraising gap with Democrats, Republican Party officials were aggressively recruiting wealthy candidates who could spend large sums of their own money to finance their campaigns. Some wealthy Republicans had each already invested 100,000 to 1 million U.S. dollars of their own money to finance their campaigns. In New York's 20th Congressional District, it was estimated that each candidate would spend at least 3 million U.S. dollars.

The "cash race" has permeated various kinds of elections in the United States. According to figures from relevant institutions, from 2005 to 2006, candidates for state high courts collected more than 34 million U.S. dollars in campaign donations. In a contest in Pennsylvania to elect two new members of the state Supreme Court, judicial candidates have broken state fundraising records, pulling down 6.8 million U.S. dollars (USA Today, November 5, 2007). Having been elected, some Congress members sought to secure interests for their campaign donors. According to a report by the Washington Post on December 10, 2007, the amount of 10 biggest earmarks that House Majority Leader sponsored in 2008 congressional spending bills, either solo or in conjunction with other legislators, worth of 96 million U.S. dollars. One earmark alone cost 9.8 million U.S. dollars. The earmarks included many that would benefit his campaign donors. When the 471 billion U.S. dollar Pentagon spending bill passed in November 2007, a legislator from Pennsylvania State said in a news release that he helped secure 8 million U.S. dollars in funding for seven companies in his Pittsburgh-area district, including companies that contributed to his campaign. In addition, 20 freshman members of Congress secured earmarks for special-interest groups.

The funding ranges from 8 million U.S. dollars to more than 18 million U.S. dollars ("Earmarks" Analysis Shows Money Follows Power, USA Today, December 12, 2007).

To seek more interests, some companies have paid for trips for some important political figures and other government employees. Records show lawmakers accepted free trips worth nearly 1.9 million U.S. dollars during the first eight months of 2007, more than in all of 2006 (Limits Don't Slow Trip Perks for U.S. Lawmakers, USA Today, October 24, 2007). According to a report by the USA Today on August 23, 2007, an examination of more than 600 travel reports on executive-branch officials over a 12-month period has found that more than 200 trips were funded by relevant companies or trade groups. The chief of the Consumer Product Safety Commission and her predecessor have taken nearly 30 trips since 2002 that were paid for in full or in part by trade associations or manufacturers of products. The expenses totaled nearly 60,000 U.S. dollars.

The U.S. administration manipulated the press. On October 23, 2007, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staged a news conference on California wildfires. A half-dozen questions were asked within 15 minutes at the event by FEMA staff members posing as reporters. The news was aired by U.S.-based television stations. After the Washington Post disclosed the farce, FEMA tried to defend itself for staging the fake briefing (FEMA Official Apologizes for Staged Briefing With Fake Reporters, The Washington Post, October 27, 2007). When Private Jessica Lynch and brother of late Army Ranger Pat Tillman were testifying to Congress on April 24, they decried the Pentagon's "deceit" in turning her and Tillman's disastrous experiences into false tales of heroism and lambasted the U.S. Administration for lying about the incident (The Times, April 25, 2007).

IV. On Economic, Social and Cultural rights

The deserved economic, social and cultural rights of American citizens have not been properly protected.

Poor population in the United States is constantly increasing. According to statistics released by the U.S. Census Bureau in August 2007, the official poverty rate in 2006 was 12.3 percent. There were 36.5 million people, or 7.7 million

families living in poverty in 2006. In another word, almost one out of eight American citizens lives in poverty. The poverty rate in Mississippi was as high as 21.1 percent (Poverty Drops as Nation's Income Hits 5-years High, USA Today, August 29, 2007). The poverty rate of major American cities was 16.1 percent. The rate was 15.2 percent in suburban areas and 13.8 percent in the South. The poverty rate in the Washington D.C. was 19.8 percent, which meant nearly one-fifths of its citizens were living in poverty (DC's "Two Economies" Headed in Different Directions, Report Finds, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, October 24, 2007). The wealth of the richest group in the United States has rapidly expanded in recent year, widening the earning gap between the rich and the poor. The earnings of the highest one percent of the population accounted for 21.2 percent of American total national income in 2005, compared with 19 percent in 2004. The earnings of the lowest 50 percent of the population accounted for 12.8 percent of the total national income in 2005, down from 13.4 percent in 2004 (Reuters, October 12, 2007). The number of "ultra-high-net worth" U.S. households, that is, those with a net worth of 5 million U.S. Dollars or more, excluding the value of their primary homes, reached 1.14 million in 2006, a 23 percent rise from 930,000 in 2005 (Richest Households Pass 1 Million Mark, CNNmoney.com, April 17, 2007). The number of billionaires increased from 13 in 1985 to more than 1,000 in 2006 (The Observer, July 24, 2007). Top executives of major U.S. businesses made an average of more than 10 million U.S. Dollars in 2006, 364 times over that of ordinary workers. They earn as much money in one day of work as ordinary workers make over the entire year (AFP, January 4, 2008).

The past five years have witnessed relatively strong growth in the U.S. economy, but the fortunes of millions of Americans just get worse. The ratio of American wage expenditure to gross domestic product (GDP) has dropped to the lowest since records began in 1947. The average income of households consisted of members at working age has seen a continuous decline in the past five years, and is 17 percent less than five years ago (U.S. News & World Report, January 1, 2007). According to a national survey on the state of stress in America conducted in September 2007, money and work were the biggest stressors for almost three-quarters of Americans. Of the 1,848 adults polled, 51 percent worried about housing costs. Housing was a "very significant or somewhat significant" source of pressure for 61 percent of the residents in the West and 55 percent those in the East (USA Today, October 24, 2007). According to a latest report by the U.S.

government, suicide rate among Americans aged 45-54 rose by about 20 percent from 1999 to 2004, the highest since records began 25 years ago (The Associated Press, December 14, 2007).

Hungry and homeless people have increased significantly in American cities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture said in a report released on November 14, 2007 that 35.52 million Americans, including 12.63 million children, went hungry in 2006, an increase of 390,000 from 2005. About 11 million people lived in "very low food security" (Over 30 Million Americans Faced Hunger in 2006, Reuters, November 15, 2007). Results of the 2007 Hunger and Homelessness Survey released by the U.S. Conference of Mayors showed that 16 of the 23 polled cities reported increased requests for emergency food assistance. Among 15 cities that provided data, the average increase was 12 percent. Detroit reported an increase of 35 percent. In 13 survey cities, 15 percent of households with children were not receiving emergency food assistance they requested. In 20 survey cities, 193,183 people applied for emergency shelter or transitional housing. The number of residents applying for government rent subsidies surged by 30 percent in Baltimore County in 2007 (More Seeking U.S. Rent Subsidy, The Baltimore Sun, December 17, 2007). It is estimated that 750,000 people are homeless on any given day in the United States (Care Critical for Homeless, The Washington Post, October 22, 2007). Los Angeles County has more than 73,000 homeless people (Dying Without Dignity: Homeless Deaths in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness, December 27, 2007). Phoenix has 7,000 to 10,000 homeless people and another 3,000 who were not sheltered by the government (Rebellion, Spain, January 2, 2008). New Orleans has 12,000 homeless people (Katrina's Wrath Lingers for New Orleans Poor, USA Today, December 13, 2007). California has about 50,000 veterans living in streets (Sing Tao Daily San Francisco Edition, November 8, 2007). Health conditions of the homeless are worrying. Research shows one-third to half of the homeless have a chronic illness. The life expectancy for a homeless person ranges between 42 and 52 years (Care Critical for Homeless, The Washington Post, October 22, 2007). Among sexual offenders in many American cities, the homeless account for a high proportion. In Boston, nearly two-thirds of 136 high-risk sex offenders lack permanent addresses. In New York City, more than 100 sex offenders are registered at two homeless shelters (Many Sex Offenders Are Often Homeless, USA Today, November 19, 2007).

People without health insurance have been increasing in the United States. A Reuters report on September 20, 2007 quoted the U.S. Census Bureau as saying that 47 million people in the United States were not covered by health insurance. A U.S. family organization said nearly 90 million people below the age of 65 were not covered by health insurance at one point or throughout the period from 2006 to 2007. The number accounted for 34.7 percent of the population falling in that age (Reuters, September 20, 2007). More than 10 million young people age 19-29 were not covered either (Reuters, August 8, 2007). In Texas, the rate of uninsured people is 23.8 percent. In Arizona it is 20.6 percent. Florida 19.7 percent and Georgia 19 percent (Ming Pao San Francisco Edition, June 26, 2007). In 2006, health insurance premiums rose 7.7 percent from a year ago, hitting 11,480 U.S. dollars for a typical U.S. family plan offered by employers. The percentage of people covered by job-based health insurance fell 0.3 percentage points to 59.7 percent (Census: Health Benefits Scarcer, USA Today, August 28, 2007). Meanwhile, the number of people whose household incomes were above the poverty line but were unable to afford medical services rose from 4.2 percent of the total population in 1998 to 5.8 percent in 2006 (Ming Pao San Francisco Edition, June 26, 2007).

V. On Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination is a deep-rooted social illness in the United States.

Black people and other minor ethnic groups live in the bottom of the American society. According to statistics released by the U.S. Census Bureau in August 2007, median income of black households was 31,969 U.S. dollars in 2006, or 61 percent of that for non-Hispanic white households. Median income for Hispanic households stood at 37,781 U.S. dollars, 72 percent of that for non-Hispanic white households. The rates of blacks and Hispanics living in poverty and without health insurance are much higher than non-Hispanic whites. Poverty rate for blacks was 24.3 percent in 2006, while that for non-Hispanic Whites was 8.2 percent. The rate for Hispanics was 20.6 percent. In 2006, the percentage of blacks without health insurance rose to 20.5 percent, from 19 percent in 2005. The number and rate of uninsured Hispanics increased to 15.3 million and 34.1 percent, respectively. The rate was 10.8 percent for whites (Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006, see Census Bureau website: www.census.gov). The prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS and other

diseases are higher among blacks and Hispanics than among non-Hispanic whites. According to a Washington Post report, 80.7 percent of the 3,269 HIV/AIDS cases identified between 2001 and 2006 were among Blacks (Study Calls HIV in DC. A "Modern Epidemic", The Washington Post, November 26, 2007). The possibility for blacks to be infected of HIV/AIDS was seven times higher than that of whites (National Urban League: The State of Black America 2007, www.nul.org). A report issued by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a think tank on minorities studies, indicated that white households that have reported higher social and economic status were twice that of black households, while black households that have reported lower income were twice that of white households (Washington Observer Weekly, November 30, 2006).

Ethnic minorities have been subject to racial discrimination in employment and workplace. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in November 2007, the unemployment rate for Black Americans was 8.4 percent, twice that of non-Hispanic whites (4.2 percent). The unemployment rate for Hispanics was 5.7 percent. The jobless rates among blacks and Hispanics were much higher than that for non-Hispanic whites (The Employment Situation: November 2007, issued by the U.S. Department of Labor on December 7, 2007, see www.bls.gov). A poll conducted in 2007 by the Pew Research Center shows that 67 percent of black respondents believe that blacks still face discrimination when applying for a job (As Black Middle Class Rises, Underclass Falls Still Further, The Baltimore Sun, December 3, 2007). According to statistics issued by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, among the 75,768 charges it received in 2006, 27,328, or 35.9 percent of the total, were related to racial discrimination (Charges Statistics FY 1997 Through FY 2006, www.eeoc.gov/stats/charges.html). In 2007, U.S. sports wear company Nike reached a settlement in a class-action lawsuit, in which four former black employees of Nike's Chicago Niketown store filed a racial discrimination lawsuit against the company, on behalf of the 400 current black employees, accusing a Niketown manager of using racial slurs to refer to black workers and customers, segregating them into low-pay jobs, making unfounded accusations of theft against black workers and directing store security to watch black employees and customers (ABC News, July 31, 2007). In March 2007, a class-action lawsuit was filed against Walgreen, the largest drugstore chain in the United States, alleging widespread racial bias against thousands of black employees. The company was accused of making decisions about employee assignment and promotion based on race (CBS, <http://cbs2chicago.com>).

There is serious racial discrimination in the education sector of the United States. According to a media report, public schools tend to take tougher discipline sanctions on black students, and the rate of black students disciplined is much higher than that of white students. In New Jersey, African-American students are almost 60 times as likely as white students to be expelled for serious disciplinary infractions. In Minnesota, black students are suspended six times as often as whites. In Iowa, blacks make up just five percent of the total students in public schools, but account for 22 percent of those who get suspended (Chicago Tribune, September 25, 2007). On August 2, 2006, a black student at the Jena High School in Louisiana asked a school administrator if Blacks could sit under a tree that was traditionally reserved for the whites. He received a positive reply. But three white students hung nooses -- the notorious symbol of lynching in the racist south -- from the tree's branches the following day (The Associated Press, Jena, Louisiana State, September 20, 2007). According to a New York Times report on October 23, 2007, the black principal of a Brooklyn high school received a noose along with a letter containing racist words like "white power forever". A noose was also hung on the office door of a black professor in Columbia University. Macalester College, Trinity College and Whitman College all reported incidents in which students showed up at parties in racially offensive costumes. At one party in Macalester College, a student wore a blackface with a noose around his neck (The Associated Press, Saint Paul, Minnesota, February 11, 2007). Nazi symbol swastika was also found on the campus of the Columbia University in 2007, apparently targeting American Jews, according to a report by the World Daily.

Racial discrimination in the U.S. judicial system is shocking. According to the 2007 annual report on the state of black America issued by the National Urban League (NUL), African Americans (especially males) are more likely than whites to be convicted and sentenced to longer terms. Blacks are seven times more likely than whites to be incarcerated (National Urban League: The State of Black America 2007, www.nul.org). Blacks are 10 times as likely to be imprisoned for drug offences as whites, even though both groups use and sell drugs at the same rate (Study Finds Racial Divide Across U.S. in Drug Arrests, The Washington Post, December 5, 2007). Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that as at yearend 2006, 815 of every 100,000 blacks were behind the bars. The rate was 283 per 100,000 for Hispanics and 170 for whites. Figures released by the

U.S. Department of Justice in December 2007 shows that as at yearend 2006, there were 560,000 blacks in state and federal prisons, accounting for 37.5 percent of the total. Hispanics and Latinos totaled 308,000, accounting for 20.5 percent. Black men had an incarceration rate of 3,042 per 100,000, six times over that for the entire U.S. population (501 per 100,000). The incarceration rate for Hispanics was 1,261 per 100,000. Nearly eight percent of black men aged 30 to 34 were incarcerated as sentenced prisoners, compared with only 1.2 percent for white men of the same age group (Prisoners in 2006, issued by the U.S. Department of Justice on December 5, 2007, see www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). In the United States, the percentage for young people serving life sentence is quite different for groups of different colors. The rate for young blacks sentenced to life imprisonment without parole was 10 times as young whites. It was 20 times in California (Los Angeles Times, November 19, 2007).

American justice system practices double standards on blacks and whites. The Associated Press reported that in the "Jena Six" case, six black youths were arrested for beating a white classmate and five of them were indicted on charges of attempted murder, which aroused a 2,000-student protest in the town which has merely 3,000 residents (The Associated Press, Jena, Louisiana on September 20, 2007). Meanwhile, the two women teachers accused of having sex with six black male students were released on bail (The Associated Press, March 28, 2007).

In the United States, minorities are the main victims of hate and violent crimes and murders. According to a FBI report published in November 2007, there were 7,722 hate crimes in the country in 2006, up eight percent. Among them, 51.8 percent were motivated by racial bias. Hate crimes against Muslims increased 22 percent. Hate crimes against Hispanics went up 10 percent (FBI: Hate Crimes Escalate 8% in 2006, USA Today, November 20, 2007). In New York City, hate crimes increased by 20.9 percent year-on-year in 2007. Of the 512 hate crimes that occurred in Los Angeles County in 2006, 68 percent were caused by racial problems (The China Press, June 8, 2007). According to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Justice in August 2007, Blacks account for 13 percent of the U.S. population, but were victims in 15 percent of all nonfatal violent crimes and 49 percent of all homicides in 2005 (Black Victims of Violent Crime, <http://www.ojb.usdoj.gov/bjs>).

VI. On the Rights of Women and Children

The conditions of women and children in the United States are worrisome.

Women account for 51 percent of the U.S. population, but there are only 86 women serving in the 110th U.S. Congress. Women hold 16, or 16 percent of the 100 seats in the Senate and 70, or 16.1 percent of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives. In December 2007, there were 76 women serving in statewide elective executive offices, accounting for 24.1 percent of the total. The proportion of women in state legislature is 23.5 percent. As of September 2007, of the 1,145 mayors of U.S. cities with populations over 30,000, 185, or 16.2 percent, were women (Women Serving in the 110th Congress 2007-09. Center For American Women and Politics, www.cawp.rutgers.edu).

Discrimination against women is pervasive in U.S. job market and workplaces. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said it received 23,247 charges on sex-based discrimination in 2006, accounting for 30.7 percent of the total discrimination charges (Charge Statistics FY 1997 Through FY 2006, www.eeoc.gov/stats/charges.html). According to media reports, as many as 1.6 million women could have joined the largest gender discrimination lawsuit in the U.S. history, in which retailer giant Wal-Mart is accused of discrimination against women in pay and promotions (Reuters, Los Angeles, February 6, 2007). The average income of women is less than that of men in America. Figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau in August 2007 shows that the median earnings of women aged 15 and older was 32,515 U.S. dollars in 2006, 77 percent of men's 42,261 U.S. dollars (Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006, issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, see www.census.gov).

The poverty rate of women is higher. Statistics show that at the year end of 2006, more than 5.58 million single women above the age of 18 were living in poverty, accounting for 22.2 percent of women in that group. Some 4.1 million, or 28.3 percent of female-householder-with-no-husband-present families were living in poverty in 2006, much higher than the national family poverty rate of 9.8 percent (Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau). Colored women are more likely to fall prey to poverty and misery. A report issued by the American Center for Reproductive Rights shows the maternal death rate of the United States ranks the 30th in the world. The

maternal death rate for black women is four times that of white women. The proportion of black women infected with AIDS and venereal diseases is 23 times and 18 times that of white women, respectively. Among all the impoverished women in America, African, Hispanic, Indian and Asian women account for 27 percent, 26 percent, 21 percent and 13 percent, respectively, compared to nine percent for white women.

American women are victims of domestic violence. According to information from the National Organization for Women, about 1,400 women are beaten to death every year by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States. It is estimated that two to four million women are battered each year. Women are 10 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate. Women who are separated, divorced or single, low-income women and African-American women are disproportionately victims of assault and rape. Domestic violence rates are five times higher among families below poverty levels. Statistics show that 37 percent of the women in the United States received emergency medical treatments because of domestic violence for at least once; 30 percent of pregnant women suffer attacks from their partners; 50 percent of American men frequently attack their women and children; 74 percent of career women suffer violence from their colleagues. According to a report by the Associated Press, domestic violence in the United States is spreading to workplaces. Yvette Cade was set on fire by her estranged husband at her job. She suffered third-degree burns over 60 percent of her body (The Associated Press, Washington, April 18, 2007).

Women are frequently victims of sexual harassment at their workplaces and military barracks. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said it received 12,025 charges on sexual harassment in 2006, 84.6 percent of which were filed by women (Sexual Harassment Charges EEOC & FEPAs Combined: FY 1997-FY 2006, see www.eeoc.gov). The National Organization for Women said every year approximately 132,000 women reported that they had been victims of rape or attempted rape, and that two to six times that many women were raped, but did not report it. The U.S. department investigating military crimes received about 1,700 sexual harassment charges in 2004, including 1,305 rape charges. A survey by the University of California among 3,000 retired female soldiers shows 25 of them suffer from sequelae of sexual harassment experiences in the barracks (Latin American News Agency, Havana, February 10, 2007). The New York Times said in a report that many American women soldiers

stationed in Iraq faced the dual strikes of trauma from sexual abuses by their own ranks and that from enemy fire in the battle field. Suzanne Swift was repeatedly sexually harassed and abused by her chain of commanders. As she tried to charge them, she received an order for redeployment together with the perpetrators (Latin American News Agency, Havana, February 10, 2007). Maricela Guzman was attacked and raped while on night watch duty during her Navy boot camp training. She tried to report the incident for four times, but no one paid attention, and the command even ordered her to do push-ups as punishment for her wrongfully treating the boss (Latin American News Agency, Havana, February 10, 2007). Abbie Pickett was just 19 years old when she was sexually assaulted during a humanitarian deployment to Nicaragua. She said she was too afraid to report the incident then because the perpetrator was an officer who ranked above her (New York Times, March 18, 2007).

Women inmates are increasing in American prisons and they are often subject to grave conditions. Figures released by the Department of Justice in December 2007 show that the number of female inmates in federal and state prisons increased by 4,872, or 4.5 percent in 2006 to reach 112,498. This is faster than the average growth rate of 2.9 percent from 2000 to 2005 (Prisoners in 2006, issued by the Department of Justice on December 5, 2007, see www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). Amnesty International said in a 2007 report that in American prisons, male watchers can do full body searches on female prisoners and watch them washing and changing clothes. In most states, male watchers are allowed to enter female cells without supervision.

The living conditions of American children are of great concern. Houston Chronicle reported that a survey by the United Nations on 21 rich countries showed that though the United States was among the world's richest nations, it ranked only the 20th in the overall well-being of children. In the dimension of health and security, the United States was at the very bottom of the ranking. Statistics show that by the end of 2006, there were 12.8 million children under the age of 18 living in poverty in the United States, accounting for 17.4 percent of the country's children population. Children account for 35.2 percent of the impoverished population in the United States. The rate of impoverished children in female households with no husbands present is as high as 42.1 percent (Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006, issued by the U.S. Census Bureau in August 2007, see www.census.gov). More

children are doing without medical insurance. By the end of 2006, some 8.7 million children under the age of 18 had no medical insurance in the United States, up by 11.7 percent from 2005. The rate of children without medical insurance reached 19.3 percent (Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau). More children are becoming homeless. According to a survey on hunger and homelessness in 23 American cities released in December 2007 by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, members of households with children made up 23 percent of the population who took up emergency shelter in 2007. Requests for emergency shelter from households with children increased in 10 cities (Mayors Examine Causes of Hunger, Homelessness, press release by the U.S. Conference of Mayors on December 17, 2007, www.usmayors.org). According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the infant mortality rate of the United State was seven in a thousand in 2004, and the mortality rate of black infants was 2.5 times that of whites (The Associated Press, November 10, 2007). The infant survival rate of the United States is lagging far behind other developed nations. A bill that would have expanded government-provided health insurance for children was vetoed by President George W. Bush in 2007 though 72 percent of the public supported the bill (Bush Vetoes Kids Health Insurance Bill, The Washington Post, December 13, 2007).

American juveniles often fall victims of abuses and crimes. According to a report on school crimes in the United States released by the Department of Justice in December 2007, 57 out of 1,000 American students above the age of 12 were victims of violence and property crimes in 2005. From July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, there were 14 school-associated homicides involving school-aged children. In 2005, 25 percent of students were tempted to buy drugs in school in the 12 months prior to the survey; 24 percent of students said there were gangs at their schools (School Crime Rates Stable Children 50 Times More Likely to Be Murdered away from School Than at School, issued by the U.S. Department of Justice on December 2, 2007, see www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs). It is reported that in some middle schools in Baltimore many students go to school with weapons like knives. From the start of school through the end of October 2007, there were 216 incidents in city schools leading to arrests (Weapon Checks OK'd at Schools, The Baltimore Sun, December 11, 2007). Sexual violations are widespread in American schools. A national survey by the Associated Press in 2007 found that 2,570 educators were punished for sexual misconduct between 2001 and 2005.

Eighty percent of the victims were students. A survey by the U.S. Congress shows that as many as 4.5 million students, out of roughly 50 million in American schools, are subject to sexually misconduct by an employee of a school sometime between kindergarten and 12th grade. An average of three sexual abuse cases take place in American schools every day (The Associated Press, Washington, October 21, 2007).

American juveniles are ill-treated at boot camps. A report mandated by Congress said thousands of teenagers suffered terrible abuses at boot camps, some even lost their lives. Governmental investigator said boot camp abuses took many forms, including youth being forced to eat their own vomit, denied adequate food, being forced to lie in urine or feces, being kicked or beaten. A boy was forced to clean a toilet with his toothbrush and then brush his own teeth with it. Journal left by 16-year-old Aaron Bacon, who died from an untreated perforated ulcer, shows that he spent 14 of 20 days without any food but was forced to hike 13 to 16 kilometers everyday. When he was given food, it consisted of undercooked lentils, lizards and scorpions. His father said that he had been beaten from head to toes during his month at the camp. Martin Lee Anderson, 14, died in a boot camp after guards choked him and forced him to inhale ammonia fumes (The Times, October 12, 2007).

Millions of underage girls become sex slaves in the United States. Statistics from the Department of Justice show some 100,000 to three million American children under the age of 18 are involved in prostitution. A FBI report says as high as 40 percent of forced prostitutes are minors.

American children are not properly protected by the justice system. The United States is one of the few countries in the world that sentence children to death, and some states still have no age limit for death penalty. It sentences more children to life imprisonment than any other country. A joint research by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International shows that some 9,400 minors were imprisoned in the United States in 2005, including 2,225 who were sentenced to life imprisonment. Sixteen percent of them were in the age of 13 to 15 (Spain, Rebellion, April 27, 2007). There are currently 2,387 teenagers sentenced to life term without parole (Los Angeles Times, November 19, 2007). In California there are 227 teenagers serving life sentences without parole. The figure for Pennsylvania is 433. Teenage criminals often receive the same punishments as

adults do. The Washington Post said it was roughly estimated that about 200,000 teenage defendants were sent directly or transferred to the adult system, known as criminal court. About 7,500 juveniles are held in adult jails on any given day (States Rethink Charging Kids as Adults, The Washington Post, December 2, 2007). Colored children and those from impoverished families are more likely to suffer fate of this kind. The Suffolk University Juvenile Justice Center said in 2000 that African American children, though only accounting for 15 percent of the total children population in the United States, made up 46 percent of the inmates in American jails, and 52 percent of them were sentenced in criminal court. The number of imprisoned black children is five times that of whites. The number of imprisoned Latino and aboriginal teenagers is 2.5 times that of whites (Rebellion, April 27, 2007). Many children of six and seven are treated as criminals for trivial misdoings. It is reported that the 7-year-old Gerard Mungo Jr. was arrested for sitting on a motorcycle in front of his home. The reason of the arrestment was that that kind of motorcycles was prohibited in the city. He was handcuffed to a chair for two hours (Rebellion, April 27, 2007). In Florida more than 4,500 children under 11 were charged for crimes. A six-year-old girl Desre'e Watson was arrested and charged for attacking a teacher, disrupting school function and resisting school guards (Rebellion, April 27, 2007).

VII. On the Violation of Human Rights in Other Countries

The United States has a notorious record of trampling on the sovereignty of and violating human rights in other countries.

The invasion of Iraq by American troops has produced the biggest human rights tragedy and the greatest humanitarian disaster in modern world. It was reported that since the invasion in 2003, 660,000 Iraqis have died, of which 99 percent were civilians. That translates into a daily toll of 450. According to the Los Angeles Times, the number of civilian deaths in Iraq has exceeded one million. A report from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) revealed that about one million Iraqis were homeless, half of whom were children. There were 75,000 children living in refugee camps or makeshift shelters. About 760,000 pupils could not go to school. According to media report, guards of Blackwater, a security service company with State Department background, shot dead 17 Iraqis for no reason on September 16, 2007, and it was given immunity by the State Department (The China Press, October 31, 2007). Investigation by the Iraqi

government found that Blackwater guards had killed 21 Iraqis and injured 27 others before that. State Department investigation showed that Blackwater was involved in 56 shooting cases in Iraq in 2007. A U.S. Congress report said the company was involved in nearly 200 shooting cases in Iraq since 2005, and 84 percent of them were random shooting. The Associated Press reported that an Apache gunship opened fired on October 23, 2007 at a group of people suspected of planting roadside bombs near Samarra in north Baghdad, killing at least 11 people, including 6 Iraqi civilians. But local police and eyewitnesses said the number of civilians killed was 14 (The Associated Press, Baghdad, October 23, 2007). Commanders of the 1st Battalion of the 501st Infantry Regiment made a baiting program to kill more insurgents, in which weapons were dropped as a bait, and if someone picked them up, the snipers would shot them. Many Iraqi civilians were killed in this way (Los Angeles Times, October 5, 2007; Washington Post, September 24, 2007).

U.S. troops have killed many innocent civilians in the anti-terrorism war in Afghanistan. The Washington Post reported on May 3, 2007 that as many as 51 civilians were killed by U.S. soldiers in one week (Karzai Says Civilian Toll is No Longer Acceptable, The Washington Post, May 3, 2007). An Afghan human rights group said in a report that U.S. marine unit fired indiscriminately at pedestrians, people in cars, buses and taxis along a 10-mile stretch of road in Nangahar province on March 4, 2007, killing 12 civilians, including one infant and three elders (New York Times, April 15, 2007).

The United States has many secret jails across the world, where prisoners were treated inhumanely. "Secret prison" and "torturing prisoners" have become synonymous with America. In May 2007, the UN special rapporteur on the protection of human right while countering terrorism said after his visit to the a United States that the latter has detained 700 people in Afghanistan and 18,000 in Iraq for reasons related to the fight against terrorism. The special rapporteur expressed his concern over the conditions of detainees at Guantanamo Bay and other secret detention facilities, the lack of justice protection and access to fair trial for terrorist suspects, as well as the rendition of suspects. He also expressed his disappointment that the U.S. government had refused to allow him to visit Guantanamo Bay and other places of secret detention (Preliminary Findings on Visit to United States by Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counter-terrorism, May 29, 2007, www.unog.ch). In addition to Guantanamo Bay where

prisoners were subject to gruesome tortures, the United States also ran secret facilities in Jordan and Ethiopia, where detainees were brutally treated. Washington Post reported on December 1, 2007 that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been running a secret jail on the outskirts of Jordan capital Amman since 2000, where many non-Jordanian terrorism suspects had been detained and interrogated with severe abuse (Jordan's Spy Agency: Holding Cell for the CIA, Washington Post, December 1, 2007). According to media reports, CIA detained hundreds of AL-Qaeda suspects in a secret location in Ethiopia. The detainees came from 19 countries and included women and children as young as seven months. They were illegally deported to Ethiopia where they were held in horrific conditions in crowded jails, with a dozen detainees sharing a single 10 feet by 10 feet cell. There was little food, and abuse and torture were commonplace (The Daily Telegraph, April 5, 2007; The Associated Press, Nairobi, April 5, 2007). The Washington Times reported on December 14, 2007 that CIA often tortured detained terrorist suspects by using waterboarding and mock execution (House Approves Ban on CIA Waterboarding, The Washington Times, December 14, 2007). The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) described in a report how waterboarding is done: the prisoner is bound to an inclined board, feet raised and head slightly below the feet. Cellophane is wrapped over the prisoner's face and water is poured over him. Unavoidably, the gag reflex kicks in and a terrifying fear of drowning leads to almost instant pleas to bring the treatment to a halt. The New York Times said in a report on December 7, 2007 that CIA in 2005 destroyed at least two videotapes documenting the interrogation of two Al-Qaeda operatives in 2002 in the agency's custody (CIA Destroyed 2 Tapes Showing Interrogations, The New York Times, December 7, 2007). It was widely believed that CIA was trying to destroy evidences of the existence of its secret detention program. Women prisoners were often subject to humiliation in Iraq. Reports said many of them became victims of Iraqi police and the occupying forces. Iraqis said there had never been so many rapes and atrocities against women in any war since the Middle Ages as witnessed in the Iraqi war (Rebellion, May 5, 2007).

The United States has always adopted double standards on human rights issues. It frequently exerts pressure on other countries to invite the UN special rapporteur to exam and report on the status of their human rights status, but itself has never done so. The United States requests others to obey the UN norms that allow special rapporteurs to visit any place and talk with any one without interference or

surveillance, but itself has rejected such norms and has turned down the request for a joint visit to the military base at Guantanamo Bay from several special rapporteurs.

The United States has to date refused to acknowledge the right to development as part of the human rights. Although it signed the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1977, the United States has not yet ratified the convention. The United States claims that it attaches importance to the protection of the rights of women and children, but it has not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 27 years after signing on the convention. The United States is one of the seven U.N. members that have not ratified the convention. The United States has not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child 12 years after signing on it, though 193 countries have already done so. Since March 2007, the Convention on Rights of Disabled Persons has been open for signature and many countries adopt active attitude towards the convention. By the end of December 2007, 118 countries had signed the convention and seven ratified it, but the U.S. has not yet signed nor ratified it.

To respect and safeguard human rights is an important achievement in the progressing of the human society and an important symbol of modern civilization. It is also a common goal of people of all countries and races and a key theme of the tide of progress in our time. All the countries have the obligation to make efforts to promote and protect human rights in their own territories, and to promote international cooperation in accordance with the norms of international relations. No country in the world should view itself as the incarnation of human rights, and use human rights as a tool to interfere in affairs of and exert pressure on other countries and realize its own strategic interests. The United States reigns over other countries and releases Country Reports on Human Rights Practices year after year. Its arrogant critique on the human rights of other countries are always accompanied by a deliberate ignoring of serious human rights problems on its own territory. This was not only inconsistent with universally recognized norms of international relations, but also exposed the double standards and downright hypocrisy of the United States on the human rights issue, and inevitably impaired its international image.

We hereby advise the U.S. government to face its own human rights problems and give up the unwise practices of applying double standards on human rights issues.