

US Human Rights Record in 2000

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Contents

- I. American Democracy - a Myth, Political Rights Infringed
- II. Rampant Violence and Arbitrary Judicial System Are Jeopardizing the freedom and lives of US citizens
- III. Widening Gap Between Rich and Poor and Deteriorating Situation of Worker's Economic and Social Rights
- IV. Gender Discrimination & Ill-treatment of Children
- V. Racial Discrimination Prevails, Minorities Ill-Treated
- VI. Waging War Frequently and Rampantly Infringing Upon Human Rights of Other Countries

I. American Democracy - a Myth, Political Rights Infringed

By elevating itself to a model of democracy, the United States continuously hawks American-style democracy to other countries. Under the pretext of safeguarding this kind of democracy, the United States continues to make rash criticism of other countries and interferes in their internal affairs.

Nevertheless, well-informed people know that the so-called democracy has been a myth since the United States was founded@than 200 years ago. Political rights of the US citizens have long been infringed.

Although the US Constitution, adopted in 1787, stipulates the citizen's right to vote, the right to vote for every American, regardless of race, color or creed, was not implemented in law until 184 years later.

Owing to discrimination based on race, gender, property, education, age and residency, the African Americans, women and American Indians as well as roughly one-third of white American males were long deprived of their legal right to vote. The African Americans, women and American Indians gained voting rights in 1870, 1920 and 1948 respectively.

In addition, the voter eligibility limitations connected to property, poll tax and low education levels were removed in 1856, 1964 and 1970 respectively.

In 1971, nearly 200 years after the founding of the United States, the federal legislature approved the 26th Amendment to the Constitution, stipulating that age cannot be a legitimate reason for depriving any American of his or her right to vote, and setting the legal voting age at 18. This marked the beginning of universal voter's rights.

Although every American 18 or older is legally guaranteed the right to vote, voter turnout in America has remained at a comparatively low level. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the voter turnouts for elections for the House of Representatives have been ranged between 30 and 60 percent.

Meanwhile, the highest voter turnout rate in the history of presidential elections, which have been touted as major US political events, stands at 65 percent.

Under US law, any presidential candidate who wins the majority of votes wins the election. Over the years, President-elects only won 35 percent of all the electorate or less.

The voter turnout rate for the 1996 general election was only 49 percent, and only 25 percent of registered voters nationwide voted for president. Thus, the results of US general elections has not represented the will of the entire people or the majority.

The 2000 presidential election further exposed the inherent flaws of the US electoral system. The two candidates, separately representing the Democratic and Republican parties, filed lawsuit after lawsuit on the counts and recounts of ballots in Florida and engaged in non-stop partisan bickering.

Some organizations even issued commemorative coins for the election turmoil. The 2000 general election was accompanied by civil demonstrations and protests.

In line with the electoral system in the election law which has been carried out for more than 200 years, electoral votes ultimately decide which candidate will win.

The 50 million voters who cast ballots for president represented less than one-fourth of the 205 million eligible voters nationwide, an all-time low in US election history.

Since the right to vote is evidently meaningless to the majority of eligible voters, the myth of American democracy was further exposed.

The Associated Press reported, "Some were shocked that a nation often held as a model of democracy could also stumble."

American democracy has always been a game for rich people. In the United States where politics is highly commercialized, any bidder for official post needs to spend a significant amount of money to win. No presidential or congressional candidate will go far without financial backing.

The general election in 2000 cost about US\$3 billion, 50 percent more than that in 1996 and setting a record.

The congressional races in various states cost another US\$1 billion. While not forbidding political donations, US law sets upper limits on donations from individuals to candidates, political commissions and parties, but allows any amount of "soft" donations from companies or trade unions to political parties.

The soft money collected by various parties and candidates in 2000 reached 648 million dollars, four times the amount of four years ago.

During the election campaign, at least 20 donors spent more than one million dollars each. Actress Jane Fonda gave a US\$12 million check for supporting a new pro-abortion group.

Business circles also spent vast sums lobbying congressional members and powerful officials.

In the 18 months before June 30, 2000, 18 British companies spent roughly 30 million dollars, and the National Rifle Association, together with firearms manufacturers, funneled several billion dollars into Capitol Hill, lobbying congressional members to oppose to restrictions on gun sales and possession. As a result, gun control legislation did not pass.

The British newspaper Financial Times said in an article on October 25, 2000, that the political system in the United States is decaying to a point where even American voters can smell the stink of money. The election made it clear that American democracy could be sold to the highest bidders, the newspaper said.

The top spender in the congressional campaign in 2000, Jon Corzine in New Jersey, spent more than US\$60 million to win his Senate seat. He set a new record for campaign spending and his race against Republican Bob Franks was the most expensive Senate election in history.

According to an Associate Press analysis of Federal Election Commission data which was released on November 9, 2000, 81 percent of year 2000 Senate winners and 96 percent of House winners outspent their opponents.

The AP analysis found 26 of 32 Senate races and 417 of 433 House races won by the candidate with the most money to spend as of October 18, the last date for which figures were available. Larry Makinson, executive director of the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that studies money and campaigns, said, "The depressing thing about American democracy is I can check the fund-raising balances at the Federal Election Commission and tell you what the election results will be before the election."

Thus, the key to American democracy is money, which directly impacts the election results. A Spanish daily, El Mundo, referred to money as the "cancer of American democracy." No other country has seen cancer as disastrous as that in the United States, the newspaper said.

Freedom of the press in the United States is also influenced by money. Wealthy people have the power to manipulate mass media, which can serve as their mouthpieces.

If it can gain financially, the American establishment will turn a deaf ear to international covenants. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, any dissemination on advocating war or ethnic and religious hatred among peoples must be prohibited by law in any country.

However, ignoring the international covenant and universal practice in many countries, the United States has sold or allowed sales of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" since 1933.

During World War II, the United States took in more than US\$20,000 worth of tax from sales of the book. For the next 34 years, the US Department of Justice collected taxes from book sales amounting to US\$139,000.

After buying the book's copyright in 1979, the US publisher Houghton Mifflin continued to sell the book. Experts estimated that the publishing house has sold at least 300,000 copies, netting profits worth between 300,000 and US\$700,000.

II. Rampant Violence and Arbitrary Judicial System Are Jeopardizing the freedom and lives of US citizens

The United States, the only country where carrying a private weapon is a constitutional right, is a society ridden with violence.

The United States is the world's number one "gun nation" with more than 200 million private guns, or nearly one for each American.

The number of registered weapon vendors in the country exceeds 100,000, more than the total number of overseas outlets of fast food giant MacDonald's.

A tracking investigation of 70,000 guns conducted annually by a US agency has shown that about 50,000 of them were used in assaults, and the rest turned up in criminal investigations: 5,000 were used in murders, 5,000 for assaults, several thousand were used in thefts and robberies, and some were used in drug-related assault incidents.

The excessive number of privately owned guns has resulted in countless gun-related assaults, resulting in tragedy for many innocent people:

On February 29, 2000, a six-year-old boy in the state of Michigan killed a girl, one of his classmates.

On April 18 that year, a man in suburban Detroit, who became angry when his neighbors complained about him, fired on the office of the apartment complex, leaving three women dead or injured.

At the night of April 24, seven children were senselessly slaughtered by a gunman at the Washington National Zoo.

On December 28, four masked gunmen broke into a home in Philadelphia fatally shooting seven people and injuring three.

This year on January 9, a gunman killed three people in Houston, Texas, and on February 5, another gunman killed four people and injured four others at a factory near Chicago.

Statistics have shown that over 31,000 people in the United States are killed by guns each year, and over 80 people are killed in gun-related incidents every day.

Police brutality is not uncommon in the United States.

Each year, thousands of allegations of police abuse are filed across the country, but relatively few police officers who violate the law are held accountable.

Victims seeking redress faced obstacles that ranged from overt intimidation to the reluctance of local and federal prosecutors to take on police brutality cases.

During 1999, about 12,000 civil rights complaints, most alleging police abuse, were submitted to the US Department of Justice, but over the same period just 31 officers confessed or were convicted.

The judicial system in the US is extremely unfair, with the death penalty exercised in 38 of the 50 US states.

By July 1, 2000, there were 3,682 people on death row in the nation, 90 percent of whom had been victims of sexual abuse and assault.

Most of them had to rely on officially appointed lawyers as they were too poor to pay for their own attorneys.

After reviewing the 5,760 death penalty cases over a period of 23 years starting 1973 in the US, a team of Columbia University professors revealed on June 12, 2000 that 68 percent of the death penalty sentences in the country did not fit the crimes.

They said that on average more than two of every three death penalty sentences were overturned on appeal.

The rate of erroneous judgment on death penalty in the state of Florida was 73 percent, while the figures rose to as high as 100 percent in the states of Kentucky, Maryland and Tennessee, said the professors.

A total of 660 people have been executed since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976 by the Supreme Court of the United States; 500 people were executed in the past eight years.

In 2000, over 70 people were executed, accounting for 11 percent of the total.

The United States violates international conventions by convicting and executing juvenile and mentally retarded offenders, and failing to provide defendants facing execution with competent attorneys.

Thirty mentally retarded people have been executed in the United States in the past decade.

Citing figures from the US Department of Justice, the American newspaper USA Today reported in its August 8 edition that about 6.3 million men and women in the US were on probation or parole, or were in jail or prison at the end of 1999.

The figure represents 3 percent of the adult population of the United States. The "correctional population" increased 2.7 percent from 1998 and 44.6 percent from 1990, according to the newspaper.

Under US law, those who are serving prison terms and former inmates out on probation or parole are disenfranchised, and one quarter of the states denied the right to vote of those who had served their sentences.

It is estimated that over one million Americans who have finished serving their sentences are deprived of their right to vote.

A report of a US judicial policy research institute showed that more than two million men and women were behind bars by February 15, 2000, up 75 percent from the 1.14 million reported 11 years ago, accounting for one-quarter of the total across the world, and ranking first in the world.

The US Department of Justice also revealed in August 2000 that the rate of incarceration had reached 690 inmates per 100,000 residents by the end of 1999, also the highest in the world. The state of Louisiana took the lead with 736 inmates per 100,000.

Despite huge spending that far exceeds the federal budget for education, US prisons are overcrowded, prison violence is rampant and prisoners are badly treated.

Statistics show that in 1998, 59 inmates in the US were killed by other inmates, and assaults, fights, and rapes injured 6,750 inmates and 2,331 prison staff.

Estimates by non-governmental groups in the state of California have shown that over 10,000 sexual assaults occur daily in US prisons, and male inmates are sexually assaulted by their roommates. In the most extreme cases, the raped inmates were literally the slaves of the perpetrators, being "rented out" for sex, "sold," or even auctioned off to other inmates.

Despite the devastating psychological impact of such abuse, perpetrators were rarely punished adequately.

A report released in September 2000 by the US Department of Justice said an "institutional culture that supports and promotes abuses" was in place in US prisons.

Frequent reports of physical abuse by prison guards include brutal beatings by officers and officers paying inmates to beat other inmates.

At Wallens Ridge State Prison, Virginia's super-maximum security prison, 50,000-volt stun guns were often used against inmates.

The Virginia Department of Corrections reported that between January 1999 and June 2000, prison guards at Red Onion State Prison, Virginia's super-max security prison, shot a total of 116 blank rounds and 25 stinger rounds of rubber bullets and discharged stun guns on 130 separate occasions.

At Corcoran State Prison in California, eight prison guards drove a group of inmates to a small playground for a wrestling match that resulted in several deaths.

Over 20,000 inmates were placed in solitary confinement in special maximum security facilities, where they were locked alone in small and sometimes windowless cells and released for only a few hours each week.

They were handcuffed, shackled and escorted by officers whenever they left their cells.

At Wisconsin's new super-maximum prisons, inmates were subjected to round-the-clock confinement in isolation, subject to constant fluorescent lighting in their cells and 24-hour video monitoring.

III. Widening Gap Between Rich and Poor and Deteriorating Situation of Worker's Economic and Social Rights

The latter part of the 20th century was the most economically prosperous period in US history, with the economic growth rate rising steadily 118 months by the end of 2000.

However, the gap between the rich and poor widened and the living standards of the laborers went from bad to worse. Pressing issues such as poverty, hunger and homelessness proved difficult to solve.

The gap between the rich and poor in the United States grew at the same pace as the economic growth. Statistics show that the richest 1 percent of the US citizens own 40 percent of the total property of the country, while 80 percent of US citizens own just 16 percent.

Since the 1990s, 40 percent of the increased wealth went into the pockets of the rich minority, while only 1 percent went to the poor majority.

From 1977 to 1999, the after-tax income of the richest 20 percent of American families increased by 43 percent, while that of the poorest 20 percent decreased 9 percent, allowing for inflation. The actual income of those living on the lowest salaries was even less than 30 years ago.

An article in the February 21, 2000 issue of US News and World Report pointed out that the average income of the richest 5 percent of families in 1979 was 10 times of that of the poorest 20 percent of families. In 1999, the income gap had been enlarged to 19 times, ranking first among the developed countries, and setting a record since the Bureau of Census of the United States began studying the situation in 1947.

The income of the executives of the largest US companies in 1992 was 100 times that of ordinary workers, and 475 times higher in 2000.

According to an assessment by the US journal Business Week in August 2000, the income of chief executive officers was 84 times that of employees in 1990, 140 times in 1995, and 416 times in 1999.

A survey shows that the real income of the one-fifth richest of the families in Silicon Valley has increased 29 percent since 1992, while the real income of the one-fifth poorest of the families in the valley decreased during most of the 1990s, and the current income for the poorest has bounced back to the same level in 1992, with the employees at the lowest rank now earning 10 percent less than a decade ago.

A great number of Americans suffer from poverty and hunger. According to the statistics of the US government, over 32 million citizens, or 12.7 percent of the total population of the country, live under the poverty line. The incidence of poverty is higher than in the 1970s, and higher than in most other industrialized countries.

An investigation by the US Department of Agriculture in March 2000 showed that 9.7 percent of American families did not have enough food, and at least 10 percent of families in 18 states and Washington D.C. often suffered from hunger and malnutrition.

In 1998, 37 million American families did not have enough food. In the state of New Mexico, 15.1 percent of the families were under threat of hunger.

The number of homeless Americans has continued to increase. A study in the mid-1990s showed that 12 million US citizens were or had been at some time homeless. According to a survey of 26 large cities conducted by the Conference of Mayors, the urgent demand for housing increased in two-thirds of the cities in 1999 over previous years.

A report in The New York Times of July 9, 2000, said that housing in New York was in the shortest supply of recent decades. More than 130,000 families in the city were waiting for public housing at that time, and homeless shelters sometimes had to receive 5,000 families and 7,000 individuals for a night.

Serious infringements upon worker's rights have been reported. Compared with other developed countries, the working hours of laborers in the United States are the longest, while their social security benefits and rights are the worst. According to a report in US News and World Report in March 2000, the average working time of US citizens was 1,957 hours annually, longer than in other developed countries.

In Manhattan, about 75 percent of the people with high-level education aged between 25 and 32 years old work more than 40 hours a week. In 1977, only 55 percent of the people worked the same amount of time.

A newly published book in the United States said that some female cashiers and workers on production lines have to wear protective undergarments because they are not allowed to take time to go to the toilet.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions submitted a report to the World Trade Organization in July of 1999, saying that the rights to organize and strike were not guaranteed in US labor laws.

When employers decide to break up or prevent the establishment of trade unions, laborers have no legal redress. Only 13 percent of US workers have joined trade unions.

More than 7 million of the 14 million functionaries in the state and local governments have no right to collective negotiation, not to mention the right to strike.

Millions of workers, including farm laborers, domestic workers, and low-level supervisors, were explicitly excluded from protection under the law guaranteeing the right of workers to organize.

In the 1950s, hundreds of workers were retaliated by employers for exercising their right for association. By the 1990s, the number climbed to 20,000.

Worker's rights and social security cannot be guaranteed for U. S. workers. A study by the US Department of Energy in 2000 showed that the incidence of cancer among workers in nuclear weapons production was much higher than workers in other industries due to exposure to harmful radiation and chemical substances.

Since the end of World War II, 22 forms of cancer have been diagnosed among the 600,000 workers in 14 nuclear plants in California, Washington and other states; this incidence rate was several times that found in ordinary factories.

The US government treads lightly on this issue until it was exposed by media in recent years. Under public pressure, the US government had to acknowledge the mistake.

About 30 million US citizens had no social security eight years ago, and the figure has increased to 46 million currently. The British newspaper Financial Times reported on October 25, 2000, that 12.3 percent of US citizens had no medical insurance 20 years ago, and the rate has increased to 15.8 percent now, or one out of every six Americans.

The education situation in the United States is surprisingly poor. According to a report in USA Today on November 29, 2000, illiteracy is still a serious problem in such a highly developed country.

One in five high school graduates cannot read his or her diploma; 85 percent of unwed mothers are illiterate; 70 percent of Americans arrested are illiterate; 21 million Americans cannot read.

According to a child protection foundation, 71 percent of fourth graders are not at the education level they ought to be. College tuition has grown faster than the increase of middle class families' income. The dropout rate among college students has risen to 37 percent.

Statistics from the US Census Bureau show that the income of middle class families increased only 10 percent from 1989 to 1999, while the college tuition increased 51 percent during the same period. The average college tuition in 1999 was 8,086 US dollars, accounting for 62 percent of the income of low-income families.

The average tuition fee of private colleges was 21,339 US dollars in 1999, up 34 percent over 1989, accounting for 162 percent of the income of poor families, but only making up for four percent of the income of rich families. More than 30 million low-income families could not afford to send their children to community colleges.

IV. Gender Discrimination & Ill-treatment of Children

Gender discrimination is widespread in almost every aspect of US society. American women have not yet enjoyed equal constitutional rights compared to men. Women in the United States not only have weak voice in politics, but also are discriminated in terms of employment, job status and wages. The labor protection standards for women are below the international norms, and sexual violence, sexual harassment and domestic violence against women are also rampant in the United States.

Reuters reported on March 22, 2000, that as many as 1,100 women have joined a class action gender discrimination lawsuit, which was initiated by five women in 1978, against the US Information Agency and Voice of America on 48 charges involving job discrimination because of gender. Following an investigation, the court discovered that the human resource departments of the defendants had purposely overlooked female candidates through deceptive means such as revising test results and selecting beforehand. It was not until 2000 that the US government was forced to accept an out-of-court settlement and paid US\$508 million in compensation after 46 out of 48 charges were upheld by the court. The breadth and depth of gender discrimination in the US can be seen from this case, which involved the highest compensation for such a case since 1964.

A report released in November 2000 by an American institute studying policy on women showed that women are paid an average of 26 percent less than their male colleagues.

The number of female prisoners has been increasing markedly in the United States, and they often are the victims of various abuses. Since 1980, the number of prisoners in the United States has tripled, while that of the female prisoners has quadrupled. A report released by the US government in December 1999 showed that accusations against jail officers of sexual abuse and other negligent behavior are widespread and criminal prosecution of prison guards for abuse of power has been on the rise.

The following major cases have been reported since December 1999:

-- Eleven guards and one officer at a county jail were accused of sexual assault and sexual harassment by 16 female inmates;

-- a jail guard in New Mexico was convicted of sexual assault;

-- a prison officer in New York was sentenced to three years imprisonment with probation for raping two female inmates;

-- a prison officer in Ohio was sentenced to four years of imprisonment for conviction of sexual assault of three female inmates;

-- Some female inmates at a prison in New York disclosed that a number of female inmates were raped and even some of them gave birth to babies in their cells.

The majority of the female prisoners who have been sexually assaulted cannot get access to adequate legal protection. The state of Michigan stipulates explicitly that prisoners are not protected by civil rights laws.

Quite a number of women and children have been smuggled to the United States who are subject to slavery and torture. According to a report released by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in November 1999, as many as 50,000 women and children are smuggled from Asia, Latin

America and Eastern Europe to the United States every year. They are often forced to become prostitutes or ill-treated workers and servants, the youngest of whom are aged nine. Despite as many as 100,000 women and children were smuggled to the country in recent two years, only 250 of whom are listed as the victims of relevant cases. The New York Times reported on April 2, 2000 that in 1999, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service conducted an investigation in 26 cities and found smuggled women in 250 brothels. An article carried on the "Insight" weekly in December 2000 revealed that the human trafficking and the sexual slave trade has become the third largest illegal trade in terms of business volume in the United States, following drugs and arms smuggling. An incomplete statistics showed that criminal rings in the United States earn US\$7 billion from human trafficking annually.

Children in the United States live under worrying conditions, and they are often the major victims of violence and as many as 5,000 children are shot fatally annually. The percentage of gunshot victims under age 14 is 21 times that of 25 other industrialized countries. Some 1.5 million children, or two percent of the country's total, have one or both parents in prison. The United States, one of five countries that have the death penalty for juveniles, has the highest number of juveniles sentenced to death in the world. Twenty-five states of the country give death penalty to juveniles, four of which set the lowest age for the death penalty at 17 years and the other 21 states set 16 years as the bottom line or have no age limit at all. Since 1990, 14 juvenile criminals have been executed in the United States, and in the first seven months of 2000, four juvenile criminals were put to death, more than the figure of other countries combined in the past seven years. By October 2000, 83 juvenile criminals, who were under 18 when their crimes were committed were waiting to be executed. The US Department of Justice released a report on February 27, 2000, indicating that from 1985 to 1997, the inmates under age 18 in adult prisons more than doubled from 3,400 to 7,400; and 90 percent of juvenile criminals were high school dropouts. To date, more than 100,000 children are incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities and many of them are subject to brutal treatment.

Many children in the United States are threatened by poverty. According to an investigation conducted by the UNICEF, the poverty rate of children in the United States ranks second among the 29 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In 1998, the poverty rate of American children hit 18.7 percent, 2.5 percent higher than that of 1979. To date, as many as 13 million children live in poverty, three million more than the figure of 1979.

Reuters reported on January 20, 2000, that children in 15.2 percent of the families in the US are starving, and that children aged below six years in 16.3 percent of households don't have enough food. About one million immigrant children who do not hold US citizenship are not covered by the medical insurance system. More than one million children in the country live on the streets, 40 percent of whom are under 5, 20 percent suffer from hunger, 20 percent are not covered by the medical insurance system, 10 percent have seen murders, shootings, rapes and violence, and 25 percent have experienced domestic violence.

In the United States, at least 290,000 children are working in factories, mines and farms where working conditions are dangerous. Children working on farms often have to work 20 hours a day

and run the risk of pesticide poisoning, injury and permanent disability. They account for 8 percent of the country's total child workers, while the job-related deaths among them make up 40 percent of the country's total occupational death toll. Among these child farm laborers, merely 55 percent have graduated from high school. It is estimated that there are one million cases of human rights violations against these child farm workers in the United States every year; yet the US Labor Department listed only 104 such cases in 1998.

V. Racial Discrimination Prevails, Minorities Ill-Treated

Racial discrimination in the US has a long history and is well known throughout the world; it stands as one of the most serious social problems in the United States.

A US report on implementation of the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination submitted to the United Nations in September 2000 admitted that racism exists as one of the most daunting challenges facing the US.

The minorities in the United States have been called the "Third World of the First World."

Racial discrimination is evident everywhere in America. The Washington Post reported on February 3, 2000, that even in large US cities, few residential areas are actually racially integrated.

In the 1990s, the actual earnings of high-income families increased by 15 percent on average; however, the rich-poor gap between whites and minorities remained unchanged.

A survey made by the US Federal Reserve in March 2000 indicated that in 1998 the average net wealth of a middle-income family of Latin Americans, African Americans, or other minorities stood at US\$16,400, equal to just 17.28 percent of that of a white family. The percentage was basically unchanged compared with 1992's 17.23 percent.

In 1998, 72.2 percent of the white families owned their own homes while the proportions for African American and Latin American families were only 46.4 percent and 44.9 percent respectively.

Even worse, nearly two million aboriginals were living on streets of big cities in the United States and 40 percent of them went without food for up to three days at a time. They are the poorest people in the world's richest country.

The Christian Science Monitor reported in May 2000 that immigrant families account for over one-fifth of the US poverty-stricken population and one-fourth of the total number of poor children. Among the immigrants in the US, over nine million, or 43 percent of the total, do not have medical insurance. In contrast, 12 percent of white people do not have medical insurance, according to a research report released last year by the Journal of American Medical Association.

The report also indicated that 41 percent of white youths could receive higher education while the rate for young Latin Americans was only 22 percent.

The discrimination against minorities is deeply rooted in America. The unemployment rate among African Americans is double that of whites.

An investigation made in 1996 indicated that 90 percent of the chief executives or managers of US companies have never given any black people the same status and responsibilities.

Computer giant Microsoft had a staff of over 20,000 in the US in 1999; only 557 of them were African Americans. The number accounted for 2.6 percent of the company's total employees. The company has 5,155 mid-level administrative personnel and only 82 people, or 1.6 percent, are African Americans.

A report in USA Today in 2000 said that charges of sexual harassment on immigrated workers had witnessed a fast increase, up 10 times from 1986 to 1999. About 2,200 cases were reported in the 1980s, while the figure became 15,150 in the 1990s.

Racial discrimination has also emerged as a very serious problem in the courts. A total of 98 percent of the judges in the US are white while most of the people receiving prison terms or the death sentence are blacks or other minorities.

Twelve percent of the US population are African American; nearly half of the two million prison inmates in the US are black, and another 16 percent are Latin American.

Black men are eight times more likely to be in prison than white men, with an incarceration rate of 3,408 per 100,000 black males compared to the rate of 417 per 100,000 white males. In 11 states, the incarceration rate of African American men is from 12-26 times greater than that of white men.

The US Department of Justice estimated that 9.4 percent of all black men at the age of 25-29 years were in prison in 1999, compared to one percent of white men in the same age group.

Also in 1999, the juveniles belonging to minority groups constituted one-third of the adolescent population in the United States, but they comprised two-thirds of the young people confined in local detention and state correctional systems. One of every three young black people were confined in juvenile facilities or out on bail.

An investigation funded by the Justice Department indicated that the number of young black inmates jailed on first offenses is six times higher than that of white youths. Among the violent crime cases, the number of incarcerated black youths is nine times higher than that of the white youths.

Fifteen percent of juveniles under 18 are black; while among the confined people of the same age group, 26 percent are African American.

Among youths held in adult prison facilities, 58 percent are black. The likelihood of conviction for black youths is much higher than that for whites.

In California, children of color are 6.2 times more likely than white youths to be charged with crimes, and seven times more likely to be sentenced to prison when they are tried as adults. The proportion of black men sent to state prisons on drug charges to the state's total population is 13.4 times greater than that of white men. The number of black youths sent to correctional facilities for drug offenses is 48 times higher than that for whites.

In at least 15 states, the number of African American men sent to prison on drug charges is 20 to 57 times more often than white men. In seven states, 80 to 90 percent of all drug offenders are black men.

Although the majority of crack cocaine users are white, almost 90 percent of convicted federal drug offenders are black.

In the 200-plus years since the US was founded, a total of 18,000 people have been sentenced to death; only 38 of them were white, accounting for 0.2 percent of the total. No white man has ever been sentenced to death for raping a black woman.

Between 1977 and 1998, African Americans comprised 10 to 12 percent of the total US population. However, out of the 5,709 people sentenced to death, 41 percent were black.

A report from the Department of Justice issued on September 12, 2000, acknowledged that in the past five years, lawyers proposed to sentence 183 offenders to death, 20 percent of them were whites, nearly half of them were blacks, around 30 percent were Latin Americans and the rest of were other minorities.

Of all death penalty sentences upheld by the US federal courts since 1995, the number of colored people accounts for 74 percent. The ratio of African American and white murder victims was almost the same; however, since 1997, 82 percent of the total number executed were African Americans who had murdered white people.

VI. Waging War Frequently and Rampantly Infringing Upon Human Rights of Other Countries

The United States, assuming an air of self-importance and practicing power politics in the world, has done a great deal of damage by encroaching on human rights in other countries.

The United States has, over a long period of time, built many military bases over the world. Hundreds of thousands of US troops stationed in these bases have committed a series of crimes

that violated the human rights of local residents. Such acts by the US troops have occurred frequently since 2000 and numerous scandals have been exposed.

In 1995 a Japanese schoolgirl was raped by three American soldiers stationed at Okinawa, sparking a massive protest by the Japanese people. Following this incident, a serviceman with the U. S. Marine Aircraft Group at Futenma Air Station was imprisoned for allegedly attempting to rape a Japanese woman in the city of Okinawa on January 14, 2000. That same month, three servicemen of the US Navy in southern Nagasaki sexually harassed two 15-year-old Japanese girls; on January 9 this year, a seaman of the US Navy sexually assaulted a 16-year-old Japanese girl in Okinawa.

On January 13, 2000, a US soldier on peacekeeping duty in Kosovo raped and killed an Albanian girl. The incident aroused strong indignation from Albanians in Kosovo. In July last year, Green Korea United, an environmental protection group of the Republic of Korea (ROK), revealed that the American military base in Seoul discharged embalming fluid used for its servicemen into the Han River. The group reported that since 1991 another US military base in ROK has discharged waste oil into a local river, which is the source of drinking water for 210,000 local people. The actions of the American troops seriously polluted the local environment and endangered the health of local people.

A Cuban newspaper reported on November 6, 2000, that an environmental group found more than 50 areas in some island countries such as Fiji and Kiribati that had been seriously polluted by dangerous refuse. All of the material has been traced back to US military interests or other interests of the US

The acting vice-minister of foreign affairs of Panama revealed on July 24, 2000, that during its nearly 100-year occupation of the Panama Canal, the US has stationed troops in the area, and numerous Panamanian women were used and cast away by American soldiers, leaving hundreds of thousands of fatherless children. When the US troops withdrew from the Panama Canal area at the end of 1999, they left behind 700 pregnant women in Panama and Colon provinces alone.

The United States butts into the internal affairs of other countries and cultivates its influence in secrecy, infringing upon human rights in other countries. The US Department of Defense launched a research institute for safety cooperation in the western hemisphere, while the predecessor of the institution is Escola Das Americas affiliated with the US Army Forces, which is famous for training Latin American and Caribbean troops to torture suspects, carry out secret executions and mail threatening letters to political dissidents. The school, described by international human rights organizations as a training base for "dictators, hangmen and assassins," trained 56,000 people during the period between 1946 when it was first established, and December of 2000 when it was closed.

The school also trained numerous personnel for various purposes. Many notorious human rights violators and ringleaders of criminal gangs are graduates of this school, and nearly all of the

major massacre cases in the Latin America and Caribbean areas have connections with these graduates.

A terrorist organization formed by graduates of the Escola Das Americas slaughtered 767 innocent villagers in a remote area of Columbia in 1981. Among those murdered were people over age 90 and less than two months old.

Nearly 10 years have passed since the end of the Cold War. Peace and development are now the common aspirations of people the world over.

However, the United States, as the only remaining superpower, has yet to relinquish its Cold War mentality. It stations troops abroad, boosts military spending, sells ammunition to other countries and regions, and rattles its sabers around the world. The US has become a major threat to world peace and stability, and infringes upon the sovereignty and human rights of other countries.

A report released by the US Department of State and the US Congressional Research and Service Bureau said that the US military spending and ammunition exports rank first in the world: Its military expenses account for one-third of the world's total and exports of ammunitions amount to 36 percent of the global total. Its military spending budget for 2001 increased by US\$12.6 billion compared with the US\$200 billion for 2000.

Incomplete statistics show that the United States has waged wars in foreign countries and regions more than 40 times in the 1990s. The country uses cluster bombs and depleted uranium shells, which are banned by international law, and new weapons of mass destruction in foreign countries, killing and injuring local people and also wreaking havoc on the eco-environment in these places.

Reports say that US troops tested depleted uranium (DU) weapons in shooting ranges in Panama 30 years ago. The US army dropped 940,000 DU bombs in Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War. About 10,000 DU bombs were dropped by the US army during the 1994-1995 Bosnia-Herzegovina war. The US army also tested DU weapons in military maneuvers in Japan's Okinawa in 1995 and 1996. In 1999, the US army used more than 31,000 DU bombs in 112 locations in Yugoslavia. The number of cancer patients has increased by 30 percent in Yugoslavia due to DU radiation, and at least 10,000 civilians have died of radiation. About 40 out of some 80 babies born in two months in a Bulgarian town adjacent to Yugoslavia have suffered from physical deformities. A number of European soldiers and civilians once served in Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia including Kosovo have contracted "Balkan Syndrome," and at least 27 of them have died.

The UN Environmental Program has analyzed samples collected in Yugoslavia and confirmed that they contain radioactive substances, according to a spokesman for the UN secretary-general. Although it is well known that uranium is a sort of radioactive heavy metal, the United States refuses to admit that DU is harmful to human health, and prevents other countries and

international organizations from investigating the matter. It even refuses to stop using DU bombs. Currently, the US troops stationed in Kosovo are still equipped with DU weapons.

In fact, the United States has long since had full knowledge of the harm brought by DU weapons. Before the breakout of the Gulf War in July 1990, a test panel affiliated with the US army pointed out in a report that the explosion of DU bombs would produce strong Alfa radiation that is cancer-inducing, and soldiers carrying out tasks in DU weapon-stricken areas must take preventive measures. However, in the same area, the local residents had not received any notice from the US army and they thus became victims of DU bombs.

The United States has always adopted a passive attitude towards international human rights conventions. Although the United States was a founding member of the UN, it did not accede to any key international human rights convention until 1988 when it joined the convention the Convention on The Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. That is to say, the United States did not ratify the treaty until 40 years after it was signed. In addition, it did not ratified the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights for 28 years and 15 years respectively after it signed them. The United States still has not ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, although it signed it 24 years ago. The United States is one of the only two countries in the world that have not acceded to the International Convention on Children's Rights, and one of several countries that have not joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The United States has always opposed the right to development as a human right, and it is the only western country that has voted against the Declaration on the Right to Development. Although it is a founding member of the Organization of American States, it refuses to accede to the Human Rights Convention of America and other human rights conventions approved by the organization. As for the international conventions it has already signed, the United States has always ensured that the enforcement of the conventions is strictly limited to within the scope of the US constitution and laws, or let them only apply to the federation instead of states, by making reservations, declarations and allowances for them. In this way, the United States has reduced the international conventions into nothing but empty rhetoric.

Actions speak louder than words, and the public champions justice. The promotion of human rights is the common task of all nations in the world. The United States not only closes its eyes to its own serious human rights problems, but also releases the "Human Rights Report" annually to condemn other countries' human rights records. All these realities have exposed the true face of the United States, showing it to be a defender of power politics rather than human rights.

China would like to offer this advice to the US government: abandon your old ways and make a new start, take effective measures to improve the human rights record in your own country, take steps to promote international cooperation in human rights, and stop ordering other countries on the pretext of safeguarding human rights.