

# Human Rights Record of United States in 2011

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(China Daily)

Editor's note: The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China published a report titled "The Human Rights Record of the United States in 2011" on Friday. Following is the full text:



**Occupy Seattle protesters, an off-shoot of the Occupy Wall Street movement, scuffle with police officers during a May Day rally and anti-capitalist march in Seattle. Stuart Isett / Bloomberg**

The State Department of the United States released its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011 on May 24, 2012. As in previous years, the reports are full of over-critical remarks on the human rights situation in nearly 200 countries and regions as well as distortions and accusations concerning the human rights cause in China. However, the United States turned a blind eye to its own woeful human rights situation and kept silent about it. The Human Rights Record of the United States in 2011 is hereby prepared to reveal the true human rights situation of the United States to people across the world and urge the United States to face up to its own doings.

**I.**

## **On life, property and personal security**

The United States has mighty strength in human, financial and material resources to exert effective control over violent crimes. However, its society is chronically suffering from violent crimes, and its citizens' lives, properties and personal security are in lack of proper protection.

A report published by the US Department of Justice on Sept 15, 2011, revealed that in 2010 the US residents aged 12 and above experienced 3.8 million violent victimizations, 1.4 million serious violent victimizations, 14.8 million property victimizations and 138,000 personal thefts. The violent victimization rate was 15 victimizations per 1,000 residents (www.bjs.gov). The crime rate surged in many cities and regions in the United States. In the southern region of the United States, there were 452 violent crimes and 3,438.8 property crimes per 100,000 inhabitants (in 2010) on average (The Wall Street Journal, Sept 20, 2011). Just four weeks into 2011, San Francisco saw eight homicides - compared with five during the same time of the previous year, with Oakland racking up 11, when the previous year in the same period it had four (The San Francisco Chronicle, Jan 29, 2011). Grand larcenies in the subway in New York City increased from 852 in 2010 to 1,075 cases in the first nine months of 2011, a 25 percent jump (The China Press, Sept 24, 2011). Homicide cases in Detroit in 2011 saw a 13.5 percent rise over 2010 (www.buzzle.com). Between January and October 2011, a

total of 123,924 serious crime cases took place in Chicago ([portal.chicagopolice.org](http://portal.chicagopolice.org)). An anti-bullying public service announcement declared in January 2011 that more than six million schoolchildren experienced bullying in the previous six months (CNN, Mar 10, 2011). According to statistics from the Family First Aid, almost 30 percent of teenagers in the United States are estimated to be involved in school bullying ([www.familyfirstaid.org](http://www.familyfirstaid.org)).

The United States prioritizes the right to keep and bear arms over the protection of citizens' lives and personal security and exercises lax firearm possession control, causing rampant gun ownership. The US people hold between 35 percent and 50 percent of the world's civilian-owned guns, with every 100 people having 90 guns (Online edition of the Foreign Policy, Jan 9, 2011). According to a Gallup poll in October 2011, 47 percent of American adults reported that they had a gun. That was an increase of six percentage points from a year ago and the highest Gallup had recorded since 1993. Fifty-two percent of middle-aged adults, aged between 35 and 54, reported to own guns, and the adults' gun ownership in the south region was 54 percent (The China Press, Oct 28, 2011). The New York Times reported on Nov 14, 2011, that since 1995, more than 3,300 felons and people convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors had regained their gun rights in the state of Washington and of that number, more than 400 had subsequently committed new crimes, including shooting and other felonies (The New York Times, Nov 14, 2011).

The United States is the leader among the world's developed countries in gun violence and gun deaths. According to a report of the Foreign Policy on Jan 9, 2011, over 30,000 Americans die every year from gun violence and another 200,000 Americans are estimated to be injured each year due to guns (Online edition of the Foreign Policy, Jan 9, 2011). According to statistics released by the US Department of Justice, among the 480,760 robbery cases and 188,380 rape and sexual assault cases in 2010, the rates of victimization involving firearms were 29 percent and 7 percent, respectively ([www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov)). On Jun 2, 2011, a shooting rampage in Arizona left six people dead and one injured (The China Press, Jun 3, 2011). In Chicago, more than 10 overnight shooting incidents took place just between the evening of Jun 3 and the morning of Jun 4 (Chicago Tribune, Jun 4, 2011). Another five overnight shootings occurred between Aug 12 evening and Aug 13 morning in Chicago. These incidents have caused a number of deaths and injuries (Chicago Tribune, Aug 13, 2011). Shooting spree cases involving one gunman shooting dead over five people also happened in the states of Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Nevada and Southern California (The New York Times, Oct 13, 2011; CNN, Jul 8, 2011; CBS, Jul 23, 2011; USA Today, Aug 9, 2011). High incidence of gun-related crimes has long ignited complaints of the US people and they stage multiple protests every year, demanding the government strictly control the private possession of arms. The US government, however, fails to pay due attention to this issue.

## **II.**

### **On civil and political rights**

In the United States, the violation of citizens' civil and political rights is severe. It is lying to itself when the United States calls itself the land of the free (The Washington Post, Jan 14, 2012).

Claiming to defend 99 percent of the US population against the wealthiest, the Occupy Wall Street protest movement tested the US political, economic and social systems. Ignited by severe social and economic inequality, uneven distribution of wealth and high unemployment, the movement expanded to sweep the United States after its inception in September 2011. Whatever the deep reasons for the movement are, the single fact that thousands of protesters were treated in a rude and violent way, with many of them being arrested - the act of willfully trampling on people's freedom of assembly, demonstration and speech - could provide a glimpse to the truth of the so-called US freedom and democracy.

Almost 1,000 people were reportedly arrested in first two weeks of the movement, according to British and Australian media (The Guardian, Oct 2, 2011). The New York police arrested more than 700 protesters for alleged blocking traffic over Brooklyn Bridge on Oct 1, and some of them were handcuffed to the bridge before

being shipped by police vehicles (uschinapress.com, Oct 3, 2011). On Oct 9, 92 people were arrested in New York (The New York Times, Oct 15, 2011). The Occupy Wall Street movement was forced out of its encampment at Zuccotti Park and more than 200 people were arrested on Nov 15 (The Guardian, Nov 25, 2011). Chicago police arrested around 300 members of the Occupy Chicago protest in two weeks (The Herald Sun, Oct 24, 2011). At least 85 people were arrested when police used teargas and baton rounds to break up an Occupy Wall Street camp in Oakland, California on Oct 25. An Iraq war veteran had a fractured skull and brain swelling after being allegedly hit in the head by a police projectile (The Guardian, Oct 26, 2011). A couple of hundred people were arrested when demonstrations were staged in different US cities to mark the Occupy Wall Street movement's two-month anniversary on Nov 17 (USA Today, Nov 18, 2011). Among them, at least 276 were arrested in New York only. Some protesters were bloodied as they were hauled away. Many protesters accused the police of treating them in a brutal way (The Wall Street Journal, Nov 18, 2011). As a US opinion article put it, the United States could be considered, at least in part, authoritarian. (The Washington Post, Jan 14, 2012).

While advocating press freedom, the United States in fact imposes fairly strict censoring and control over the press and "press freedom" is just a political tool used to beautify itself and attack other nations. The US Congress failed to pass laws on protecting rights of reporters' news sources, according to media reports. An increasing number of American reporters lost jobs for "improper remarks on politics." US reporter Helen Thomas resigned for critical remarks about Israel in June 2010 ("Report: On the situation with human rights in a host of world states," the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia, Dec 28, 2011). While forcibly evacuating the Zuccotti Park, the original Occupy Wall Street encampment, the New York police blocked journalists from covering the police actions. They set cordon lines to prevent reporters from getting close to the park and closed airspace to make aerial photography impossible. In addition to using pepper spray against reporters, the police also arrested around 200 journalists, including reporters from NPR and the New York Times (uschinapress.com, Nov 15, 2011). By trampling on press freedom and public interests, these actions by the US authorities caused a global uproar. US mainstream media's response to the Occupy Wall Street movement revealed the hypocrisy in handling issues of freedom and democracy. Poll by Pew Research Center indicated that in the second week of the movement, reports on the movement only accounted for 1.68 percent of the total media reports by nationwide media organizations. On Oct 15, 2011, when the Occupy Wall Street movement evolved to be a global action, CNN and Fox News gave no live reports on it, in a sharp contrast to the square protest in Cairo, for which both CNN and Fox News broadcast live 24 hours.

The US imposes fairly strict restriction on the Internet, and its approach "remains full of problems and contradictions." (The website of the Foreign Policy magazine, Feb 17, 2011) "Internet freedom" is just an excuse for the United States to impose diplomatic pressure and seek hegemony.

The US Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act both have clauses about monitoring the Internet, giving the government or law enforcement organizations power to monitor and block any Internet content "harmful to national security." Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act of 2010 stipulates that the federal government has "absolute power" to shut down the Internet under a declared national emergency. According to a report by British newspaper the Guardian dated Mar 17, 2011, the US military is developing software that will let it secretly manipulate social media sites by using fake online personas, and will allow the US military to create a false consensus in online conversations, crowd out unwelcome opinions and smother commentaries or reports that do not correspond with its own objectives. The project aims to control and restrict free speech on the Internet (The Guardian, Mar 17, 2011). According to a commentary by the Voice of Russia on Feb 2, 2012, a subsidiary under the US government's security agency employed several hundred analysts, who were tasked with monitoring private archives of foreign Internet users in a secret way, and were able to censor as many as five million microblogging posts. The US Department of Homeland Security routinely searched key words like "illegal immigrants," "virus," "death," and "burst out" on Twitter with fake accounts and then secretly traced the Internet users who forwarded related content. According to a report by the Globe and Mail on Jan 30, 2012, Leigh Van Bryan, a British, prior to his flight to the US, wrote in a Twitter post, "Free this week, for quick gossip/prep before I go and destroy America?" As a result, Bryan along with a friend were handcuffed and put

in lockdown with suspected drug smugglers for 12 hours by armed guards after landing in Los Angeles International Airport, just like "terrorists". Among many angered by the incident in Britain, an Internet user posted a comment, "What's worse, being arrested for an innocent tweet, or the fact that the American Secret Service monitors every electronic message in the world?"

The US democracy is increasingly being influenced by capitalization and becoming a system for "master of money." Data issued by the US Center for Responsive Politics in November 2011 show that 46 percent of the US federal senators and members of the House of Representatives have personal assets of more than a million dollars. That well explains why US administration's plans to impose higher tax on the rich who earn more than one million dollars annually have been blocked in the Congress ([www.finance-ol.com](http://www.finance-ol.com)). As a commentary put it, money has emerged as the electoral trump card in the US political system, and corporations have a Supreme Court-recognized right to use their considerable financial muscle to promote candidates and policies favorable to their business operations and to resist policies and shut out candidates deemed inimical to their business interests (Online edition of Time, Jan 20, 2011). According to a media report, nearly two thirds of all the contributions that the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee received during the 2010 election cycle came from industries regulated by his committee. A ranking Democrat Representative on the Agriculture Committee, who served as chairman between 2007 and 2010, saw a 711 percent increase in contributions from groups regulated by his committee and a 274 percent increase in contributions over all, in the same period (The New York Times, Nov 16, 2011). According to a Washington Post report on Aug 10, 2011, nearly eight in 10 of Americans polled were dissatisfied with the way the political system is working, with 45 percent saying they are very dissatisfied (The Washington Post, Aug 10, 2011).

The US continued to violate the freedom of its citizens in the name of boosting security levels (The Washington Post, Jan 14, 2012). The Electronic Frontier Foundation in 2011 released a report, "Patterns of Misconduct: FBI intelligence violations from 2001-2008," which reveals that domestic political intelligence apparatus spearheaded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, continues to systematically violate the rights of American citizens and legal residents. The report shows that the actual number of violations that may have occurred from 2001 to 2008 could approach 40,000 possible violations of law, Executive Order, or other regulations governing intelligence investigations. The FBI issued some 200,000 requests and that almost 60 percent were for investigations of US citizens and legal residents ([www.pacificfreepress.com](http://www.pacificfreepress.com)). The New York Times reported on Oct 20, 2011, that the FBI has collected information about religious, ethnic and national-origin characteristics of American communities (The New York Times, Oct 20, 2011). According to a Washington Post commentary dated Jan 14, 2012, the US government can use "national security letters" to demand, without probable cause, that organizations turn over information on citizens' finances, communications and associations, and order searches of everything from business documents to library records. The US government can use GPS devices to monitor every move of targeted citizens without securing any court order or review (The Washington Post, Jan 14, 2012).

Abuse of power, brutal enforcement of law and overuse of force by US police have resulted in harassment and hurt to a large number of innocent citizens and have caused loss of freedom of some people or even deaths. According to a report carried by the World Journal on Jun 10, 2011, the past decade saw increasing stop-and-frisks by the New York police, which recorded an annual of 600,000 cases in 2010, almost double of that in 2004. In the first three months of 2011, some 180,000 people experienced stop-and-frisks, 88 percent of whom were innocent people (World Journal, Jun 10, 2011). In early July of 2011, two police officers beat a mentally ill homeless man to death in Orange County, Southern California (FoxNews.com, Sept 21, 2011). In August 2011, North Miami police shot and killed a man carrying realistic toy gun (The NY Daily News, Sept 1, 2011). On Jan 8, 2011, a Central California man was shot and killed by the police, who thought of him as a gang member only because the jacket he was wearing was red, "the chosen color of a local street gang." ([www.kolotv.com](http://www.kolotv.com), Jan 19, 2011) In May 2011, Arizona's police officers raided the home of Jose Guerena and shot him dead in what was described as an investigation into alleged marijuana trafficking. However, the police later found nothing illegal in his home (The Huffington Post, May 25, 2011). Misjudged and wrongly-handled cases continued to occur. According to media reports, Anthony Graves, a Texas man, was imprisoned for 18

years for crimes he did not commit (CBS News, Jun 22, 2011). Forty-six-year-old Thomas Haynesworth spent 27 years in prison after being arrested at the age of 18 for crimes he didn't commit (Union Press International, Dec 7, 2011). Eric Caine, who was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment after being tortured by police into confessing to two murders, spent nearly 25 years behind bars.(Chicago Tribune, Jun 13, 2011).

The US lacks basic due lawsuit process protections, and its government continues to claim the right to strip citizens of legal protections based on its sole discretion (The Washington Post, Jan 14, 2012). The National Defense Authorization Act, signed Dec 31, 2011, allows for the indefinite detention of citizens (The Washington Post, Jan 14, 2012). The Act will place domestic terror investigations and interrogations into the hands of the military and which would open the door for trial-free, indefinite detention of anyone, including American citizens, so long as the government calls them terrorists (www.forbes.com, Dec 5, 2011).

The US remains the country with the largest "prison population" and the highest per capita level of imprisonment in the world, and the detention centers' conditions are terrible. According to the US Department of Justice, the number of prisoners amounted to 2.3 million in 2009 and one in every 132 American citizens is behind bars. Meanwhile, more than 140,000 are serving life sentences (Report: On the situation with human rights in a host of world states, the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia, Dec 28, 2011). According to a Los Angeles Times report on May 24, 2011, in a California prison, as many as 54 inmates may share a single toilet and as many as 200 prisoners may live in a gymnasium (Los Angeles Times, May 24, 2011). According to data issued by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the estimated number of prison and jail inmates experiencing sexual victimization totaled 88,500 in the US between October 2008 and December 2009 (www.bjs.gov). Since April 2011, officials stopped serving lunch on the weekend in some US prisons as a way to cut food-service costs. About 23,000 inmates in 36 prisons are eating two meals a day on Saturdays and Sundays instead of three (The New York Times, Oct 20, 2011). Harsh conditions and treatment in prisons have caused recurring protests and suicides of inmates. There were two major hunger strikes in California prisons staged by a total of more than 6,000 and 12,000 prisoners in July and October 2011, respectively, to protest against what they call harsh treatment and detention conditions (CNN, Oct 4, 2011; The New York Times, July 7, 2011). According to a Chicago Tribune report on July 20, 2011, since 2000, at least 175 youths have attempted to kill themselves inside Department of Juvenile Justice lockup facilities in Chicago and seven youths committed suicide. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture in a 2011 report noted that in the US, an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 individuals are being held in isolation, and the US government in 2011 for twice turned down the Special Rapporteur's request for a private and unmonitored meeting with detainees held in isolation.



**Demonstrators call for justice in the murder of Trayvon Martin at Leimert Park in Los Angeles on March 22, 2012. Florida Governor Rick Scott appointed a task force to investigate the shooting death of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin as calls grew for charges to be filed against the neighborhood watch volunteer who killed him.**

**Jonathan Alcorn / Reuters**

### III.

#### **On economic, social and cultural rights**

The United States is the world's richest country, but quite a lot of Americans still lack guarantee for their economic, social and cultural rights, which are necessary for personal dignity and self-development.

The United States has not done enough to protect its citizens from unemployment. At no time in the last 60 years had the country's long-term unemployment been so high for so long as it was in 2011. It has been one of the Western developed countries that provide the poorest protection of laborer's rights. It has not approved any international labor organization convention in the last 10 years. Moreover, the US lacks an effective arbitration system to deal with enterprises that refuse to compromise with employees. The New York Times reported on Dec 12, 2011, that at last count, 13.3 million people were officially unemployed and that 5.7 million of them had been out of work for more than six months (The New York Times, Dec 12, 2011). The unemployment rate was 8.9 percent for 2011 ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)), and the unemployment rate for American youths between 25 and 34 stood at 26 percent in October of that year (The World Journal, Nov 18, 2011), with more underemployed. A total of 84 metropolitan areas reported jobless rates of at least 10.0 percent, and El Centro, California, recorded the highest unemployment rate of 29.6 percent in September of 2011 ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)). The unemployed people suffered from not only financial pressures but also mental pressures including anxiety and depression.

There is a widening of the gap between the extreme top and bottom (The USA Today, Sept 13, 2011), showing apparent unfair wealth distribution. The United States claims to have a large population of middle class, making up 80 percent of its total population, while there is only very few impoverished and extremely rich people (The China Press, Oct 13, 2011). However, this is not the truth. According to the report issued by the US Congressional Budget Office (CBO) on Oct 25, 2011, the richest one percent of American families have the fastest growth of family revenue from 1979 to 2007 with an increase of 275 percent for after-tax income, while the after-tax income of the poorest 20 percent grew by only 18 percent (The World Journal, Oct 26, 2011). Cable News Network reported on Feb 16, 2011, that in the last 20 years, incomes for 90 percent of Americans have been stuck in neutral, while the richest 1 percent of Americans have seen their incomes grow by 33 percent. Economic Policy Institute published a paper on Oct 26, 2011, saying that in 2009 the ratio of wealth owned by the wealthiest one percent to the wealth owned by median households was 225 to 1 ([www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org)). Besides, in the United States, the best-off 10 percent made on average 15 times the incomes of the poorest 10 percent (Reuters, Dec 9, 2011). The wealthiest 400 Americans have \$1.5 trillion in assets (The China Press, Oct 13, 2011), or the same combined wealth as the poorest half of Americans - more than 150 million people ([www.currydemocrats.org](http://www.currydemocrats.org)). The annual incomes of the richest 10 chief executive officers (CEO) were enough to pay the salary of 18,330 employees (The World Journal, Oct 16, 2011). Roughly 11 percent of Congress members had net worth of more than \$9 million, and 249 members were millionaires. The median net worth: \$891,506, was almost nine times the typical household (The USA Today, Nov 16, 2011). A commentary by the Spiegel said that the US has developed into an economic entity of "winners take all". American politician Larry Bartels said that fundamental shifts in wealth allocation was caused by political decisions rather than the consequences of market forces or financial crisis (The Spiegel, Oct 24, 2011).

Contrary to the wealthiest 10 percent, the number of Americans living in poverty as well as the poverty rate continued to hit record highs, which is a great irony in affluent America. A report published by the Census Bureau on Sept 13, 2011, showed that 46.2 million people lived below the official poverty line in 2010, 2.6 million more than 2009, hitting the highest record since 1959. The report also said that the percentage of American who lived below the poverty line in 2010 was 15.1 percent, the highest level since 1993. An analysis done by the Brookings Institution estimated that at the current rate, the recession would have added nearly 10 million people to the ranks of the poor by the middle of the decade. According to the analysis, 22 percent of children were in poverty (The New York Times, Sept 13, 2011). Another survey showed that 12 states of the US had poverty rates above 17 percent, with Mississippi's poverty rate standing at 22.4 percent (The Huffington Post, Oct 21, 2011). The US has grown into a country dependent on food stamps (Reuters, Aug 22, 2011). The

percentage of Americans who did not have enough money to buy food grew from 9 percent in 2008 to 19 percent in 2011 (The World Journal, Oct 15, 2011). In 2010, 17.2 million households, or 14.5 percent, were food insecure ([www. Worldhunger. org](http://www.Worldhunger.org)). In 2011, 46 million Americans lived on food stamps, about 15 percent of the total population, up 74 percent from 2007 (Reuters, Aug 22, 2011).

Millions of homeless people wandered around streets. Reports said that about 2.3 million to 3.5 million Americans did not have a place that they call home to sleep in the night ([www.homelessnessinamerica.com](http://www.homelessnessinamerica.com)). Between 2007 and 2010, the number of homeless families grew by 20 percent (The Huffington Post, Aug 26, 2011). Over the past five years, the percentage of singles arriving at shelters after living with family or elsewhere in the community has jumped from 39 percent to 66 percent (The USA Today, Dec 9, 2011). There was an all-time record of more than 41,000 homeless people in New York City, including 17,000 homeless children ([www.coalitionforthehomeless.org](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org)). On any given night in Santa Clara County, California, 7,045 people were homeless according to a 2011 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey ([www.santaclaraweekly.com](http://www.santaclaraweekly.com)). And advocates estimated that Chicago had up to 3,000 homeless youths in need of shelter on any given night ([www.chicagonewscoop.org](http://www.chicagonewscoop.org)).

The US declared it has the best healthcare service in the world, but quite a lot of Americans could not enjoy due medication and healthcare. The Cable News Network reported on Sept 13, 2011, that the number of people who lacked health insurance in 2010 climbed to 49.9 million (Cable News Network, Sept 13, 2011). Bloomberg reported on March 16, 2011, that 9 million Americans have lost health insurance during the past two years. An additional 73 million adults had difficulties paying for healthcare and 75 million deferred treatment because they could not afford it (Bloomberg, March 16, 2011).

Death and infection risks caused by AIDS grew. Since the first American patient was diagnosed with AIDS in 1981, 600,000 people have died from the disease in the US. By the end of 2008, 1,178,350 Americans had been infected with AIDS (The China Press, June 3, 2011). AFP reported that nearly three quarters of Americans with HIV do not have their infection under control and one in five people with human immunodeficiency virus are unaware that they have the disease. Among people who know their HIV status is positive, only 51 percent get ongoing medical treatment (AFP, Nov 29, 2011). Statistics given by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention showed that, in the last 10 years, death caused by prescription drugs in America had doubled and that one would die from taking prescription drug every 14 minutes. Prescription drug overdose caused 37,485 deaths in 2009, exceeding traffic fatalities (The China Press, Sept 19, 2011).

The US government has significantly cut the expense on education, reduced teaching staff, and shortened school hours with tuition fees soaring. The guarantee for teenagers' rights to education is weakening. The New York Times reported on Oct 3, 2011, that since 2007, school budgets in New York city have been cut by 13.7 percent every year on average. Since 2008, 294,000 posts in the American education industry, including schools of higher education, have been cut (The China Press, Oct 25, 2011). Four-day per week classes have been practiced in 292 school districts, which was only put into use during the financial crisis in the 1930s and the oil crisis in the 1970s (The World Journal, Oct 30, 2011). A report by College Board showed that the average tuition fee of American four-year public universities in the school year of 2011 through 2012 was \$8,244, \$631 more than the last school year, up 8.3 percent (The China Press, Oct 27, 2011). About 3,000 people gathered on Sproul Plaza to protest tuition increases at Berkeley on Nov 9, 2011 (The New York Times, Nov 13, 2011). Reuters reported that two-thirds of undergraduate students would graduate with student loans about \$25,000 on average owing to expensive college tuition (Reuters, Feb 1, 2011).

Native American culture in the United States has long been suppressed. The country assimilated the Native American culture through legislation and mainstream culture. At the end of the 19th century, the United States carried out "white man's education" and implemented compulsory English-only education. Most of the people who now speak Native American languages are the seniors living in reservations. It is estimated that only five percent of Native Americans will speak their own languages 50 years later if there are no measures from the US government.

The financial crisis was far from being the sole reason for the inadequate guarantee of Americans' economic, social and cultural rights. So far, the US has not approved the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The above problems concerning human rights are the reflection of the US ideology and political system that ignore people's economic, social and cultural rights.

#### IV.

##### **On racial discrimination**

Ethnic minorities in the United States have long been suffering systemic, widespread and institutional discrimination. And racial discrimination has become an indelible characteristic and symbol of American values.

Ethnic minorities have low political, economic and social positions due to discrimination. The number of ethnic people in civil service is not proportional to their population. New York Times reported on June 23, 2011, that the number of Asian Americans in New York City has topped one million, nearly 1 in 8 New Yorkers, but only one Asian-American serves in the State Legislature, two on the City Council and one in a citywide post of the New York City. According to the annual report released by the National Urban League of the US, African-Americans' 2011 Equality Index is currently 71.5 percent, compared to 2010's 72.1 percent, among which the economic equality index declined from 57.9 percent to 56.9 percent, and the health index, from 76.6 percent to 75 percent, and the index in the area of social justice, from 57.9 percent to 56.9 percent.

Ethnic Americans are badly discriminated against when it comes to employment. It was reported that the unemployment rate of Hispanics rose to 11 percent in 2010 from 5.7 percent in 2007 (The New York Times, Sept 28, 2011). The unemployment rate of African Americans was 16.2 percent. For black males, it's at 17.5 percent; and for black youth, it's nearly 41 percent, 4.5 times the national average unemployment rate (CBS News, June 19, 2011). Nationally, black joblessness stands at 21 percent, rising to as high as 40 percent in major urban centers such as Detroit (The Wall Street Journal, Aug 31, 2011). In Ziebach County of South Dakota, a community mainly composed of Native Americans, more than 60 percent of the residents live at or below the poverty line, and unemployment rate hits 90 percent in the winter (The Daily Mail, Feb 15, 2011). A study shows that of the seven occupations with the highest salaries, six are overrepresented by whites (Washington Post, Oct 21, 2011).

The poverty rate of African Americans doubles that of whites, and the ethnic minority groups suffer severe social inequalities. According to a report by the Pew Research Center released in June 2011, the median wealth of white households is 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households (pewresearch.org). In 2010, poverty among blacks rose to 27.4 percent, and poverty among Hispanics increased to 26.6 percent, much higher than the 9.9-percent poverty rate among whites (www.census.gov). A Pew Research Center report says the lopsided wealth ratios among whites, Hispanics and African-Americans in 2009 were the largest in the past 25 years (pewresearch.org). According to an investigation done by the Washington-based Bread for the World, "black children are suffering from poverty at a rate of nearly 40 percent, and over a quarter of Blacks reported going hungry in 2010". "The figures are both startling and very telling," said Rev Derrick Boykin (www.amsterdam.com).

Ethnic minorities are denied equal education opportunities, and ethnic minority kids are discriminated against and bullied in schools. According to a report by the US Census Bureau on June 8, 2011, in 2008, among 18-to 24-year-olds, 22 percent were not enrolled in high schools for Hispanics, 13 percent for African-Americans, whereas only 6 percent for whites (www.census.gov). US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said on Oct 28, 2011, one-third of American students are bullied at schools, and Asian-American children bear the brunt. The teases and insults they get in cyber space are three times more compared with kids from other ethnic groups. A research finds 54 percent of Asian-American students have been bullied in schools, 38.4 percent for African-Americans and 34.3 percent for Hispanics (World Journal Oct 29, 2011).



Ethnic minorities and non-Christians are also badly discriminated against in fields such as law enforcement, justice and religion, rendering the so-claimed ethnic equality and religious freedom nothing but self-glorifying forged labels. A New York Times story (Dec 17, 2011) says the New York Police Department recorded more than 600,000 stops in 2010 and 84 percent of those stopped were blacks or Latinos. It was reported that black non-Hispanic males are incarcerated at a rate more than six times that of white non-Hispanic males (World Report 2011: United States, [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)). On Dec 1, 2011, the American Civil Liberties Union said that "the FBI is using its extensive community outreach to Muslims and other groups to secretly gather intelligence in violation of federal law". (Washington Post, Dec 2, 2011) A survey by Pew Research Center finds that 52 percent of Muslim-Americans surveyed said their group is under government's surveillance, about 28 percent said they had been treated or viewed with suspicion and 21 percent said they were singled out by airport security ([articles.boston.com](http://articles.boston.com)). More than half of Muslim-Americans in another poll said government anti-terrorism policies singled them out for increased surveillance and monitoring, and many reported increased cases of name-calling, threats and harassment by airport security, law enforcement officers and others (Washington Times, Aug 30, 2011).

Illegal immigrants also live under legal and systematic discrimination. It was reported that after Arizona passed its anti-illegal immigration bill, Alabama began implementing its immigration law on Sept 28, 2011. The Alabama immigration law provides differentiated treatments to illegal immigrants in each of its term, rendering their daily lives rather difficult. Critics argued that the law runs counter to the US Constitution and to certain terms in relevant international human rights law regarding granting equal protections to illegal immigrants ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)). The New York Times reported on May 13, 2011, that Georgia passed an anti-illegal immigration law which outlaws illegal immigrants working in the state and empowers local police officers to question certain suspects about their immigration status. Illegal immigrants suffer ferocious mistreatments. Internal reports from the Office of Detention Oversight of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) revealed grave problems in many US detention facilities for immigrants, including lack of medical care, the use of excessive force and "abusive treatment" of detainees (The Houston Chronicle, Oct 10, 2011). A report released on Sept 21, 2011, by an Arizona-based non-profit organization revealed that thousands of illegal immigrants detained across the border between Mexico and Arizona are generally mistreated by US border police, being denied enough food, water, medical care and sleep, even beaten up and confined in extreme coldness or heat, suffering both psychological abuse and threats of death (The World Journal, Sept 24, 2011).

Native Americans are denied their due rights. From January to February 2011, UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya lodged two accusations against the United States, including accusing the Arizona State government of approving the use of recycled wastewater for commercial ski operations on the San Francisco Peaks, a site considered sacred by several Native American tribes ([www.forgottennavajopeople.org](http://www.forgottennavajopeople.org)), as well as the case of imprisoned indigenous activist Leonard Peltier. Peltier was sentenced to life in prison in 1977 for the alleged murder of two FBI agents. However, Peltier has been claiming he is innocent and persecuted by the US government for participating in the American Indian Movement ([www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)). On April 26, 2011, Farida Shaheed, independent expert in the field of cultural rights, Heiner Bielefeldt, special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and James Anaya, special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, of the UN Human Rights Council, jointly lodged accusations against the US, claiming that the city of Vallejo, California, is planning to level and pave over the Sogorea Te, held sacred to indigenous people in northern California, in order to construct a parking lot and public restrooms ([www.treatycouncil.org](http://www.treatycouncil.org)).

Race-motivated hate crimes occur frequently. According to an FBI report, 6,628 hate crime incidents were reported in 2010, 2,201 of which were against African-Americans, 534 against Hispanics and 575 against whites. And 47.3 percent of all were motivated by racial bias, 20 percent by religion and 12.8 percent by an ethnicity/national origin bias ([ww.fbi.gov](http://ww.fbi.gov)). According to a report released by the Center for American Progress in August 2011, seven American charitable groups, over the past decade, had spent 42.6 million US dollars on inciting hatred against Muslim communities (The New York Times, Nov 13, 2011). There are three active white supremacy groups in the city of San Francisco, which focus on attacking ethnic minorities and immigrants ([www.abclocal.go.com](http://www.abclocal.go.com)). On Nov 10, 2010, two Mexican nationals were beaten by a group of whites who were

members of these organizations ([www.sfappeal.com](http://www.sfappeal.com)). According to an investigation, black men aged 15 to 29 years old were most likely to be victims of murders. In New York City, they make up less than 3 percent of the city's population but in 2010 represented 33 percent of all homicide victims (The Wall Street Journal, March 9, 2011).

The sufferings of civil rights activists who oppose racial discriminations arouse attention. The Huffington Post reported on May 31, 2011, Catrina Wallace, a civil rights activist in Jena, Louisiana, was sentenced to 15 years in prison by authorities only based on a drug dealer's accusation. Previously, Wallace had taken part in organizing a 50,000-people protest against racial discrimination that won freedom for six black high school students. The article deemed the sentence was revenge taken by authorities on Wallace's human rights activism. "I am a freedom fighter," she says. "I fight for people's rights."



**Yang Ting Lye (left) and Amy Huang hug at an impromptu memorial on campus for the two graduate students from China, Qu Ming of Jilin and Wu Ying of Hunan, who were shot dead near the University of Southern California in Los Angeles on April 11, 2012. Jonathan Alcorn / Reuters**

V.

### **On the rights of women and children**

To date, the US has ratified neither the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, nor the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As the US neglects the rights of women and children, their situation deteriorates.

Gender discrimination against women widely exists in the US. According to statistics, women are not fully represented in governments at all levels in the US, as women hold only 17 percent of the seats in Congress ([www.wcffoundation.org](http://www.wcffoundation.org)). Women doing the same work as men often get less payment in the US, and the wage gap has narrowed by only 18 cents in the past half century ([www.thedailybeast.com](http://www.thedailybeast.com)). According to a report released by the American Civil Liberties Union, in 2009, women working full-time, year-round were paid 77 cents on average for every dollar paid to men ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)). Women in the US widely suffer discrimination in terms of employment, promotion and work. A new study confirms that American tech companies are woefully behind in including women among their board members and highest-paid executives. On average, fewer than one in 28 of the highest-paid tech executives is a woman. At California's biggest public companies, only about 10 percent of the board members and top executives are women (The New York Times, Dec 9, 2011).

The poverty rate among American women reached a record high. According to data from the US Census Bureau, over 17 million women lived in poverty in 2010, including more than 7.5 million in extreme poverty

and 4.7 million single mothers in poverty. The poverty rate among women climbed to 14.5 percent in 2010 from 13.9 percent in 2009, the highest in 17 years; the extreme poverty rate among women climbed to 6.3 percent in 2010 from 5.9 percent in 2009, the highest rate ever recorded ([www.merchantcircle.com](http://www.merchantcircle.com)). According to a report of the Associated Press on April 12, 2011, a single mother named Lashanda Armstrong drove her four kids in a minivan into the Hudson river in Newburgh, New York, due to the unbearable burden of raising the kids. Only her 10-year-old boy survived.

Women in the US often experience discrimination, violence and sexual assault. Ethnic minority women face discrimination during pregnancy. According to a report provided by the LAMB (The Los Angeles Mommy and Baby Project), 32.4 percent of Asian-American mothers felt discriminated against during pregnancy, second only to African-American mothers among whom the ratio amounts to 47.9 percent, while the ratio among Latin American mothers is 31.1 percent (The China Press, June 1, 2011). According to statistics from the website of the Los Angeles Police Department, more than 2 million American women are victims of domestic violence annually. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey shows nearly one in five women has been raped in her lifetime, and one in four has experienced serious physical violence from an intimate partner at some point in her life (Los Angeles Times, December 14, 2011). Throughout the military, sexual assault affects about 19 percent of female troops but most of them choose to keep silent, according to a survey of sexual assault conducted by the US military ([www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)). From March to October in 2011, a string of 20 sexual assaults happened in Bay Ridge, Sunset Park and Park Slope and the victims were all young women (The New York Times, Oct 19, 2011). Reports say many of the 1 million women in prison in the US experienced harsh treatment and even had their arms and legs chained when they were giving birth ([www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org)).

The poverty rate for children in the US reached a record high. According to the report released by the US Census Bureau, more than 1 million children were added to the poverty population between 2009 and 2010, making the total number of children living below the poverty line reach more than 15 million, the greatest since 2001. The poverty rate for children in 2010 climbed to 21.6 percent in 2010 from 20 percent in 2009, with 653 counties seeing a significant increase in poverty rate for children aged 5 to 17 and about one-third of counties having school-age poverty rates above the national poverty rate ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). The Daily Mail reported on Aug 17, 2011, that child poverty increased in 38 states from 2000 to 2009 and Mississippi is the state with the highest level of 31 percent. The US Census Bureau said that children living in poverty, especially small children, are more likely to develop cognitive and behavioral difficulties and may have a shorter education time and a longer time being unemployed when they grow up (The China Press, Nov 21, 2011).

The number of homeless children has surged. In 2010, 1.6 million children in the US were living on the street, in homeless shelters or motels, up 33 percent from that in 2007, according to the National Center on Family Homelessness (USA Today, Dec 15, 2011). According to the Education Department of New York, there are 53,503 homeless students and children of 3 to 21 years old in New York, and the Homeless Service Department's count also shows an average of 6,902 children of 6 to 17 years old a month are homeless in the city (The New York Times, Nov 14, 2011). Nearly 17,000 children slept in the municipal shelters in New York on Halloween night in 2011. From May 2011 to November 2011, children in shelters rose 10 percent (The Wall Street Journal, Nov 9, 2011).

Children are severely exposed to violence and pornography. BBC reported on Oct 17, 2011, that over the past 10 years, more than 20,000 American children were believed to have been killed by their family members. More than 1 million children are confirmed each year as victims of child abuse ([www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)), and one in every two families in the US is involved in domestic violence at some time ([www.reverepolice.org](http://www.reverepolice.org)). The Wall Street Journal reported on Nov 14, 2011, that roughly 120,000 calls were made to the state hotline for child abuse calls administrated by the state Department of Public Welfare in Pennsylvania, but only about 24,000 cases were investigated. A 13-year-old boy named Christian Choate was allegedly beaten to death in 2009 by his father. The report said prosecutors had alleged that the boy endured beating daily and was kept locked in a 3-foot-high dog cage, where he had little to eat and often soiled himself (Chicago Tribune, June 24, 2011). Campus violence and cyber bullying are growing more malicious in the US. According to a report of the

US News & World Report on June 3, 2011, at least 40 percent of high school students have been bullied by cyber bullies ([www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)). The Women's eNews reported on May 23 last year, the sex-trafficking problem is acute in the state of Georgia, with an estimated 250 to 300 underage teens and girls being sexually exploited each month there ([womensenews.org](http://womensenews.org)). According to a report published by Stanford University, the number of reports of sexual assaults received in its campus in 2010 rose by 75 percent over that in 2009 (CBS, Sept 30, 2011).

Infant mortality rate remains high in the US. According to a report of The New York Times on Oct 15, 2011, the infant mortality rate in the US is 6.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. The rate among African-Americans is 13.3 deaths per thousand, while the rates among whites, Hispanics and Asian-Americans are respectively 5.6, 5.5 and 4.8 per thousand. In Pittsburgh, the infant mortality rate for black residents of Allegheny County was 20.7 per thousand in 2009, while the rate among whites in the county was only 4 per thousand in the same period. Nationally, black babies are more than twice as likely as white babies to die before the age of 1.

## VI.

### **On US violations of human rights against other nations**

The US has been pursuing hegemony in the world, grossly trampling upon the sovereignty of other countries and capriciously violating human rights against other nations. It "appears more and more to be contributing to international disorder" (After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order, by Emmanuel Todd).

The revelation of the history of human experiments conducted in the US is yet another scandal sparking public outcry around the world after the prisoner abuse scandal. The British newspaper The Telegraph reported on Aug 30, 2011, that from 1946-1948, a US government-paid medical experiment program had made nearly 5,500 people in Guatemala subjected to diagnostic testing, and the researchers deliberately exposed more than 1,300 people, including soldiers, prostitutes, prisoners and mental patients, to syphilis and other venereal diseases. Seven women with epilepsy were injected with syphilis below the back of the skull, and a female syphilis patient with a terminal illness was infected with gonorrhea in her eyes and elsewhere. These experiments had caused over 80 deaths. An article on a US-based journalistic website said that "these revelations are only the latest in an ongoing series of scandals regarding government illegal and unethical experimentation" and that "there are plenty of other underreported and important stories out there on the terrible scandal that has been US illegal experimentation." The article said that the list of such illegal experiments is quite long, including government radiation experiments, human mind control (also known as MKULTRA) experiments and the CIA and DoD (Department of Defense) experiments on "enemy combatants" in the "war on terror" ([Pubrecord.org](http://Pubrecord.org)). Newspaper The Hindu reported on Aug 30, 2011, that in 1932, the US public health service agency started a study of untreated syphilis in the human body in Alabama. The researchers told the subjects that they were being treated for some ailments, and nearly 400 African-American men were infected with syphilis without informed consent. In fact, the men infected did not receive proper treatment needed. The study lasted until 1972 after media disclosures. Austrian national TV commented that this was a disgraceful event in the US history and a dark period in US medical ethics.

The US-led wars, albeit alleged to be "humanitarian intervention" efforts and for "the rise of a new democratic nation", created humanitarian disasters instead. For Iraqis, the death toll in the US-initiated Iraq war stands at 655,000 (Tribune Business News, Dec 15, 2011). According to figures released by the Iraq Body Count, at least 103,536 civilians were killed in the Iraq war (Reuters, Dec 18, 2011). In 2011, there were an average of 6.5 deaths per day from suicide attacks and vehicle bombs ([www.iraqbodycount.org](http://www.iraqbodycount.org)). It is estimated that civilian casualties in the military campaign in Afghanistan could exceed 31,000 (Tribune Business News, Oct 17, 2011). According to a news report, on May 28, 2011, a US-led NATO airstrike killed 14 civilians and wounded six others in the southern region of Afghanistan (The New York Times, May 29, 2011). Separately, on May 25, a total of 18 Afghan civilians and 20 police were killed in a NATO airstrike in the province of Nuristan (BBC News, May 29, 2011). The British newspaper The Guardian reported on March 11, 2012, that an American

soldier stationed in Afghanistan burst into three civilian homes in two villages in the small hours of March 11, shot dead 16 sleeping Afghan villagers, injured five others and burned the dead bodies. The victims included nine children and three women. According to a Reuters report, witness accounts said there were several US soldiers involved (Reuters, March 11, 2012). Another Deutsche Presse-Agentur report quoted a member of the Afghan parliamentary investigative team as saying that there were 15 to 20 soldiers who had conducted the night raid operation in several areas in the village. The source also told DPA that some of the Afghan women who were killed were sexually assaulted, according to the findings (DPA, March 18, 2012). Such "American-style massacre" against innocent civilians has once again pierced the veil of the US proclaiming itself "a country under the rule of law" and "a human rights defender." Incomplete statistics revealed that the US has launched more than 60 drone attacks in Pakistan in 2011, killing at least 378 people (USA Today, Jan 11, 2012; Newamerica.net). The number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan increased 15 percent in the first half of 2011 over the same period of 2010 (The New York Times, Aug 6, 2011). According to media reports, on the night of Feb 20, 2012, some American soldiers of the NATO troops at the Bagram air base in Afghanistan transported copies of Koran and other religious books to a rubbish pit and burned them (BBC News, Feb 23, 2012). The acts of desecration of the Quran have sparked strong protests and large-scale demonstration activities among the people across Afghanistan as well as in the countries of Pakistan and Bengal ([www.pakistantoday.com.pk](http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk); [www.firstpost.com](http://www.firstpost.com)).

The US does not support the right to development, which is a concern of most of the developing countries. In September 2011, the 18th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on "the right to development." Except for an abstention vote from the US, all the HRC members voted for the resolution.

The US continues its conduct that seriously violates the right of subsistence and right of development of Cuban people. On Oct 26, 2011, the 66th session of the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba," the 20th such resolution in a row. A total of 186 countries voted in favor of the resolution, three countries abstained, and only the US and Israel voted against the resolution. The resolution urged the US to repeal or invalidate the almost 50-year-long economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as soon as possible ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)). The US, however, continues to defy the resolution. The blockade imposed by the US against Cuba qualifies as an act of genocide under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was adopted in 1948.

The above-mentioned facts are but a small yet illustrative enough fraction of the US' dismal record on its human rights situation. The US' own tarnished human rights record has made it in no condition, on a moral, political or legal basis, to act as the world's "human rights justice," to place itself above other countries and release the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices year after year to accuse and blame other countries. We hereby advise the US government once again to look squarely at its own grave human rights problems, to stop the unpopular practices of taking human rights as a political instrument for interference in other countries' internal affairs, smearing other nations' images and seeking its own strategic interests, and to cease using double standards on human rights and pursuing hegemony under the pretext of human rights.

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[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2012-05/26/content\\_15392452.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2012-05/26/content_15392452.htm)