

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

For more than three decades, the United States administrations have projected human rights as an important part of their foreign policy. Two presidents, in particular Democrat Jimmy Carter and Republican George W. Bush, made the promotion of rights central to their foreign policy objectives and trumpets itself as the international protector of human rights. However, United States' actions are not consistent with the mission it claims to champion. It is notorious for violating human rights of people within the U.S. and other countries when it perceives its own interest especially economic, strategic and political interests being jeopardized. The reward for this hypocrisy is the global anti-Americanism.¹

The human rights record of the United States is a controversial and complex issue. The United States has been praised for its progressive human rights record, but has faced criticism over certain issues, such as the deception of the government leaders, the U.S. withdrawal from many human rights treaties, the covert operations of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the invasion of Iraq that causes a huge innocent casualty, the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. corporations' abuse of worker's rights, or the rights violation of children, women, and people of different race or ethnicity in the United States. The tragic result is that the United States has been handicapped in providing crucial human rights leadership especially when such leadership is desperately needed.

It is inarguable that the United States is an exceptional country, but this does not mean it should be exempt from criticism. The Obama administration that took office in 2009 faces an enormous challenge, particularly how to restore faith in America and its place in the global community. The U.S. should have a more actively supportive role in international organizations concerning human rights protection. It's

¹ Robert McMahon, "Human Rights Reporting and U.S. Foreign Policy," Backgrounders, *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 9, 2009, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/18939/human-rights-reporting-and-us-foreihn-policy.html>.

involvement will help to strengthen and legitimize these institutions. In addition, the United States should first adopt a more sophisticated, less ham-handed approach to the promotion of democracy around the globe. Second and the most important solution is that it needs to conform its own practices to international standards on fundamental human rights issues. Third, it needs to renew its support for the international system by ratifying one or more international human rights. Fourth, it needs to codify the positive obligations of the United States under the newly doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" civilian populations at risk from mass atrocities. Fifth, the United States should not employ military force for alleged humanitarian reasons without the explicit approval of the Security Council. Sixth, the new government must make sure that all occupants at Guantanamo Bay must be released or transferred to the American military or criminal justice system for prosecution. Finally, the United States must work with the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and multilateral trade agreements in promoting human rights.

Reducing the United States human rights policy inconsistencies and contradictions will not eliminate the powerful waves of anti-Americanism that have always existed and that have crested in recent years. But it will certainly more or less reduce the rhetorical criticism available to the United States.