**U.S. Systemic Racism Targeting Asian and Chinese American’s Latest Struggle**

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1. S. President Joe Biden met with the Korean boy band BTS at the White House on May 31 2022. The meeting came as the Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month in May came to a close, and also be a major initiative of the Biden administration to address the recent surge of anti-Asian hate crimes across the Country. The footage of the U.S. president talking, laughing and doing the finger heart with seven Korean pop stars has sparked widespread attention on the Internet , however skepticism among them. Fox News host Tucker Carlson took a jab in his show, saying that getting “a Korean pop group to discuss anti-Asian hate crimes in United States" as trying to degrade the country. Some tweets also worried that President Biden host the most influential Asian celebrities cannot change the fact of Asian Americans being harassed, attacked and even shot on the streets.

This is the exact struggle that Asian Americans are facing in the United States. American sociologist Joe Feagin has proposed there is systemic racism in the United States, arguing that this system of racial oppression was not an accident of history, but was created intentionally by white American. It is not a surface-level feature of society, but rather it pervades, permeates, and interconnects all major groups, networks, and institutions across society. [[1]](#footnote-0)For almost two century, Asians have been the victims of systemic racism in the United States. Praised as “model minority” by hardworking and diligence, they suffer from multiple discrimination in political, economic and cultural fields at the same time. In recent years, polarization of American politics, the resurgence of extreme right-wing and the pandemic worsened their situation, stigma, hatred and violence have put all Asians America at risk.

When Asians have become the major target of systemic racism in the United States, Chinese American are the bullseye. While struggling against anti-Asian racism, Chinese American also pay extra price for the United States’ mistaken China policy. In order to contain China, government and media launched a campaign of stigmatizing China which exaggerated by social media. Chinese Americans therefore become the target of U.S. anxiety about China and be blame for the rampant Covid-19 pandemic, even domestic problems. These practices are not only against the fact, but also contradict the United Nations’ appeal of strengthening human rights and eliminating racial discrimination, and essentially undermine the effort of major powers to work together to address new global challenges.

***Systemic Racial Discrimination against Chinese American: Three Dimensions***

The UN Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights notes unchallenged, pervasive, and persistent discrimination that is often found “entrenched in social behaviour and organization” . It has defined as “systemic discrimination” as the “legal rules, policies, practices or predominant cultural attitudes in either the public or private sector which create relative disadvantages for some groups, and privileges for other groups”[[2]](#footnote-1). Accordingly, the racism which is systemic means it is not isolated and sporadic cases, but a long-term, historical product; it is not targeting a particular race, but involving all minorities, even mainstream groups; the subject of racism suffer from not only the economic deprivation , but a disadvantage politically, economically, culturally and safety; People under racism is facing antipathy, restriction, exclusion, hostility and even threat of life on a daily base. By analyzing racism against Asian Americans, at least three dimensions can be observed: explicit discrimination, prevailing restriction, and disguised discrimination.

 *“Perpetual Foreigner”-Explicit Hostility against Asian Americans*

The history of the United States is a history of immigrants from various countries creating a brand new country in North America. The Indians were the original inhabitants of North America, Protestants from Britain created the political, economic and cultural framework of the country, Black slaves played a major, though unwilling and generally unrewarded, role in laying the economic foundations, especially in [the South](https://www.britannica.com/place/the-South-region).[[3]](#footnote-2)Asian immigrants were the main labour of the construction of the Pacific Railroad, contributing to link the east and west and reshape the country’s landscape. “Hart–Celler Act” in 1965, abolished the quota system limiting the immigrants numbers, and tens of millions of immigrants from Asia, Southern and Eastern Europe, and Africa poured in since them, fundamentally altered the demographics and economic history of the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2020, Non-Latino white Americans make up 57.8% of the U.S. population, Latinos 18.7%, African-Americans 12.1%, and Asians 5.9%.As of 2017, an estimated 44,525,458 residents of the United States were foreign-born, 13.5% of the country’s total population.[[4]](#footnote-3) In 2018, 27.5% of immigrants had lived in the U.S. for less than 10 years[[5]](#footnote-4). Currently, global immigrants are flowing into the United States steadily.

However, being American is still equated with being White in a country with such a diverse racial and cultural structure[[6]](#footnote-5), and Asians are seen as “perpetual foreigners”. It implies that Asians, coming from distant Asia, have appearance and cultural background different from the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant group, so they cannot be trusted emotionally as permanent “others”. Historically, Asians arrived in the America later and contributed far less to the development of the United States than whites or even other ethnic minorities. When conflicts of values or interests with Asians outbreaks, dominant majorities thought they have good reasons to exclude, discriminate, expel and even violently attack Asians.

Since arrival in the Americas in the 1840s, Asians have been experiencing discriminatory legislation and social discrimination. The U.S. government introduced numbers of acts that exploited the cheap labor of Asians while cruelly denying their basic human rights as members of society. In 1790, Congress enacted the Naturalization Act, which only allow “free whites” who live in the Unites States for at least two years to be naturalized as U.S. citizens, Asian immigrants being excluded. In 1850, California imposed a mining license tax of $20 per month on all foreign miners, mostly Asians. In 1854, a federal court ruled that it was illegal for Chinese to testify against whites in court. In 1870, Congress extended naturalization rights to African descent, but not Asians. In 1882, Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first act to restrict immigration of specific ethnic groups, which completely banned Chinese immigrants. Several western states enacted the Alien Land Act, prohibiting Japanese and Chinese immigrants from owning and leasing land in 1919. The Johnson-Reid Act in 1925 completely banned all Asian immigrants. Asians have been constantly bullied, discriminated and violent attacked in cities as well. 1871 massacre of Chinese in Los Angeles, the anti-Japanese sentiment in the 1980s, the attacks against Korean in the 1992 Los Angeles riots, and the violence against Asians during economic recessions illustrate explicitly the extreme vulnerability of Asians in the American racial structure.

Hate crimes against Asians further spike since Covid-19 pandemic outbroke in 2020. The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, had released *Report to the Nation: Anti-Asian Prejudice & Hate Crime*, revealing that hate crimes targeting Asians have reached some unprecedented levels in 2020 and 2021. According to the data, reported anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 149%, while overall hate crime drops 9% in 2020. New York City had a particularly drastic rise, from 3 anti-Asians hate crimes reported in 2019 to 28 crimes in 2020, a 833 percent increase. San Francisco a 50 percent increase and 114 percent increase in Los Angeles. Things got worse in 2021,124 percent increased national wide,a 343 percent increase in New York City,a 567 percent increase in San Francisco and 173 percent increase in Los Angeles.[[7]](#footnote-6) 45% of Asian adults in a Pew survey in April 2021 say they have experienced at least one of five specific offensive incidents since the the pandemic, and one-third in 2022 survey said they have changed their daily travel routes to avoid attacks.[[8]](#footnote-7) Verbal jokes, racial slurs, spat on, physical attacks in public places and even shootings against Asians were showed in online videos which are beyond imaging. Asian Americans are living in a grave danger.

*The Bamboo Ceiling - Restrictions hidden but ubiquitous*

In 2005, Jane Hyun, a Korean American writer, published a book titled *Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling: Career Strategies for Asians*, arguing that Asian Americans faced a tangible obstacle in education, workplace and marriage. Unlike the “glass ceiling” faced by women, the “bamboo ceiling” is more visible and stands in the way of all Asians.

Equality of educational opportunity is essential for a equal society. Asian American families highly value good education, and Asian students excel academically, so the number of students enrolled in top universities in the U.S. is rather large. 27.8% Students admitted by Harvard University in 2022 are Asian, compared to 6% Asians are in U.S. population.[[9]](#footnote-8) But a closer look reveals that Asians are not competing fairly. New York Times published a article based on a experiment in which emails were sent to more than 6,500 randomly selected professors of 259 American universities to ask about the professor’s Ph.D. program. These emails were identical,varying only in the 20 student names with racial characteristics.The results showed that Asian-named students were rejected at a much higher rate than white-named students, while most Chinese-named students were rejected.[[10]](#footnote-9) Affirmative action, imposing racial and gender quotas on admissions to colleges,military since the 1960s also put Asians in a awkward situation. In California where colleges and universities insist merit-based admissions rather than race, top schools, such as UC Berkeley and UCLA, have over 40% Asian undergraduates, and half students of the other prestigious private schools are Asian. But at other Ivy League colleges and universities with race quotas, the Asian admissions rate remains around 20 percent.[[11]](#footnote-10) In 2015, a Chinese-American high school student from California with excellent performance was rejected by six of the seven Ivy League colleges to which he applied. He filed complaint with the U.S. Department of Education and received the response “we need a smoking gun”[[12]](#footnote-11).

In the workplace, the limitations to Asians accessing senior positions are even more apparent. Report *Good worker, not leader* released by Association of Asian American Investment Managers shows that in Silicon Valley, 1 out of every 285 Asian women and 1 out of every 201 Asian men is an executive; in the federal government, Asians make up 5.8% of the workforce, but just 3.5% of senior executives; in law, Asian Americans make up 5% of lawyers, but have the lowest ratio of partners to associates. Asian Americans make up 3% of Federal Judges and 2% of state judges. In banking, Asian Americans make up 7% to nearly 19% of executives or senior managers at the six largest U.S. lenders, yet they comprise 23% of middle managers and professionals.[[13]](#footnote-12)

Even some talented Asians have touch or even broken the bamboo ceiling, they still face general mistrust and skepticism. Political observer website Politico published a article *Foreigners in Their Own Country* in March 18, reporting that Asian diplomats serving in the State Department have been under race-based security checks and restrictions. More than 100 Asian military officers, diplomats, government civilians, intelligence officers, scientists and academics working in foreign policy and national security sectors signed a joint statement saying they have been subjected to suspicion, attacks, discrimination and accusations of disloyalty in the workplace because of their race.[[14]](#footnote-13) Even though David Wu, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives who was invited to address employees by Department of Energy in May 2001, was denied access with his Asian assistant even after showing their congressional identification. The building guard asked repeatedly if he was a citizen.[[15]](#footnote-14)

*Honorary Whites/Model Minority - Discrimination Disguised as Praise*

Usually the discussion of racism would done here, but there is a third level of discrimination against Asians, which is disguised as praise. “Honorary white” is a term that was used by the [apartheid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apartheid_in_South_Africa%22%20%5Co%20%22Apartheid%20in%20South%20Africa) regime of [South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa%22%20%5Co%20%22South%20Africa) to grant the rights and privileges of [whites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_South_African%22%20%5Co%20%22White%20South%20African) to those who are racially non-whites, include the [Japanese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_people_in_South_Africa%22%20%5Co%20%22Japanese%20people%20in%20South%20Africa), [Koreans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koreans_in_South_Africa%22%20%5Co%20%22Koreans%20in%20South%20Africa) and other East Asian ethnic groups.The term “model minority” was introduced by sociologist William Peterson in his article in 1966 about the “success story” of Japanese Americans in the US, expanded to Asian Americans later. In terms of statistic including education level, economic income and crime rate, Asians are indeed outstanding among all ethnic groups. Known as hardworking, introverted, and reluctant to get involved in social conflicts, Asians were perceived “model minority” and “whiter than whites”.

However these appreciative titles represent discrimination which are harder to detect and are more harmful to Asians.

First, these terms are reward from the superior white community to subordinate Asians, essentially a cover up for racism. Accepting these titles means satisfying their status as second-class citizens, endorsing the current racial structure, and giving up the right to fight for equal.

Second, these terms can also be used to corroborate the rhetoric that America is a country that is equal and free of racism. In other words, the success of Asians in American society proves that there is nothing wrong with the American social and racial system. Even if some minor flaws exists, they do not necessarily prevent minorities from earn a better life, because Asians have overcome these difficulties. If certain minority groups are lagging behind, it is a problem of their own, not because of the systemic racism.

Third, these terms deliberately create conflicts between Asians and other minorities. Claiming “model minority” myth of Asians is to openly criticizing other minority groups for not being exemplary enough. In addition, exaggerating the success of Asians would foster the illusion that Asians obtain resources more than should, which also easily arouses the resentment of other minority groups and even majority groups, and intensifies ethnic conflicts. For example, white Americans called the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) as “Made In Taiwan” because of the large number of Chinese Taiwanese students admitted to the college; the University of California, Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.) was also jokingly referred as “United Caucasians Lost Among Asians”[[16]](#footnote-15) or “You See Lots of Asians”[[17]](#footnote-16). This makes Asians a easy target for xenophobia in U.S. society and hinders the united effort of minorities to fight for rights.

Fourth, overstating the achievements of Asians will separate Asians from disadvantaged groups favored by the affirmative action. Even few Asians are successful, the Asian community remains a vulnerable group in American society, especially economic and political refugees from Southeast Asia and other immigrant groups, which is still in need of help. A emphasis on Asians’ success may further shrink the current limited preferential policies for Asians. There was a debate over whether to eliminate admission quotas for Asian groups at top universities, with proponents claiming that Asians no longer need quotas because they are excellent enough.

In short, Asian Americans will never be able to change their status as outsiders due to three dimensions of racism suppression. With constantly efforts, Asians can achieved extraordinary upward mobility, but still can’t crack the bamboo ceiling. When the society are prosperous and stable, Asians are given the reputation of being a “model minority” to build the illusion that Asians are integrated into mainstream society. However, when economic declines or interests conflict, Asian Americans are relegated to “perpetual foreigners” again and face prejudice, exclusion, or even violence.

***New Features of Racial Discrimination against Chinese Americans***

Chinese are the oldest and the largest Asian community in the United States. Worked as miners, railroad builders, farmers, factory workers, and fishermen in the past and professionals in various fields today, they have made innumerable contributions to the development of the United States as a superpower with their intelligence and hardworking. However, they endured the most severe discrimination among all Asian communities as well.The first and only immigration act in the United States against a particular ethnic group immigrants was the Chinese Exclusion Act. Although the U.S. government and society has continued to promote the agenda of eliminating racial discrimination, discrimination against Chinese American has never disappeared but increased and adapts to new circumstances, many new features have emerged.

*More Violence against Chinese American*

Violence against Asians has increased dramatically sine the pandemic and the attacks on Chinese American are disproportionately surged. According the the U.S. census, Chinese account for 25.6% of the Asian population in the U.S., but in 3,795 incident reports of hate crimes against Asians the non-profit organization Stop AAPI Hate received, 42.8% was reported by Chinese, nearly half. Koreans reported 16.1%, Japanese reported 8.2%, and Vietnamese reported 8.0%, proportionally fit their percentage of the Asian population.[[18]](#footnote-17)

Judging from some perpetrators’ yelling, some incidents experienced by other Asian communities may intended targeting Chinese. For example, a Filipino woman was harassed in the Washington, D.C. Metrom in March 2021 by someone who shouted offensive words including China.[[19]](#footnote-18) As Chinese and Japanese, Korean, and other East Asian groups are indistinguishable from appearance and perpetrators launched indiscriminate attacks.This suggests that the current data may only shows the tip of the iceberg of what is really happening to Chinese American.

*More harsh discrimination language against Chinese America*n

### The problem of “linguistic racism” is quite pervasive in U.S. It may seem less damaging than violent attacks, but by creating, using and disseminating discrimination language, people help build a broader, deeper, and more persistent psychological foundation of racism. There are countless xenophobic rhetoric against Chinese throughout U.S. history. In the 19th century, white people made humiliating remarks about the appearance, characters, and lifestyle of Chinese laborers by calling them “yellow peril”, “ Chinese menace”, “sneaky Oriental”, living in a “filthy nest of iniquity and rottenness, and Chinese women as the source of “sin” and “impurity”.

The discriminatory language against Chinese has once been tempered in modern society, but has grown explosively again recently. One of the major stimulus is the pandemic. Researchers at the University of Utah used Twitter’s data set that contained keywords reflecting COVID-19 and anti-Asian hate during November 2019 and May 2020. They identified two spikes in hateful tweets: The first at the end of January 2020 when COVID-19 first came to the U.S.; the second in mid-March after President Donald Trump tweeted about the “Wuhan flu” and “Chinese virus.”[[20]](#footnote-19) Another study collected 1.2 million hashtags on Twitter in March 2020 and found that approximately 1 in 5 hashtags used in tweets along with #covid19# were anti-Asian, whereas [half of the hashtags used alongside #chinesevirus#](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306154). [[21]](#footnote-20)The volume of anti-Asian language in cyberspace went down later but remained higher than before the pandemic. In real life, Chinese Americans face verbal attacks more frequently, with extreme offensive words such as “Chink Virus”, “dirty China” and “take the virus and go back to China”[[22]](#footnote-21). Inflation in the U.S. also fuel the trend, “job thief”, “Chinese liar”, and “Chinese spy” have also flooded the Internet and the real world.

*More official discrimination practice against Chinese American*

Another distinctive feature of the racial discrimination against Chinese in the United States in recent years is that the U.S. government has increasing playing a role as fresh impetus. Former President Donald Trump is the originator of this trend. His inflammatory anti-China rhetoric,such as “almost every student” from China “a spy” and “Chinese Virus” followed by a rise of other politicians’ attacks to Chinese scientists and elites for their loyalty and identity to the U.S.

The most notorious official discrimination against Chinese American is the “China Initiative” launched by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2018. Although Chinese Americans working in national security and sensitive technology sectors have been always subject to rigorous background checks and due diligence than other ethnic groups, the China Initiative,declaiming to counter economic espionage and other forms of trade secret theft conducted by Chinese government, push the paranoid and racism against Chinese further. It encouraged 94 U.S. Attorney’s offices to bring on at least one prosecution each year, “identifying and prosecuting those engaged in trade secret theft” by China and “develop an enforcement strategy concerning non-traditional collectors that are being co-opted into transferring technology contrary to U.S. interests”[[23]](#footnote-22) This top priority of US law enforcement is the most blatantly anti-Chinese practice since the McCarthyism in the 1950s, leading a witch hunt of the FBI and intelligence agencies at Universities, research institutions, labs and other defence industrial bases throughout the country. According to database MIT Technology Review published in December, the China Initiative has involved 77 cases and more than 150 defendants, nearly 90 percent of whom are of Chinese American. In February 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice, in response to intense criticism, renamed the “China Initiative” to the “National Threat Strategy”, stating that the greatest danger to U.S. national security comes from foreign governments, not from China or Chinese American. But the arbitrary investigations and scrutiny of Chinese-American scholars led by the U.S. government are far from over. NIH, NSF and other institutes running numbers of U.S.-China cooperation programs of high end technologies have initiated checks and reviews. The chilling effect has already gripped every Chinese origin in U.S. universities and research institutions.

Deep-rooted racism against Chinese permeate the US Army as well. Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest program(MAVNI) , launched by the Bush administration in 2008, aims to recruit non-citizen residents with certain critical skills to join the military in return of U.S. citizenship. The Obama administration called a halt to the program in 2009 and later resumed it with stricter vetting procedures. According to media reports, after being resumed in 2012, several hundreds of recruit applications were rejected, most of whom were Chinese. Two Chinese recruits were denied for totally opposite reasons, alleging that one recruit’s grandfather served in the Chinese Communist military, and another recruit’s grandfather fought against, and was tortured by, Communist Party.[[24]](#footnote-23)

*Rising negative sentiment against Chinese American by other Asians*

As one of the top five minority groups in the U.S., Asians have always suffered discrimination together and fought it together. The Stop Asian Hate protests sweeping the U.S. in early 2022 also advocated the right of Asian Americans as whole instead of many sub-groups. But there is a dangerous signal that few Asians are trying to separate themselves with the Chinese and their negative feeling about Chinese is growing.

This may be out of self-protection. Being Afraid of the attacks, some Asians aware that some perpetrator’s anger are originally targeting Chinese and think showing signs of “non-Chinese” can avoid hurt. T-shirts, masks, stickers, magnets printed with “Don’t shoot, I’m not Chinese”, “Yes, I’m Asian, No, I'm not Chinese”,designed by A Melbourne-based fashion company, were also sold on Amazon, though they were soon removed after complaints.

What’s more, having been immersed in a racist environment for so long, some minorities have become the advocacy of racism and interracial competition, considering the suppression of Chinese as an opportunity for their own ethnicity. While responding to a question about Chinese immigration at a GOP forum in April 2021,Republican candidate for Texas’ 6th Congressional District and Korean American Sery Kim said “I don’t want them here at all” ,“they steal our intellectual property, they give us Corona virus, they don’t hold themselves accountable.” She added later that she is eligible to attack Chinese American because she was Korean.[[25]](#footnote-24) While she faced intense backlash and lost her sponsors for campaign, this sentiment doss not fade. If the negative feeling about Chinese were to spread among other Asian groups, it would cause a rift among Asians and put double pressure on Chinese Americans beside of White Supremacy.

***Root of the latest Chinese American’ struggle***

Systemic racist discrimination can never be attributed to one perpetrator and one event, but rather to the political, cultural, and social structures that produce the perpetrators and events. In his latest book *The Loneliest American*, Korean American writer Jay Caspian Kang argues that the various racist acts against Asians throughout American history have their roots in its Asian policies. He writes that while Asian people face racialized labor exploitation, rampant workplace abuse, criminalization within the workplace, targeted sexual violence, routine refusal of language access, immigration detention and deportation, and xenophobic media attacks domestically, the United States wages military occupation, military sexual violence in host nations, environmental destruction, and extractive and coercive trade/economic policies abroad in countries across Asia. It is from this context that every form of violence against Asian people in the United States springs.[[26]](#footnote-25)

This explains why systemic racist discrimination against Asians continues to intensify and Chinese American are in an unprecedented predicament although international societies are promoting the agenda of eliminating racial discrimination and calling for zero tolerance of racism. From verbal attacks to physical harassment, from official scrutiny to populace’s resentment, racial discrimination against Chinese American has significantly deteriorated. This, which goes against the tide, is rooted in the containment strategy against China that the U.S. government is pursuing.

Since perceived China’s rise as greatest challenges, the U.S. government has unveiled a strategy mixed of intensifying diplomacy standoff, growing economy sanction and, rarely gone to the front of the stage from behind, promoted overall stigmatization of China. In international relations, stigma is derogatory and insulting terms used in political interactions between states around power games. Stigmatization is essentially constructing a narrative driven by competition and exclusion need, in which one state purposefully and consciously imposes derogatory and insulting allegations on the identity, characteristics or behavior of another state in order to discriminates against or degrades the latter.[[27]](#footnote-26) These moral degradation can service for political agendas. In China’s case, the U.S. government has fabricated stories of “forced labor” in Xinjiang to justify its unilateral sanctions on China; labeled the Covid-19 pandemic as “Chinese virus” in order to divert the public’s attention away from its failure in fighting the pandemic domestically; accused China of “stealing trade and technological secrets” to incite other countries joining the technical and economic suppression against China, etc. Jim O'Neill, former UK Treasury Minister and Chair of think tank Chatham House, said in his article *Blaming China is a Dangerous Distraction* that this blame game is not just unhelpful but dangerous.

One of the most dangerous consequence is that the stigmatization against China is shifting to Chinese American. The U.S. government has not explicitly stated that Chinese American should responsible for the pandemic and other crises, however, the rising anti-China sentiment fostered by the stigmatization of China is inevitably transferred to Chinese American. As a result, the fallacy of “China virus” turn to the perception that “Chinese are spreading the virus”, the accusation of “China steal technology” will lead to a conclusion that “Chinese are spies”. As the hostile against Chinese escalate rapidly, the U.S. government has not only failed to prevent , but has also taken the lead in initiating reviews, suspensions and lawsuits against Chinese professionals in sensitive fields. This further reinforces the disloyal image of Chinese American to the public and implies that the hatred and attacks against Chinese American are legitimate and encouraged, thus fueling turmoil to a higher level.

Provoked by the national strategy, some American media, abandoning journalistic ethics, disseminated anti-Chinese remarks by unscrupulous politicians, and published unconfirmed rumors about China. Social Media, for their own interests, allowed pictures, cartoons and videos explicitly implying that China is responsible for the pandemic to spread on the Internet rather than fulfil the obligation of regulation. Anxiety of the pandemic, economic frustration and antipathy toward China eventually brewed into severe anti-Chinese hatred, and violence became its final outlet.

Scapegoating the minorities for domestic crisis and foreign tensions is a old tricks the U.S. government have been using. The Chinese Exclusion Act was signed in 1870s when a large number of white workers got unemployed under the Great Depression. In World War II, the U.S. froze the assets of Japanese expatriates and forcibly interned nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans in settlements in California and Arkansas. 2018 Oscar best documentary Feature nominee *Abacus: Small Enough to Jail*tells a story that the only financial institution that U.S. government filed a lawsuit against after the 2008 financial crisis is a Chinese community bank in China Town of New York City rather than major real estate credit firms in Wall Street. When U.S.-China relations are bumpy or the U.S. economy declines, Chinese have always been the victims. As U.S. carrying containment strategy against China, long-existing racism against Chinese has turned into a systematic racial persecution promoted by the government, exaggerated by the media, and in which all races are involved. With well-organized, and widely implemented, the persecution is causing a destructive consequence at an alarming rate.

**U.S. government should fulfill its responsibility to eliminate racism**

It is proved that the victims of racism are never a specific race, but every people in society. Discrimination against Chinese American has intensified the conflicts among ethnic groups and contributed to the rise of right-wing and white supremacy. When awareness of tolerance and equality declines, all ethnic groups’ interests will be violated. The “witch hunt” led by the U.S. government against Chinese scientists has also led to scandals of power abuse in the U.S. Department of Justice and other agencies, which has seriously jeopardized the U.S. law enforcement. In the long run, the systemic racism against Chinese American will lead to a overall regression of American politics and society. In this regard, the U.S. government has a responsibility to do the following two things.

*Withdrawing the limitations of ICERD and fulfilling their obligation*

Although the United States is a State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), it ratified ICERD with a number of reservations, declaration and understandings.The UN Committee on the

Elimination of Racial Discrimination has noted that this significantly limits the practical effect of the ICERD in the United States to curb racial hate speech and other indirect discrimination.At a time when ethnic tension is intensifying and racism against Chinese is exploding, the U.S. should seek a lift or a withdrawal of the reservations and adjustment of relevant laws and policies, putting an effort to admit and eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, and eventually ensure a true equality for all minority groups. [[28]](#footnote-27)

*Stopping stigmatization to avoid endangering innocent Chinese American*

The U.S. government is responsible for the recent Chinese American’ s plight. In the foreseeable future, China and the U.S. may enter a period of “uneasy peace”, and Chinese American is impossible to stay out of it. The U.S. government, as the initiator, should take positive measures to minimize the harm to Chinese American. For example, in U.S.-China relations, the U.S. policy-maker should reduce and stop using stigmatization and demonization tactics, and pursue its own interests through fair, legitimate and orderly competition; in domestic law enforcement, effectively implement the Anti-New Coronation Hate Crimes Act, rectify the common deficiencies in law enforcement, and improve the efficiency of identification, examination and trail of related hate crimes, to safeguard the basic human rights of Chinese. It also need to guide the public opinion to correctly understand the positive role of Chinese in American society and draw a clear red line between “rivaling with China” and “persecuting Chinese”.

# Chinese Americans are first and foremost American citizens before they are of Chinese descent. Historically and today, Chinese immigrants are an integral part of American society. The United States was founded on the values of freedom and equality, and has presents itself as “beacon” and “safeguard” of human rights.Facing the challenge of the U.S.-China tension and sharp rise of racism, the bottom line is whether to protect Chinese from racist discrimination is a test that the U.S. government truly values its values and defend the basic human rights of its citizens.The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act is the first step to address the recent spike of racism and the U.S. still has a long way to go to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

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