

PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF COMFORT WOMEN

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND
THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC,
AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:35 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eni F. H. Faleomavaega (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. The subcommittee will come to order. On behalf of the subcommittee, I certainly would like to welcome my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from California, Congressman Royce, who is sitting in place for our ranking member, Mr. Manzullo, a gentleman from Illinois who is attending a funeral of our former colleague, the Honorable Charles Norwood from the State of Georgia, and we certainly extend to him and the members of his family our deepest sympathies at this time.

This is also the reason why many of our colleagues of Republican members are currently traveling to Georgia in attendance of the funeral services of our colleague, Congressman Norwood.

The subcommittee recognizes also Madam Pak, who is the National Assembly Member and the daughter of the late President of South Korea, President Pak Chung Lee. The subcommittee also welcomes our witnesses, including our colleague, the gentleman from California, Mr. Honda, and Ms. Yong Soo Lee, Ms. Jan O'Herne, Ms. Koon Ja Kim, Ms. Mindy Kotler and Dr. Soh. We also welcome Ms. Anna Song who will be translating for Ms. Lee and Ms. Kim.

Today our subcommittee will consider House Resolution 121, introduced by my good friend and colleague, Congressman Honda, which urges, basically, the Government of Japan to formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery—or forced prostitution if you want to put it in other terms—during its occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands before and during World War II.

I want to note for the record that former Congressman Lane Evans from the State of Illinois originally spearheaded this effort to defend the human rights of those who came to be known as Japanese military, and I quote, “comfort women.” Congressman Honda has continued Mr. Evans' work in part to bring clarity and closure

to this issue given that there has been some suggestion the Government of Japan is now trying to downplay its culpability.

I want to note that in terms of some of the information that has been brought to the Chair's attention, I wanted to say that before giving the opportunity to the members of the committee and especially also to our first witness, Congressman Honda, I would like to make this as an opening statement part of the chairman.

Clearly, it is a matter of historical record that the Japanese military forced at least some 50,000 to 200,000 women from Korea, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Holland and Indonesia to provide sex to Japanese soldiers during World War II and even before that. House Resolution 121, introduced by Congressman Honda, calls upon the U.S. House of Representatives to urge Japan to accept full responsibility for the actions of its military.

Japan contends that it has accepted responsibility. But it wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that major publications in Japan began to describe the details of what is now known as the "comfort women" system, and that countries occupied by Japan also began to speak out about it.

In response to these developments, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei issued a statement of admission and apology in 1992. Prime Minister Koizumi also issued an apology in the year 2001. However, in 2006, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shimomura Hakubun, as well as Japan's largest circulating newspaper, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, specifically challenged the validity of the Kono Statement and this has led to the belief that Japan is attempting to revise history.

For the record, I am including an article from *The Daily Yomiuri* dated December 24, 2006, entitled "LDP split over 'comfort women'/ Lawmakers plan to seek revision of 1993 statement on culpability." I am also including other newspaper articles from here and abroad which raise similar concerns and address other matters pertinent to this issue.

I also note that according to the Congressional Research Service, and I quote, "There has been a noticeable trend for new editions of history textbooks to omit references to comfort women." The Japanese Diet Government says this is not the case and has submitted statements suggesting otherwise, which I have included for the record.

As an aside, I will say that in no way is this hearing meant to embarrass the government and the good people of Japan. Like my colleagues, I appreciate that Japan is a close United States ally and I have a special love and affinity for the people of Japan and their leaders. But more sacred to me is our obligation to protect the human rights of those who were forced to become comfort women.

This is the very reason why I believe this hearing is important. Some may say the past is the past and that the U.S. is also an offender and violator of human rights. Maybe this is so. But nowhere in recorded history has the U.S. military as a matter of policy issued a directive allowing for the coercion of young women into sexual slavery or forced prostitution. On the other hand, this is exactly what the Japanese military did and it is an affront to truth for any government to downplay its history.

Civilized society cannot allow history to be revised or denied under any circumstances. Regardless of what bearing this, or any other issue, may have on bilateral relations or U.S. foreign policy, civilized society has a moral obligation to remember, to give voice to those who have suffered, to pay living tribute to victims past and present, to defend human rights and human dignity. Otherwise we run the risk of another Holocaust or, in this case, young women being forced into sexual slavery.

While I am aware that Japan set up the Asian Women's Fund in 1995 and agreed to pay for medical and support programs, and fund operational expenses for comfort women victims, the Japanese Government refused to finance atonement payments. Atonement payments were financed through private Japanese contributions and, to date, only 285 women have received payments from the Asian Women's Fund. In March of this year, the Asian Women's Fund will expire.

For the record, I will emphatically state that I do not believe any amount of money can atone for what these women suffered and, while I support any woman's right to lay claim to these funds, I do not believe the Japanese Government or its citizens should suggest that a monetary payment can right a moral wrong. So for me, any and all discussions about Asian Women's Fund sufficing as an act of apology falls far short of what is relevant.

What is relevant is that Japan acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery during its occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands through World War II. According to the Government of Japan, it has done so, and since 1996 every prime minister of Japan has extended his sincere apologies. According to the Government of Japan, current Prime Minister Abe also announced in October 2006 that the government continues to stand by its statement of apology.

House Resolution 121 suggests that this is not enough and, for this reason, we will consider the testimony presented to us in order to make a good-faith effort about where we need to go from here.

At this time, it is my privilege to extend to our ranking member of our subcommittee, the gentleman from California, for his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Faleomavaega follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Clearly, it is a matter of historical record that the Japanese military forced some 50,000 to 200,000 women from Korea, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Holland and Indonesia to provide sex to Japanese soldiers during WWII and, H. Res. 121, introduced by Congressman Mike Honda, calls upon the US House of Representatives to urge Japan to accept full responsibility for the actions of its military.

Japan contends that it has accepted responsibility. But it wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that major publications in Japan began to describe the details of what is now known as the "comfort women" system and that countries occupied by Japan also began to speak out about it.

In response to these developments, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei issued a statement of admission and apology in 1992. Prime Minister Koizumi also issued an apology in 2001. However, in 2006, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shimomura Hakubun, as well as Japan's largest circulating newspaper, *Yomiuri*

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What is relevant is that Japan acknowledge, acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery during its occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands during WWII. According to the Government of Japan, it has done so, and since 1996 every Prime Minister of Japan has extended his sincere apologies. According to the Government of Japan, current Prime Minister Abe also announced to the Diet in October 2006 that the government continues to stand by its statement of apology.

H. Res. 121 suggests that this is not enough and, for this reason, we will consider the testimony presented to us in order to make a good-faith effort about where we go from here.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that opportunity, and let me just say as a cosponsor of this resolution, the Japanese comfort resolution, I greatly appreciate you holding this hearing today.

Beginning in the 1930s the Imperial Government of Japan orchestrated the enslavement—as the chairman said—of somewhere between 50,000 and 200,000 young women who would euphemistically come to be known as comfort women. Many of these women were abducted from their homes and sent to Japanese military brothels. Others were lured from their homes under the false pretense of work or were told that they were being sent for employment, and of course they found neither.

The trauma and shame that these women suffered drove many to conceal their past, either too embarrassed or scared to speak of

it. Many died without ever mentioning their ordeal, suffering in silence and in psychological angst. Though the democratic Government of Japan today bears no resemblance to Imperial Japan and is a good ally not only of the United States but of democratic governments everywhere in the world, to this day the Japanese Diet maintains that all potential claims by individuals for suffering inflicted in the war were closed by treaties normalizing its ties with other Asian countries. Clearly many feel differently.

Groups of former comfort women continue to hold demonstrations outside of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Every week, rain or shine, they have held these demonstrations now for 14 years. Still, though, the prime ministers of Japan have issued apologies. Still a formal apology from the Japanese Diet continues to deny these women in their view full recognition.

What is more, some are actively seeking in Japan to downplay the past, stepping away from and diluting former statements of recognition. Some Japanese textbooks significantly downplay the abuses and war crimes suffered by the comfort women. Others are more forthcoming.

It is important that the Japanese Diet confronts this dark part of the history of Imperial Japan. In the previous Congress, the House International Relations Committee passed out of our committee House Resolution 759, the Japanese Comfort Women Resolution of which I was also a cosponsor. This resolution calls on the Japanese Government to formally acknowledge and take full responsibility for their sexual enslavement for thousands of young women.

Some are going to ask: Why do we focus on this issue now? Certainly time has passed, and there are many pressing issues on the Korean peninsula. Recently the Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on the killing in Darfur, Sudan. What we have there is genocide being engineered by the Sudanese Government. Much of the world, sadly, is ignoring this killing. The Chinese Government is blocking sanctions against Sudan for genocide.

The world's strength to oppose killing today is made greater by accountability for actions present but also actions in the past. It is weakened by denial of accountability and obfuscation of past facts. History is a continuum. It is much harder to get today right if we get yesterday wrong. So thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding these hearings, and I yield back.

Mr. FALCOMA. I thank the gentleman from California for an eloquent statement. I would like to give this opportunity to other members of our subcommittee if they have any opening statements. I understand my good friend from New Jersey, Congressman Sires, who is a new member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, is also here with us, and I believe he does not have an opening statement but my good friend from California, the gentleman from California, Congressman Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Today we are addressing a subject that is very painful, especially to the families and those former comfort women who will be providing testimony for us today. To each of those brave women, I extend my thanks for participating today, and to help Americans understand the suffering that took place during this time during the Second

World War, and my most sincere sympathy for the pain and the suffering and the agony that these individuals have had to suffer.

As everyone knows, during World War II Japan forced many thousands of innocent women from other countries in Asia to perform sexual services for the Japanese military. The victims known by the euphemism comfort women were not only raped many times but also mistreated and murdered. Many died and all of them suffered greatly.

George Santayana said that those who cannot remember the past are certainly condemned to repeat it. So thus it is fitting for this subcommittee to set the factual record straight about this tragic history, one which would help the world to avoid repeating any such actions. This in and of itself, setting the record straight, is a worthy goal. However, I have grave doubts about the wisdom and even the morality of going any further and adopting resolutions like H. Res. 121 which is before us today, and I will explain why.

House Resolution 121 demands that Japan apologize but, Mr. Chairman, Japan has already apologized many, many times which is exactly what they should have done. They should have apologized, and they did. The central thrust of H. Resolution 121 is to demand, and I quote, "Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner." But the most compelling point in our discussion should be that Japan has in fact done exactly what the resolution demands.

Japan has apologized many times, and it has done so in clear and strong terms, and that raises questions about this resolution. In 1994, for example, the Japanese prime minister stated the following: "On the issue of wartime comfort women, which seriously stained the honor and dignity of many women, I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my profound and sincere remorse and apologies." Of course this is not the whole story.

A line of Japanese prime ministers, many Japanese prime ministers since 1994 have issued very similar statements, and the current Prime Minister Abe, for example, has confirmed the policy of his predecessors, and I would like to submit for the record a copy of the text Prime Minister Kaszumi's letter to comfort women.

Prime Minister Kaszumi stated very clearly, "As prime minister of Japan, I thus extend a new my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women. We must not evade the weight of the past nor should we evade our responsibilities for the future." That was the prime minister of Japan, and the words, "As prime minister of Japan," are key here. That was meaning he was apologizing for the Japanese people. It was an official apology by the prime minister of Japan exercising his official capacity.

Japan has a parliamentary system. It also has a prime minister who is a member of the Diet. In addition, the Diet has issued numerous statements accepting responsibilities for Japan's actions during the Second World War. Mr. Chairman, this issue of an apology has been fully and satisfactorily addressed. Yes, it is important for us to set the record straight for history exactly how diabolical

and horrible these activities were by the Japanese during the Second World War.

But we must be accurate in what we are saying in terms of the Japanese position of today. For example, another part of H121, which I find to be misleading, is the fact that it talks about Japanese textbooks downplaying the comfort women tragedy. Well as in the United States, textbooks in Japan are chosen by local not central government authorities. A panel of experts in Japan has identified 18 history books that are used by the Japanese high school students. Of those 18, 16 address the comfort women matter, and all 18 describe the suffering of peoples in neighboring countries during the Second World War.

Well Japan's responsibility for those countries and this horrible crime is great but so is its regret, and in 16 of those 18 books that are used in the high schools, they address the comfort women issue, and those 16 books represent between 93 and 95 percent of all of Japan's high school history text. It seems to me that yes, we want to make sure that history is recorded accurately but we want to make sure that we are not saying that the current Japanese people and Government have not acknowledged those wrong deeds.

Every country in the world has committed crimes, not just the Japanese. Every country in the world, and, Mr. Chairman, I might note that you repeatedly called to our attention to some of the crimes the United States Government has committed by error or intentionally over the years, and I have heard you at many hearings call into question horrible things that our Government has done. So this is not a question of is Japan any dirtier than the rest of us in terms of having made mistakes, and the fact is that they have acknowledged those dirty deeds. In some cases I would say the United States has been less apologetic about some of the crimes that we have committed, and we have in the past.

Finally let me note, Mr. Chairman, that we have to make sure that what we do in condemning the past, that which has already been condemned and we have demanded that of Japan, that we are not unfairly suggesting that the Japanese of today must in some way be punished for two generations of Japanese ago did. That is not the way to create more harmony in this world.

So accept accountability. It is really important. Setting the record straight is really important. You are right. We must set a humane and decent standard but let me just say that it is my reading of the world today that the Japanese in alliance with the United States and other western powers is a major force for decency and humane standards today. It was not that way 60 and 100 years ago but today Japan is pivotal to the western democracy's fight to have these human rights standards that are so important for civilization.

So let us not beat someone after they have apologized. Let us make sure that we acknowledge and thank them for being open with us on those issues to the degree that they have. Now if I am wrong, I am willing to listen and to hear but I have got the quotes from the prime ministers. We have got people we talked to, the Japanese. They all suggest that we are so sorry about these things and apologize profusely et cetera, and it seems to me that we

should be setting the record straight but not blaming the current generation of Japanese. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman for his statement and I just want to say that I do not think there was ever intention on the part of the Chair to provide any accusations against the Japanese Government and its leaders and its people. We are just trying to make sure that we properly identify this very serious issue which has been pending for how many years, and the fact of the matter is this is the reason why we have a hearing, proposed legislation, and this is what makes this democracy so beautiful, and we are all entitled to our opinions, and I deeply respect the gentleman's opinion about this issue.

I ask if our good friend from Ohio, my good friend Congressman Chabot, if he has any opening statement.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief. I first want to apologize myself because I have about three hearings going on at the same time, and I am going to have to leave shortly but I am going to try to come back as well because this is an important hearing, and I do not want to repeat what the other members have said, and I think there have been some very good statements already made.

In the chairman's remarks, he had indicated that some allege that the Government of Japan is trying to downplay its culpability in this matter, and as my colleague from California indicated, Japanese officials have time and again already apologized, as they should have because this was a very terrible abuse of human rights. It did happen in World War II, and I would note now that Japan and Korea and Taiwan and Philippines and the other countries that suffered are all very strong allies of the United States.

We have the utmost respect for all those countries and the people in those countries as well. They are some of the people that have stood with us under difficult circumstances now and in the past, and we need to continue to work with them.

One of the things that I would like to see if possible is there should be compensation to the women that underwent these horrors and their families, and it is my understanding that a relatively small number have taken advantage of this for a number of reasons. I think the number is about 285 out of many more than that that would have qualified, and I would like to see some way to get the money, some compensation—although no compensation would ever be enough to pay them for the degradation that they had to undergo—but if there is some way that we could get more compensation to more of those individuals who qualify for that money we ought to try to do that.

And it is my understanding that some of the countries have either discouraged or prevented payments from being made for one reason or another. So I hope that perhaps that can be something looked into to try to compensate these women, the least we can do to try to help them, and I yield back my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I want to note that this was an issue that I had brought to the attention of the Ambassador from Japan, and that was the question I also raised. If there were somewhere between 50 to 200,000 women that were under this forced prostitution and the

fact that only 283 or 285 were compensated, I think we can all appreciate the psychological impact and why any woman would be so embarrassed even trying to say anything publicly about what happened in this part of our global history if you will of what the Japanese military did against these women but that certainly is an issue that we ought to pursue and see what we can do to see what else can be done.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Will the chairman yield for 1 second?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I gladly yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you. That is one thing that I was wondering if there was not some way and the embarrassment that people might feel is not embarrassment that they in any deserve but the fact is human nature being as it is some people might not want that past to be made public.

So if there was some way to make this a more private process that people could obtain the funds without necessarily broadcasting to the world how these funds were obtained I think that would be something, and it is also my understanding that—and I believe it is Taiwan and Korea is what I was told—that basically have a policy that they either do not permit it or frown upon it. So perhaps we could work with those countries as well to do something to try to help these women. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman for responding. I think one of the issues that I, in my readings and the accounts that give in to this issue, is the fact that many of these women do not really care about any monetary compensation. It is the sense of a formal apology or I think we went through the same experience with the Japanese Americans when they were interred, and I think I could not have asked for a better witness before us in sharing with us his sense of experience of what they went through in that terrible time, World War II.

But anyway, I want to invite our first witness this afternoon to speak. The chief sponsor of this legislation, my good friend the gentleman from California, a former mayor, I think, of the great city of San Jose, also with the California State Assembly, and then he was elected a Member of Congress in 1990. In 2000 was it? He really rose up in the ranks. Currently now he is a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee and vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, none other than my good friend Congressman Honda for his statement. Welcome

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL M. HONDA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. HONDA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman Faleomavaega, and I would also like to thank the other members of the subcommittee, especially Congressman Rohrabacher, for we have been partners and colleagues on similar issues regarding the ex POWs who were used as slave laborers during World War II, and to Mr. Chabot and Mr. Sires.

I hope that some of the comments that were raised by your opening remarks will be addressed by the three witnesses we have today, who traveled long distances from the Netherlands and from Australia and from Korea to share their experiences and their in-

sights, and perhaps respond to some of the ideas and comments that you have today.

I want to thank you for holding this historic hearing, and thank you for inviting me to testify before the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on the comfort women tragedy of which my good friend and our former colleague, Congressman Lane Evans, long advocated to be addressed by this body. I hope he is watching. *Semper Fi*.

As members of the subcommittee know, I recently introduced H. Res. 121, a resolution calling on the Government of Japan to formally acknowledge, apologize and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women and girls into sexual slavery during World War II, euphemistically known as comfort women. These violated women—mostly Korean, Chinese and Filipino, but include Dutch women as well—have too long been denied their dignity and their honor.

My interest in seeking justice for the comfort women began during my career as a school teacher in San Jose. A couple of decades ago, I learned that Japan's ministry of education sought to omit or downplay the comfort women tragedy in its approved textbooks. As a teacher interested in historical accuracy and reconciliation, I knew the importance of teaching and talking about tragedy and injustice without flinching from the details. Without honesty and candor, there can be no foundation for reconciliation.

My subsequent research on Japan's long unresolved historical issues with its former adversaries led me to pursue efforts toward reconciliation in the California State Assembly, and in 1999 I authored Assembly Joint Resolution 27 (AJR 27), which called on Congress to urge the Japanese Government to issue an apology for the victims of the rape of Nanking, comfort women, and the POWs who were used as slave laborers. The resolution was ultimately passed.

Now, nearly 9 years after the passage of AJR 27, I stand united with several of my colleagues in the House, from both parties, in support of H. Res. 121 and the surviving comfort women who are here with us today. The urgency is upon this committee and the Congress to take quick action on this resolution for these women are aging and their numbers dwindling with each passing day.

If we do not act now, we will lose a historic opportunity to encourage the Government of Japan to properly acknowledge responsibility for the plight of the comfort women. Elected officials of Japan have taken steps on this issue, and for that they are to be commended. In 1993, Japan's then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono issued an encouraging statement regarding comfort women, which expresses apologies and remorse for the government's ordeal.

Additionally, Japan attempted to provide monetary compensation to surviving comfort women through the Asia Women's Fund, a government-initiated and largely government-funded private foundation whose purpose was a carrying out of programs and projects with the aim of atonement for the comfort women. The Asia Women's Fund is to be disbanded on March 31, 2007.

Recent attempts, however, by some senior members of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party to review and possibly retract Secretary Kono's statement are disheartening and mark Japan's

retary Kono's statement are disheartening and mark Japan's equivocation on this issue.

Additionally, while I appreciate Japan's creation of the Asia Women's Fund and the past prime minister's apologies to some comfort women which accompanied this fund's disbursement of monetary compensation from this fund, the reality is that without a sincere and unequivocal apology from the Government of Japan, the majority of surviving comfort women refused to accept these funds.

In fact, as you will hear today, many comfort women returned the prime minister's letter of apology accompanying the monetary compensation saying they felt the apology was artificial and disingenuous. Perhaps the apologies of the aforementioned prime minister read, "My sincere regret," and what I think people are talking about is a process by which the Government of Japan goes through and makes a formal, unequivocal apology on behalf of the government with the leadership along with that.

Mr. Chairman, let me make my intentions abundantly clear. This resolution provides for historical reconciliation and then moving forward. It is not in any way meant and should not damage our strong relationship with Japan. As Congressman Rohrabacher and I have said regarding our past efforts, they are in no way meant to appear to bash Japan or bash Asians or whatever. That is not what this is all about.

I understand that many feel strongly that this resolution is unnecessary, that it focuses too much on the past, and fear it will negatively affect regional stability along with our alliance with Japan.

These worries are unfounded. I feel strongly that accepting responsibility for the comfort women tragedy is worthy of a nation as great as Japan is. I also feel strongly that reconciliation on this issue will have a positive effect on upon relationships in the region as historical anxieties are put to rest.

We know as policymakers on domestic and foreign relations issues that many dynamics between our countries are sometimes set aside for the anxieties and the wrongs of the past which have not yet been fully put to rest.

I ask that Members of Congress understand that apologies on matters of historical significance are important, and that they are the first necessary steps in any attempt to reconcile differences or atone for past actions. Our Government has made its own mistakes, but in its wisdom it has made the difficult choice to admit wrongdoing.

For example, in 1988, Congress passed, and President Ronald Reagan signed into law, H.R. 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which was a formal, clear, unequivocal apology to the United States citizens of Japanese ancestry who were unjustly put into internment camps during World War II.

I want to repeat that. Congress passed this act and the President signed it into law, and this was considered by the community a formal, clear, unequivocal apology. As someone who was put into internment camp as an infant, I know firsthand that we must not be ignorant of the past, and that reconciliation through appropriate government actions to admit error are the only ones likely to be long lasting. One of our past philosophers and writers, George San-

tayana, had said that those who do not understand or study their past mistakes are doomed to repeat them.

For many Japanese Americans whose civil and constitutional rights were violated by internment, that dark chapter of history was closed by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which emerged over 40 years after internment. Seeking reparations was a long and arduous journey, but the apology, once it came, was clear and unequivocal. Reconciliation is something our generation should rightfully be calling for in order to promote the growth of a peaceful global society, and to address issues of the past so we can finally put them to rest.

Mr. Chairman, for reconciliation and justice for these women, I and many other people have worked very hard to bring these three survivors, Ms. Lee Yong Soo, Ms. Kim Koon Ja and Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne, to Washington. They are the human face of wartime violence against women. Their words reflect not just history but the continued pattern of organized abuse of women in conflict.

Members of Congress who feel that this resolution is unnecessary need to look no further than these three women who know that they speak not just for themselves but also for the young women in Burma, Bosnia and Darfur.

I urge the committee to act swiftly on H. Res. 121 so that it may soon come to the floor for a vote. The strength and humanity of these women and the truths to which they testify today must supersede any political pressures to stop and slow this resolution. I want to again thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the subcommittee for this opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Honda follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL M. HONDA, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Thank you, Chairman Faleomavaega, for holding this historic hearing. And thank you for inviting me to testify before the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on the comfort women tragedy, which my good friend and our former colleague, Lane Evans long advocated to be addressed by the U.S. Congress.

As the members of the Subcommittee know, I recently introduced H.Res.121, a resolution calling on the Government of Japan to formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women and girls into sexual slavery starting in the 1930s during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Euphemistically known as "Comfort Women," these violated women have too long been denied their dignity and honor.

My interest in seeking justice for the Comfort Women began during my career as a schoolteacher in San Jose. A couple decades ago, I learned that Japan's Ministry of Education sought to omit or downplay the comfort women tragedy in its approved textbooks. As a teacher interested in historical reconciliation, I knew the importance of teaching and talking about tragedy and injustice without flinching from the details. Without honesty and candor, there is no foundation for reconciliation.

My subsequent research on Japan's long unresolved history issues with its former adversaries led me to pursue efforts toward reconciliation in the California State Assembly. In 1999, I authored Assembly Joint Resolution 27 (AJR27), which called on Congress to urge the Japanese government to issue an apology for the victims of the Rape of Nanking, Comfort Women, and POWs who were used as slave laborers. The resolution was ultimately passed.

Now, nearly nine years after the passage of AJR27, I stand united with several of my colleagues in the House, from both parties, in support of H.Res.121 and the surviving Comfort Women who are here with us today. The urgency is upon this Committee and the Congress to take quick action on this resolution. These women are aging and their numbers dwindling with each passing day. If we do not act now,

we will lose a historic opportunity to encourage the Government of Japan to properly acknowledge responsibility for the plight of the Comfort Women.

Elected officials of Japan have taken steps to address this issue, and for that they are to be commended. In 1993, Japan's then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono issued an encouraging statement regarding Comfort Women, which expressed the Government's sincere apologies and remorse for their ordeal. Additionally, Japan attempted to provide monetary compensation to surviving comfort women through the Asia Women's Fund, a government initiated and largely government-funded private foundation whose purpose was the carrying out of programs and projects with the aim of atonement for the Comfort Women. The Asia Women's Fund is to be disbanded on March 31, 2007.

Recent attempts, however, by some senior members of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party to review and even possibly retract Secretary Kono's statement are disheartening and mark Japan's equivocation on this issue. Additionally, while I appreciate Japan's creation of the Asia Women's Fund and the past prime minister's apologies to some comfort women, which accompanied this Fund's disbursement of monetary compensation from this fund, the reality is that without a sincere and unequivocal apology from the government of Japan, the majority of surviving Comfort Women refused to accept these funds. In fact, as you will hear today, many Comfort Women returned the Prime Minister's letter of apology accompanying the monetary compensation saying they felt the apology was artificial and disingenuous.

Mr. Chairman, let me make my intentions abundantly clear: this resolution provides for historical reconciliation and then moving forward. It is not in any way meant to and should not damage our strong relationship with Japan. I understand that many feel strongly that this resolution is unnecessary, that it focuses too much on the past, and fear it will negatively affect regional stability along with our alliance with Japan.

These worries are unfounded. I feel strongly that accepting responsibility for the Comfort Women tragedy is worthy of a nation as great as Japan is to do. I also feel strongly that reconciliation on this issue will have a positive effect upon relationships in the region as historical anxieties are put to rest.

I ask that Members of Congress understand that apologies on matters of historical significance are important and that they are the first, necessary steps in any attempt to reconcile differences or atone for past actions. Our government has made its own mistakes. But in its wisdom, it has made the difficult choice to admit wrongdoing.

For example, in 1988, Congress passed, and President Ronald Reagan signed into law, H.R. 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which was a formal apology to U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry who were unjustly put into internment camps during World War II. As someone who was put into an internment camp as an infant, I know firsthand that we must not be ignorant of the past, and that reconciliation through government actions to admit error are the only ones likely to be long lasting.

For many Japanese Americans whose civil and constitutional rights were violated by internment, that dark chapter of history was closed by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which emerged over 40 years after internment. Seeking reparations was a long and arduous journey, but the apology, once it came, was clear and unequivocal. Reconciliation is something our generation should rightfully be calling for in order to promote the growth of a peaceful global society, and to address issues of the past so we can finally put them to rest.

Americans have high expectations of close allies such as Japan, which shares so many of our values and ideals. Japan's current approach of denial to the Comfort Woman tragedy—some call it a historic fabrication—detracts from the relationship and questions the overall alliance in the eyes of Japan's neighbors. It compels one also to question Japan's appreciation of the Dutch, British, and Australian soldiers who recently guarded Japan's Self Defense Forces in Iraq, whose country's nationals are said to have been included in the Comfort Women system. Most important, the failure of Japan to successfully resolve their culpability and responsibility toward the Comfort Women casts doubt upon Japan's commitment to human rights, violence against women in war and UN leadership.

Mr. Chairman, for reconciliation and justice for these women, I have worked very hard to bring these three survivors, Ms. Lee Yong Soo, Ms. Kim Koon-Ja, and Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne, to Washington. They are the human face of the wartime violence against women. Their words reflect not just history but the continued pattern of organized abuse of women in conflict. Members of Congress who feel that this resolution is unnecessary need to look no further than these three women who know that they speak not just for themselves but also for the young women in Burma, Bosnia, and Darfur.

I commend groups such as the Washington Coalition for Comfort Women, Amnesty International, V-Day, the Korean American Voter's Council, the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, Justice for Comfort Women, the Global Alliance for Preserving History of World War II in Asia, and the Center for Women Policy Studies for their continued and tireless work on behalf of these women—without which much of the efforts to keep this issue alive would have failed long ago.

I urge the Committee to act swiftly on H.Res.121 so that it soon may come to the floor for a vote. The strength and humanity of these women and the truths to which they testify today must supersede any political pressures to stop this resolution.

Thank you.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman for his testimony, and I would like to say at this point in time also in commenting to the gentleman's statement the fact that it took our Government what some 50 years that we finally made a formal apology by a congressional enactment and resolution, and also by that we also gave compensation to the number of survivors among the Japanese Americans that they were I think about \$20,000 per person but it was not the money. It was the whole idea of the concept that there was a formal apology made through congressional legislation.

This is what makes this country so great. That it is willing to correct its mistakes and doing so in a way that finally as the gentleman said earlier we have now put this chapter to a close. I know for many years many of my Japanese American friends older than me refused, hardly anyone would want to talk about what they went through. I call them concentration camps and what our Government did against them.

But here again as I said this is what makes this country so great as a democracy is its willingness to correct its mistakes and doing so in a way as you said earlier, Mr. Honda, was that we made this formal apology, and I think finally members of our Japanese American community are becoming more open and people have a better understanding and appreciation what they went through during that period of time.

I might also note for the record this incident happened 50 years ago but another incident also occurred over 100 years ago where our Government and officials illegally and unlawfully seized a sovereign government that existed in the Hawaiian Islands. Just simply went over there. The marines just went over there and took over the government from Queen Lili'uokalani, and what did we do? After almost 100 years, we also issued a formal apology through congressional legislation recognizing the wrong that we did some 100 years ago telling the native Hawaiian people we did you wrong, and we apologize.

Mr. HONDA. If I may, Mr. Chairman, the Civil Rights Act of 1988, H.R. 442, there were two other acts that were preceding that that recognized the compensation to the Japanese Americans. Monetary compensations which went to Congress but the one in 1988 was the most difficult one because it dealt with civil rights, and it was a concept that was coming, and people started to understand what it meant. It was that act that lifted the burden of guilt off the shoulders of our generations and provided the remedy, if you will, to close the wounds that existed in the community.

And I dare say that those of us who have wounds in our bodies who have had cuts in the past know that when the cut is healed there is a scar tissue there, and that scar tissue is much stronger

than any other tissue surrounding it. So reconciliation through an unequivocal and clear apology, as this country has done, which we seek to urge Japan to do, is what will make relationships much stronger in the future. Much stronger. Thank you.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. I will also say to the gentleman that as a former member, as a reserve officer of the distinguished battalion now known as the 442nd, 100th battalion, 442nd infantry, I can tell you how the gentleman feels in terms of as an American who happens to be of Japanese ancestry where young men of Japanese ancestry, Americans, volunteered despite all the bigotry, the hatred, the racism that was heaped upon them. Still volunteered to fight our enemies during World War II which became known as the 100th battalion, 442nd infantry, the most decorated military unit of its size ever in the history of the United States Army.

And I can practically memorize 18,000 individual decorations were given, over 9,000 Purple Hearts, 562 Silver Stars, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses which was the second highest, and what happens? Only one Medal of Honor. We had to take corrective action for that too. So Senator Akaka introduced legislation we need to review this. Something seems to be wrong here.

And after reviewing of the process, all of a sudden that we have 19 additional recipients of the Congressman metal of honor, those of Japanese American ancestry who fought against our enemies during World War II. So I would say to the gentleman that I can appreciate where you are coming from because you personally experienced this. Now I do not mean to get out of touch in terms of our purpose but I think the intent of when somebody suffers psychologically, spiritually and mentally I think the basis of you introducing this legislation, and like I said with all the respect that I have for our colleague from California but this is part of the process.

We deliberate, we debate, and see how this legislation is going to go through the process in this committee. Again, I thank the gentleman for his eloquent statement, and as a prerogative of the Chair, even though as a matter of practice members are not to be questioned after they bear their testimony here before the committee, but I would like, as a gesture of goodwill as I am sure my good friend from California will not mind, will invite the gentleman from California to sit on the dias and to be part of our committee hearing.

Mr. HONDA. I would be honored to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. All right. Thank you. At this time I would like to invite the next panel, Ms. Yong Soo Lee. She is a surviving comfort woman, member of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery. Also Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne, also a surviving comfort woman, Friends of Comfort Women in Australia, currently living in Australia, and also Ms. Koon Ja Kim.

Just for the purposes of the record, I just want to say that we are going to need some real good translation here for our friends. I know that Ms. O'Herne does not need a translator but for our good ladies who traveled so far and certainly thank them so much. Ms. Yong Soo Lee was born in Korea in 1928 as the only daughter of a poverty stricken family. During her childhood, she studied in

the evening at Dalsung Elementary School for 1 year because of financial difficulties.

At the age of 16, she was taken as a sexual slave to serve the Japanese Imperial Army. Thereafter she was forced to labor as a sexual slave in Taiwan and survive until the war was over. Her Japanese name was Tosiko. At the end of World War II, she returned to her homeland, Korea, in 1945. She gave her first public testimony in 1992, disclosing her ordeal as a former comfort woman under the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II.

Since 1992, she has been attending numerous international conferences, and has been met with politicians and NGOs to present her testimony. She has visited Japan more than 19 times, the United States, China, Taiwan for the public awareness of comfort women. She has participated in demonstrations for many years on behalf of comfort women. Ms. Yong Lee has attended graduate school studying law. She is well known for her appearances on numerous films about comfort women as the little voice, sound of breathing and has appeared on KBC, NBC, major TV stations in Korea.

She has been a public figure, and has brought much attention to the international society on comfort women issues. Recently she did her solo demonstration at the front of the department of foreign affairs in Seoul, Korea to demand the prompt resolution on comfort women issues. I would like our translator to have Ms. Yong Soo Lee to raise her hand so that everybody will know. Okay.

We also have Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne. Jan Ruff O'Herne was born in Indonesia in 1923, fourth generation of a Dutch family. In 1944, 21 years old, she was forced into brothel to become a military sex slave for the Japanese military. She was repeatedly abused, beaten, raped in a period of 3 months after which she was returned to prison camp with threats that her family would be killed if she revealed the truth about the atrocities inflicted upon her.

When the war ended, Jan married Tom Ruff and eventually gave birth to two beautiful daughters. The family lived in England and the migrated to Australia where they now live. In 1992 after seeing Korean War rape victims euphemistically called comfort women making appeals for justice on television, Jan decided to break her silence and support them by speaking out as a witness at the international public hearing on Japanese war crimes held in Tokyo.

Jan, for the past 10 years, has worked tirelessly to support the plight of the Asian comfort women, for the protection of women in war and armed conflict. Her autobiography, *50 Years of Silence*, has been translated into Japanese and Indonesian, and a documentary film on the same name received many awards. She has worked with Human Rights Commission, International Red Cross, Amnesty International speaking both in Australia and throughout the world on this issue.

In September 2001, Jan received a knighthood from Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. She received the ANZAC Peace Prize in 2002 in recognizing her contributions of international peace and goodwill.

We also have as our third witness Ms. Koon Ja Kim. I will not say she is 21 years old. Koon Ja Kim is 81. She was born in the Kangwon Province. She was orphaned at the age of 14, and to sup-

port herself and her siblings she worked as a maid. At 17 years old she was forcibly drafted by the Japanese military to serve again forced prostitution and now as a comfort women.

After 3 years of being physically abused and raped on a daily basis, the war ended. With no money and physically defeated body, she and a small group of other women summoned their strength of spirit to walk hundreds of miles over several weeks back to Korea. She now lives in South Korea with other comfort women, and the House of Sharing established committee was founded. Apparently she also assisted in this residence in 1992 supported by the various organizations there in Korea.

I would like to especially welcome our three ladies as witnesses to this hearing, and I would like to start with Ms. Yong Soo Lee for her testimony. She can speak Korean but we need the translator. If you could have another microphone there for the translator so that you could state her statement in English.

Yes, you could use that at this point. Please. And please advise Ms. Lee that we will have to take it one or two sentences at a time and you translate in English, okay? So that we do not get ahead of ourselves. Okay. Ms. Lee, please proceed. You need to press the button there. Okay. And your button as well of your microphone. Is it working? Yes, yours is working. Okay.

STATEMENT OF MS. YONG SOO LEE, SURVIVING COMFORT WOMAN, KOREAN COUNCIL FOR THE WOMEN DRAFTED FOR MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY

Ms. LEE. Chair of the committee, Chairman Faleomavaega, members of the subcommittee, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to come all the way to United States of America to share with you my anger, my rancor. This is a true and live testimony from history. So I will share my story with you but I am so embarrassed. I am so ashamed but this is something that I cannot keep just to myself. So I will start telling you my story.

I live in Taegu, South Korea. My name is Lee Yong Soo, and sometimes I am a 14-year-old girl, and I look outside my window, and there is a girl, and there is a Japanese man, and they are saying something to each other, and they are gesturing me to come out. I did not know anything. I did not know what was going on but they gestured me to come out so I came out, and as you seen her dress, the girl and the Japanese soldier put their hand on my shoulder, and covered my mouth, and the soldier put something against my back, and like that in the middle of the night I was taken away.

So when I was taken away I was taken to a bridge. Underneath the bridge there were cars going by, and when I arrived there I saw three other girls and they gave me a parcel, a ripped parcel, and I had a feel of what that parcel had inside it, and there were some clothes and some shoes. And then we were taken to a train station. We were taken on a train. It was my very first time in my entire life to board a train, and my head hurt a lot. I can even remember now I told them my head hurts, my head hurt, and they called me something like Jo Sen Ging or something like that, and they started hitting me with their fists and kicking me with their

feet. And they kicked me and punched me so much that I lost consciousness.

So the train went all the way to North Korea. It went to P'yongan, and from there we got off of the train, and we were at a port. We were told to board a ship. So we boarded this ship, and there were 300 soldiers on the ship as well as us. As we were going on the ship, the ship was rocking like this, and on the ship I had seasickness. I had seasickness so badly that I went to the toilet inside of the ship, and I remember I was being sick inside the toilet, and then as I was getting up I saw shoes of a Japanese soldier.

And as I was trying to get out of the toilet, the soldier gestured like this and prevented me from coming out of the toilet, and I remember I bit his arm very hard but then he hit me. He hit me back. He hit me back really hard, and after that I lost consciousness. When I woke up again, they told me we found you covered in blood without consciousness. So they put a blanket over me, and they told me do not get up. Do not get up and close your eyes.

As I was lying there, I opened my eyes a little bit, and I could see from the corner of my eyes all around me the Japanese soldiers were all over the girls but even then I did not know what was really going on. The ship was shaking a lot. There was a lot of turbulence, and they told me to change my clothes, and they gave me a set of new clothes, and they told me that the ship cannot go on. It has to stop, and there were still soldiers. And I did not know what was going on. I did not know what it meant that the ship has to stop.

And we traveled I do not know for how long on the ship, and then one day they told us to get off. We got off the ship, and we saw a truck. They told us to get on the truck, and when we got out of the truck we saw a house, and I looked inside the house, and there were pretty women wearing kimonos to the one side, and to the other side there were little rooms, and they used blankets to make curtains to provide petition for the little rooms.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. If I could ask the translator I realize that our witnesses have traveled quite a distance to come and to testify, and I am sure of the members here on the committee will also like to ask questions but if she could summarize maybe for the next 2 minutes some of the highlights. With all due respect I would like to ask if she could. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. The soldier told me to come, and when I went he told me to go inside a room. I could see a Japanese soldier inside the room so I said, I am not going in. I am not going in but they held me like this, and they just dragged me inside the room. The room had a big lock, and they put me in there. They kicked me, and they had sticks they beat me with. They even had knife. They put it here, and they wrapped something around my wrists, and at that point I remember I screamed out "Mom, Mom." I screamed out, and right now, right now I can hear that sound ringing in my ears.

I was really beaten a lot. I was really beaten a lot. I even got electric shock. I even got tortured. And then one day they told us the war is finished. I remember there was a Japanese soldier he was in a special like special force like the marines, and I remember he gave me a Japanese name. He called me Tosiko.

So after the war, I was in POW camp, and then after that I went home. When I arrived home, just then there were giving *jesah* which is Korean ceremony for passed away ancestors. They were giving *jesah*, and when I walked in they said there is a ghost. There is a ghost because they have not seen me in such a long time.

And my mother came up to me, and she said, this is a ghost of my daughter, and she hit me, and she went a little crazy, and she bit me on the face, and she hit me saying, I am a ghost. And my father at that point he was just drinking everyday, and when he saw me he was shocked, and he had a stroke, and soon after that he passed away. Here is a victim. Here is a witness but still the Japanese Government is lying.

I have heard before one of the members of the committee speaking, and he said there was evidence that the Japanese Government had already apologized but why is that apology here in the United States when I am the survivor and the victim did not get an apology? Why did they give that to the Americans? I will not leave the Japanese Government alone. I will continue until they get down on my knees in front of me and then they give me their sincere apology.

I am a victim. I have been damaged. I have gone through suffering. So I ask you, the chairman and the members of the committee, I feel embarrassed and ashamed but I have told you my story. The Japanese Government have never apologized to me. See I have been protesting for the last 15, no, the last 16 years I have been in Wednesday demonstrations but never once have the Japanese Government apologized to me. Never once have I gotten anything from them. Never once.

The chairman and the members of the committee, I thank you again for this opportunity, and I ask you again, I plead with you; you cannot leave the Japanese Government alone, never. If you leave them alone, violence against women during world war will continue. We have to rip out the roots of violence against women and girls during war so we cannot leave the Japanese Government alone. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. YONG SOO LEE, SURVIVING COMFORT WOMAN,
KOREAN COUNCIL FOR THE WOMEN DRAFTED FOR MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY

Chairman Faleomavaega and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for this opportunity to come before you today. I am pleased to join with Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne of the Friends of Comfort Women in Australia and Ms. Koon Ja Kim of the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium to share our stories.

I would also like to thank Representative Michael Honda for introducing House Resolution 121, which expresses 'the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as 'comfort women,' during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II.' You have just heard Congressman Honda explain the circumstances that compelled him to sponsor this legislation. Now we would like to add our personal histories to the conversation.

This is a story that I told nobody until just a few years ago, because the shame of my shattered childhood haunted me through the rest of my life. Some of the details of my life story you will find shocking. You will think these are the details of

a movie script or novel about cruelty. I can assure you that these are the true things that happened to me.

My Early Life

I was born in 1928 in the Korean city of Taegu. My family was poor and nine of us lived in a single, small house: my parents, my grandmother, my five brothers, and myself. I only had one year of formal education and spent most of my childhood caring for my younger brothers and doing household chores so my father and mother could work outside our home to support the family.

At the age of 13, I also began working in a factory and tried to return to school, but the heavy burden of work prevented me from focusing on my studies. To tell the truth, I was not a highly motivated student, although I did enjoy music lessons and was told I had a pretty singing voice.

During World War II, when I was 15, I was drafted to the training group for the Voluntary Corps in Ch'ilsong Elementary School. Boys and girls lined up separately for training, and we did exercises and marched in neat lines. We also had to march home at the end of each day. Our lives were highly regimented.

In the autumn of 1944, when I was 16 years old, my friend, Kim Punsun, and I were collecting shellfish at the riverside when we noticed an elderly man and a Japanese man looking down at us from the hillside. The older man pointed at us with his finger, and the Japanese man started to walk towards us. The older man disappeared, and the Japanese beckoned to us to follow him. I was scared and ran away, not caring about what happened to my friend. A few days later, Punsun knocked on my window early in the morning, and whispered to me to follow her quietly. I tip-toed out of the house after her. I left without telling my mother. I was wearing a dark skirt, a long cotton blouse buttoned up at the front and slippers on my feet. I followed my friend until we met the same man who had tried to approach us on the riverbank. He looked as if he was in his late thirties and he wore a sort of People's Army uniform with a combat cap. Altogether, there were five girls with him, including myself.

We went to the station and took a train to Kyongju. It was the first time I had been on a train. In Kyongju we were put up in a guest-house. We stayed in the guest-house for two days, during which time two more girls joined us. Now there were seven of us. We boarded a train and passed through Taegu where I could just see my home through the broken window. I suddenly missed my mother. I began to weep, saying I wanted to go home. I pushed the bundle of clothes away and continued to cry, asking the man to let me get off. He refused. Exhausted, I finally fell asleep as the train just kept on going. We must have traveled for several days.

Beating and Torture

We got off the train at Anju, in P'yongan province, and were led to what looked like an ordinary residential house. An elderly woman was keeping the house on her own. Food was short, and we were given boiled potatoes and corn. We felt very hungry and sometimes during our stay there we would pinch apples from the tree. The Japanese man who had led us from Taegu punished all of us if any single girl did something wrong. We had to stand on small round clubs, holding large bottles filled with water in our hands. Or he would beat our palms and the soles of our feet with sticks. He would ask one of us to bring him water to drink, and if the girl was slightly slow in doing what was asked, he would beat all of us. Any excuse prompted a beating. We became so scared that we tried not to upset him in any way.

In the winter, we froze, feeling ice form all over our bodies. If we complained of the cold, he would beat us. We shivered and tried to keep our frozen hands warm, doing everything behind his back. The two girls who had joined us in Kyongju were taken away, leaving the five of us who had set off together at the beginning of our journey. We remained in Anju for about a month and then boarded a train once more to travel to Dalian. We stayed overnight in a guest-house in Dalian. The following morning we were given soup and steamed bread. We boarded a ship and were told that a convoy of eleven boats would be sailing together. They were big ships. We were taken into the last one. It was already crowded with Japanese sailors. We were the only women.

New Year's Day 1945 was spent on board. The ships stopped in Shanghai, and some of the sailors landed for a short break on shore. We were not allowed to disembark. I was summoned on deck and sang for the men. Afterwards, an officer gave me two rice cakes. I shared them with the other girls. The ships started to sail again but often halted because of bombing. One day our ship received a direct hit. The other ships were destroyed, but only the front of our ship was damaged. Men shouted and screamed outside our cabin. The ship was tossed about, and I suffered with severe seasickness. My head was splitting with pain, and my stomach seemed to

turn upside down. I remember crawling towards the bathroom, throwing up as I went along, when I was grabbed by a man and dragged into a cabin. I tried to shake him off, biting his arm. I did my best to get away. But he slapped me and threw me into the cabin with such force that I couldn't fight him off. In this way I was raped. It was my first sexual experience. I was so frightened that what actually happened didn't sink in at the time. I vaguely thought that this man had forced me into the room just to do this.

People kept shouting that we would all die since the ship had been torn to pieces. We were told to put life-jackets on and to stay calm. We thought we were going to drown. Dying seemed better than going on like this. But the ship somehow managed to keep going. Later I found out that I was not the only one who had been raped. Punsun and the others had also suffered that same fate. From then on, we were often raped on the ship. I wept constantly, until my eyes became swollen. I was frightened about everything. I think that I was too young to hold a grudge against my aggressors, though looking back I feel angry and full of the desire for revenge. At that time I was so scared I didn't even dare look any man squarely in the face. One day I opened the window of our cabin and tried to jump into the water. It would have been better to end my life then and there, I thought. But the water, blue-green and white with waves, scared me so much that I lost the courage to throw myself out.

Eventually we arrived in Taiwan. When we disembarked I couldn't walk properly as my abdomen hurt so much. My glands had swollen up in my groin, and blood had coagulated around my vagina. I could walk only with great difficulty, since I was so swollen that I couldn't keep my two legs straight.

The man who had accompanied us from Taegu turned out to be the proprietor of the comfort station we were taken to. We called him Oyaji. I was the youngest amongst us. Punsun was a year older than me and the others were 18, 19 and 20. The proprietor told me to go into a certain room, but I refused. He dragged me by my hair to another room. There I was tortured with electric shocks. He was very cruel. He pulled out the telephone cord and tied my wrists and ankles with it. Then, shouting '*konoyaro!*' he twirled the telephone receiver. Lights flashed before my eyes, and my body shook all over. I couldn't stand it and begged him to stop. I said I would do anything he asked. But he turned the receiver once more. I blacked out. When I came round my body was wet; I think that he had probably poured water on me.

Life in the Comfort Station

The comfort station was a two-storey Japanese-style building with 20 rooms. There were already many women there when we arrived. About ten, all of whom looked much older than us, wore kimonos. There was a Japanese woman, the proprietor's wife. We changed into dresses given to us by the other women. The proprietor told us to call them '*nesang*', 'big sister' and to do whatever they told us to. We began to take turns to wash their clothes and cook for them. The food was again not enough. We ate gruel made with millet or rice. I was terrified of being beaten; I was always scared. I was never beaten by soldiers, but I was frequently beaten by the proprietor. I was so frightened that I couldn't harbor any thoughts of running away. After having crossed an ocean and not knowing where I was, how could I think of escape?

The rooms were very small. Each was big enough for two people to lie down in. At the entrance of each hung a blanket in place of a door. The walls and floor were laid with wooden boards, and there was nothing else. We were each given a military blanket and had to sleep on the bare planks. One day, a man came in and asked my name. I was still frightened and just sat in a corner shaking my head without answering. So he said he would give me a name, and began to call me Tosiko. After that day I was always called Tosiko in the station.

We mainly had to serve a commando unit. They were not in the slightest way sympathetic towards us. They wore uniforms, but I had no idea whether they were from the army, navy or air force. I served four or five men a day. They finished their business quickly and left. Hardly any stayed overnight. I had to use old clothes, washed thoroughly, during my period. Even then I had to serve men. I was never paid for these services.

There were frequent air raids, and on some days we had to be evacuated several times. Whenever there was a raid, we were forced to hide ourselves in mountain undergrowth or in a cave. If the bombing ceased, the men would set up make-shift tents anywhere, on dry fields or in paddies, and they would make us serve them. Even if the tents were blown down by the wind, the men didn't pay any attention but finished what they were doing to us. Those men were worse than dogs or pigs. They never wore condoms. I don't remember ever having a medical examination.

One day, while we were in an underground shelter, the comfort station collapsed in a bombing attack. Our shelter was buried under the rubble. We dug through the soil, trying to get out. After a while we saw light through a small hole. I was incredibly relieved to be able to look out and shouted 'At last I can see outside!' Then I smelt smoke, and blood gushed out of my nose and mouth. I lost consciousness. The proprietor's wife and mistress both died. As the house had collapsed, we were moved into a bomb shelter at the foot of a hill, and there we again had to serve the men. After a while, the proprietor got hold of some material and built a rough and ready house. It didn't take him long. We continued to serve the men. In the end I was infected with venereal disease and the proprietor gave me the injection of the serum known as No. 606, which was used before penicillin became widely available. The fluid had a reddish tint. The disease stayed with me for a long time because I had to continue to serve men before I was clear. So I had to have constant injections. There was no hospital or clinic in the vicinity. Medical care—such as it was—was haphazard.

Apart from going to the bomb shelters we weren't allowed out at all. We were warned that if we tried to venture beyond the confines of the station we would be killed, and I was sufficiently scared not to try anything. The men we served in the unit were all young; they seemed to be 19 or 20 years old, not much older than we girls were.

One evening, a soldier came to me and said he would be in combat later that same evening and that this battle would mark the end of his early life. I asked him what his commando unit was. He explained that one or two men would fly an airplane to attack an enemy ship or base. They would be suicide pilots. He gave me his photo and the toiletries he had been using. He had come to me twice before and said he had got venereal disease from me. He said he would take the disease to his grave as my present to him. Then he taught me a song:

*I take off with courage, leaving Sinzhu behind,
Over the golden and silver clouds.
There is no one to see me off:
Only Tosiko grieves for me.*

Until then I had known we were somewhere in Taiwan, but because we were kept in such close confinement and isolation, I had no idea of exactly where. From his song I learned we were in Sinzhu.

When we were evacuated to avoid the bombing we stole sugar cane. We were that hungry. But if we were caught we were beaten. We were not allowed to speak in Korean. Again, if we were caught doing so, we were beaten.

The War Ends

One day, one of the older girls who normally hardly spoke a word to us announced that she, too, was Korean. She told me, in Korean, that the war was over. We hugged each other and wept with joy. She held my hand tightly and told me I must return to Korea. We could hear people shouting and running about. This confirmed to us that the war was really over. By the time we had calmed down, the proprietor and the other women who had been at the station before us were nowhere to be found. We walked to a refugee camp by the pier. It looked like a warehouse. We were given balls of boiled rice which had dead insects mixed in. We waited for a ship. I was scared even then that someone might drag me away, so I sat, shaking with fear, in a corner wrapped in a blanket. I kept crying so much that my small eyes got even smaller.

We finally got a ship. When it arrived in Pusan, the barley was green. As we disembarked, someone sprayed us with DDT and gave us each 300 won. There were four of us: Punsun, two other girls, and myself. We said farewell and went our separate ways. I got a train to Taegu. I kept weeping and tried to hide myself from other passengers in fear that someone might take me away again. I found my house, just as run down and poor as before. My mother asked if I was a ghost or a real person and fainted.

After my return, I couldn't dare think about getting married. How could I dream of marriage? Until recently I had suffered from venereal disease. My parents and brothers did not know what I had been through; I could not tell them. My father was upset merely because his only daughter wouldn't get married. Both my parents resented the fact that they weren't able to see me hitched before they died. I worked in a drinking house which also sold fishballs, and I ran a small shop on the beach in Ulsan. For some time I ran a small market stall selling string. Then I worked as a saleswoman for an insurance company. I gave up when I began to get too old.

Return My Youth to Me!

In 1992, encouraged by the existence of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, I told my story. It poured out from me and I felt so relieved, but I was also faced with the question, How many more years can I live?

I am grateful that the Korean Council is trying to help us. These days I hum a song, *Katusa*, putting my own words to the tune: 'I am so miserable; return my youth to me; apologize. . . . You dragged us off against our own will. You trod on us. Apologize. . . . This lament, can you hear it, my mother and father? My own people will avenge my sorrows.'

I visited my parents' graves the other day. I said to them: 'Mother, I know you won't come back to life however much I may wish for it. My own people will avenge me. Please close your eyes and go to paradise.'

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you and tell my story. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Ms. Lee. I think I am going to give our translator a little break, and I am going to ask Ms. O'Herne if she would like to offer her statement now, and then we will have Ms. Kim. Ms. O'Herne.

STATEMENT OF MS. JAN RUFF O'HERNE, SURVIVING COMFORT WOMAN, FRIENDS OF COMFORT WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA

Ms. O'HERNE. Thank you for this holding of this congressional hearing on the plight of comfort women. I am pleased to join with survivors Ms. Yong Soo Lee and Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Japanese Military Sexual Slavery and Ms. Koon Ja Kim of the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium to share our stories before you today.

I would also like to thank Representative Michael Honda for introducing House Resolution 121 which demands that the Japanese Government officially and unambiguously apologize and to take historical responsibility, and I thank Chairman Eni Faleomavaega for inviting the witnesses to speak, to tell their stories to the world in the hope that it will bring justice and peace.

My experience as a woman in war is one of utter degradation, humiliation and unbearable suffering. During World War II, I was forced to be a so-called "Comfort Woman" for the Japanese military, a euphemism for military sex slaves. I call my story "The Forgotten Ones." I was born in Java, in the former Dutch East Indies, now known as Indonesia, in 1923 of a fourth generation Dutch colonial family.

I grew up on a sugar plantation, and had the most wonderful childhood. I was educated in Catholic schools, and graduated from Franciscan Teachers College in Semarang, Java. When I was 19 years old, in 1942, Japanese troops invaded Java, and together with thousands of women and children I was interned in a Japanese prison camp together with my mother and two younger sisters for 3½ years.

Many stories have been told about the horrors, brutality, suffering and starvation of Dutch women in Japanese prison camps but one story was never told. The most shameful story of the worst human rights abuse committed the Japanese during World War II. The story of the comfort women, the *jugun ianfu*, and how these women were forcibly seized against their will to provide sexual services for the Japanese Imperial Army.

I had been in a camp for 2 years when in 1944 high ranking Japanese officers arrived at the camp. The order was given. All single girls from 17 years up had to line up in the compound. We were very anxious about this. We thought it was just another inspection. The officers walked toward us, and a selection process began. They paced up and down the line, eyeing us up and down, looking at our figures, at our legs, lifting our chins.

They selected 10 pretty girls. I was one of the 10. We were told to come forward and pack a small bag. The first things I put in my bag were my prayer book, my rosary beads and my Bible. I thought somehow these would keep me strong, and then we were taken away. The whole camp protested, and our mothers started to pull us back. I embraced my mother and two young sisters, not knowing if I was ever going to see them again.

We were hurled into an army truck like sheep for the slaughter. We were terrified, and we clung to our bags and to each other. The truck stopped in the city of Semarang in front of a large Dutch colonial house. We were told to get out. Entering the house, we soon realized what sort of a house it was. A Japanese military told us that we were here for the sexual pleasure of the Japanese. The house indeed was a brothel.

We protested loudly. We said we were forced to come here against our will. That they had no right to do this to us, and that it was against the Geneva Convention but they just laughed at us, and said they could do with us as they liked. We were given Japanese names, and our photos were taken, and these were put on a pinup board so that the soldiers could choose the girl that they liked the best.

We were a very innocent generation. We were still virgins, and I knew nothing about sex. The horrific memories of opening night of the brothel have tortured my mind all my life. We were told to go to the dining room. We huddled together in fear as we saw the house filling up with military. I got out my prayer book, and I led the girls in prayer in the hope that this would help us.

Then they started to drag us away one-by-one. I could hear the screaming coming from the bedrooms. I hid under the dining room table but I was soon found. A tall, large-built officer dragged me to my room. I fought him. I kicked him with all my might. The Japanese officer became very angry because I would not give myself to him. He took his sword out of its scabbard. I remember this sword. He was a high ranking officer. It was a beautiful Samurai sword.

He pointed this sword at me threatening me with it, and he said that he would kill me if I did not give myself to him. I curled myself into a corner like a hunted animal that could not escape. I made him understand that I was not afraid to die. He said he would kill me. I would not give myself to him. But I pleaded with him to allow me to say some prayers, and at that moment I felt very close to God. While I was then praying, he started to undress himself, and I realized he had no intention of killing me. I would have been no good to him dead.

He then threw me on the bed, and ripped off all my clothes. He ran his sword all over my naked body, and played with me as a cat would with a mouse. I still tried to fight him but he thrust him-

self on top of me, pinning me down under his heavy body. The tears were streaming down my face as he raped me in the most brutal way. I thought he would never stop.

He then left the room, and my whole body was shaking. I was in total shock. I gathered up what was left of my clothing and fled into the bathroom. There I found some of the other girls. We were all crying and in shock. In the bathroom, I tried to wash away all the dirt and shame of my body. Just wash it away. Just wash it away. But the night was not over yet. There were more Japanese waiting, and this went on all night. It was only the beginning.

In the early hours of the morning, 10 exhausted girls gathered round and cried over lost virginity. How could this happen to us? We were so helpless. The house was completely guarded. There was no way to escape. At times I tried to hide. I even climbed a tree once, and it took them half an hour to find me but at least it had saved me one rape. So I was always found. After the hiding then I was dragged back to my room. I tried everything. I even cut off all my hair so that I was totally bald. I thought if I made myself look ugly nobody would want me but it turned me into a curiosity object. They all wanted the girl that had cut off her hair. It had just the opposite affect.

Never did any Japanese rape me without a fight. I fought each one of them. Therefore, I was repeatedly beaten and threatened that they would send me to a brothel downtown where it would be much worse but I still kept on fighting them. In the so-called "Comfort Station," I was systematically beaten and raped day and night. Even the Japanese doctor raped me each time he visited the brothel to examine us for venereal disease. And to humiliate us even more, the doors and windows were left open so that the Japanese could watch us being examined, and this was as horrific as being raped.

During the time in the brothel the Japanese had abused me and humiliated me. I was left with a body that was torn and fragmented everywhere. My young body. Something beautiful, a temple of God. They violated it, and made it into a place of sinful pleasure.

The Japanese soldiers had ruined my young life. They had stripped me of everything. They had taken everything away from me, my youth, my self-esteem, my dignity, my freedom, my possession and my family but there was one thing they could never take away from me, and it was my firm Catholic faith and my love for God. This was mine, and nobody, nobody could take that away from me. It was my deep faith in God that helped me survive all that the Japanese did to me.

I have forgiven the Japanese for what they did to me but I can never forget. For 50 years the comfort women maintained silence. They lived with a terrible shame of feeling soiled and dirty. It has taken 50 years for these women's ruined lives to become a human rights issue. The war never ended for the comfort women. We still have nightmares. We had no counseling. After the war, we just had to get on with our lives as if nothing had happened. Our bodies were damaged. I had three miscarriages after I married Tom, and I needed major surgery to restore my body.

In 1992, the war in Bosnia had broken out, and I could see that women were again being raped in an organized way, and then after

that, that same year, I saw the Korean comfort women on television. They broke their silence, and Ms. Kim Hak Sun was the first comfort women to speak out. I watched them on television as they pleaded for justice, for an apology and compensation from the Japanese Government.

I decided to back them up especially as I realized that in Bosnia women again were being raped on an organized scale. I decided to break my silence, at the international public hearing on Japanese war crimes in Tokyo in December, 1992, and I revealed one of the worst human rights abuses of World War II, the forgotten Holocaust. For 15 years I have worked tirelessly for the plight of comfort women in Australia and overseas and for the protection of women in wars so that these wartime atrocities will never happen again.

Now time is running out. After 60 years, the comfort women deserve justice. They are worthy of a formal apology from the Japanese Government, from the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe himself, and what I call an apology is an apology that is followed by action, the same what the American Government did. It was followed by action that paid compensation to the Japanese that were put in prison camps here but this is the one thing that Japan has never done. Their apology has never been followed by action.

The Japanese Government must take full responsibility for their war crimes. In 1995, they established the so-called Asian Women's Fund to compensate the victims. This fund was an insult to the comfort women, and they, including myself, refused to accept it. This fund was a private fund. The money came from private enterprise and private business. It did not come from the government.

Japan must come to terms with its history and acknowledge their wartime atrocity. They must teach the correct history of the mistakes made in the past. When I was in Japan only a couple of years ago, I was invited to talk at high schools and colleges about what happened during the war. Not one of those students knew about the horrific atrocity that the Japanese committed during World War II. It is important that the surviving comfort women tell their stories. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to share my story. I hope that by speaking out I have been able to make a contribution to world peace and reconciliation, and that human rights violations against women will never happen again.

I feel very honored to tell my story in this very important place, and that a government is considering it worthwhile to take up this crucial human rights issue. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. O'Herne follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. JAN RUFF O'HERNE, SURVIVING COMFORT WOMAN,
FRIENDS OF COMFORT WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA

Chairman Faleomavaega and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for this holding this congressional hearing on the plight of "Comfort Women." I am pleased to join with survivors Ms. Yong-Soo Lee of Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Japanese Military Sexual Slavery and Ms. Koon-Ja Kim of the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium to share our stories before you today.

I would also like to thank Representative Michael Honda for introducing House Resolution 121, which demands that the Japanese government "officially and unambiguously" apologize and to "take historical responsibility." And I thank Chairman

Eni F.H Faleomavaega for inviting the witnesses to speak, to tell our stories to the world in the hope that it will bring us justice.

My experience as a woman in war is one of utter degradation, humiliation and unbearable suffering. During World War II, I was forced to be a so-called "Comfort Woman" for the Japanese military, a euphemism for sex slave.

The Forgotten Ones

I was born in Java, in the former Dutch East Indies (now known as Indonesia) in 1923 of a fourth generation Dutch colonial family. I grew up on a sugar plantation and had the most wonderful childhood. I was educated in Catholic schools and graduated from Franciscan Teacher's College in Semarang, Java.

When I was 19 years old in 1942, Japanese troops invaded Java. Together with thousands of women and children, I was interned in a Japanese prison camp for three and a half years. Many stories have been told about the horrors, brutalities, suffering and starvation of Dutch women in Japanese prison camps. But one story was never told, the most shameful story of the worst human rights abuse committed by the Japanese during World War II: The story of the "Comfort Women," the *jugun ianfu*, and how these women were forcibly seized against their will, to provide sexual services for the Japanese Imperial Army.

I had been in the camp for two years, when in 1944 high ranking Japanese officers arrived at the camp. The order was given: all single girls from seventeen years up, had to line up in the compound. The officers walked towards us, and a selection process began. They paced up and down the line, eyeing us up and down, looking at our figures, at our legs, lifting our chins. They selected ten pretty girls. I was one of ten. We were told to come forward, and pack a small bag, as we were to be taken away. The whole camp protested, and our mothers tried to pull us back. I embraced my mother not knowing if I was ever going to see her again. We were hurled into an army truck. We were terrified and clung to our bags and to each other.

The truck stopped in the city of Semarang, in front of a large Dutch Colonial house. We were told to get out. Entering the house we soon realized what sort of a house it was. A Japanese military told us that we were here for the sexual pleasure of the Japanese. The house was a brothel.

We protested loudly. We said we were forced to come here, against our will. That they had no right to do this to us, and that it was against the Geneva Convention. But they just laughed at us and said that they could do with us as they liked. We were given Japanese names and these were put on our bedroom doors.

We were a very innocent generation. I knew nothing about sex. The horrific memories of "opening night" of the brothel have tortured my mind all my life. We were told to go to the dining room, and we huddled together in fear, as we saw the house filling up with military. I got out my prayer book, and led the girls in prayer, in the hope that this would help us. Then they started to drag us away, one by one. I could hear the screaming coming from the bedrooms. I hid under the table, but was soon found. I fought him. I kicked him with all my might. The Japanese officer became very angry because I would not give myself to him. He took his sword out of its scabbard and pointed it at me, threatening me with it, that he would kill me if I did not give into him. I curled myself into a corner, like a hunted animal that could not escape. I made him understand that I was not afraid to die. I pleaded with him to allow me to say some prayers. While I was praying he started to undress himself. He had no intention of killing me. I would have been no good to him dead.

He then threw me on the bed and ripped off all my clothes. He ran his sword all over my naked body, and played with me as a cat would with a mouse. I still tried to fight him, but he thrust himself on top of me, pinning me down under his heavy body. The tears were streaming down my face as he raped me in a most brutal way. I thought he would never stop.

When he eventually left the room, my whole body was shaking. I gathered up what was left of my clothing, and fled into the bathroom. There I found some of the other girls. We were all crying, and in total shock. In the bathroom I tried to wash away all the dirt and the shame off my body. Just wash it away. But the night was not over yet, there were more Japanese waiting, and this went on all night, it was only the beginning, week after week, month after month.

The house was completely guarded, there was no way to escape. At times I tried to hide, but was always found, and dragged back to my room. I tried everything, I even cut off all my hair, so I was totally bald. I thought if I made myself look ugly, nobody would want me. But it turned me into a curiosity object; they all wanted the girl that had cut off her hair. It had the opposite effect.

Never did any Japanese rape me without a fight. I fought each one of them. Therefore, I was repeatedly beaten. In the so-called "Comfort Station" I was system-

atically beaten and raped day and night. Even the Japanese doctor raped me each time he visited the brothel to examine us for venereal disease. And to humiliate us even more the doors and windows were left open, so the Japanese could watch us being examined.

During the time in the "Comfort Station," the Japanese had abused me and humiliated me. I was left with a body that was torn and fragmented everywhere. The Japanese soldiers had ruined my young life. They had stripped me of everything. They had taken away my youth, my self-esteem, my dignity, my freedom, my possessions, and my family. But there was one thing that they could never take away from me. It was my religious faith and love for God. This was mine and nobody could take that away from me. It was my deep Faith that helped me survive all that the Japanese did to me.

I have forgiven the Japanese for what they did to me, but I can never forget. For fifty years, the "Comfort Women" maintained silence; they lived with a terrible shame, of feeling soiled and dirty. It has taken 50 years for these women's ruined lives to become a human rights issue.

The war never ended for the "Comfort Women." We still have the nightmares. After the war I needed major surgery to restore my body.

In 1992 the Korean "Comfort Women" broke their silence. Ms. Kim Hak Sun was the first to speak out. I watched them on TV as they pleaded for justice, for an apology and compensation from the Japanese government. I decided to back them up. I broke my silence at the International Public Hearing on Japanese War Crimes in Tokyo in December 1992 and revealed one of the worst human rights abuses of World War II, the forgotten holocaust.

For the past 15 years, I have worked tirelessly for the plight of "Comfort Women" in Australia and overseas, and for the protection of women in war. Now the time is running out. After sixty years the "Comfort Women" deserve justice. They are worthy of a formal apology from the Japanese government, from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe himself. The Japanese government must take full responsibility for their war crimes.

In 1995 they established the Asian Women's Fund, to compensate the victims. This Fund was an insult to the "Comfort Women" and they, including myself, refused to accept it. This fund was a private fund, the money came from private enterprise, and not from the government. Japan must come to terms with its history, and acknowledge their war time atrocities. They must teach the correct history of the mistakes made in the past.

It is important that the surviving "Comfort Women" tell their stories. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to share my story. I hope that by speaking out, I have been able to make a contribution to world peace and reconciliation, and that human rights violation against women will never happen again.

Thank you.

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Justice for 'comfort women'

Introduction

During World War II the Japanese Imperial Army adopted a system of institutionalised military slavery for women, who were forced into sexual slavery. These women were euphemistically known as 'comfort women'. 'Comfort stations' are known to have existed in Indonesia, East Timor, China, Taiwan, Borneo, the Philippines, many of the Pacific Islands, Singapore, Malaya (as it was then) and Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). Women were enslaved against their will and repeatedly raped, tortured and brutalised for months or years on end, exclusively for the benefit of Japanese military. Women were abducted or obtained by deception and, in some cases, girls were purchased from destitute parents. The number of victims involved is estimated to be between 90,000 and 200,000. The majority of victims were under the age of 20 and some girls were as young as 12.

Women who made it home at the end of the war often kept silent about their experience, only coming out in the early 1990s. Survivors suffered severe psychological and emotional trauma and many women proved sterile as a result of venereal diseases.

The Japanese Government has vigorously defended its legal position on this issue and has persistently maintained that all issues of compensation were settled by postwar peace treaties. Japan's apologies to the former 'comfort women' have been half-hearted and the government has refused to accept any legal liability. Japan's answer to compensation has failed to meet international guidelines on reparation and compensation.

Survivors speaking out

Australian Jan Ruff O'Herne broke her silence after 50 years. She and her family were taken captive when Japan invaded Indonesia during World War II. Jan was forced into sexual slavery after being hand-picked by Japanese military officers. She was held captive in a 'comfort station' for three months during which time she suffered abuse, beatings and repeated rapes. Prior to her release, the Japanese warned that if she ever told what had happened, she would be killed — as would her family. Jan has bravely spoken about her experience because she

believes women deserve justice and to prevent these war crimes from happening again.

Innes de Jesus is one of approximately 1000 surviving East Timorese women who were sexually abused by the Japanese military. Innes was used as forced labour during the day and was sent to a 'comfort station' to be raped by several men at night. Innes recalls that "Many girls died after they left that place because of their injuries. I experienced a lot of pain for at least six months. I could not walk properly and my abdomen felt at the time like I would die."

Innes kept her terrible experience a secret for more than 50 years. "I was scared and felt ashamed and didn't tell anyone what happened to me, not even my family. I was scared that if the Japanese heard they would come back and capture me again."

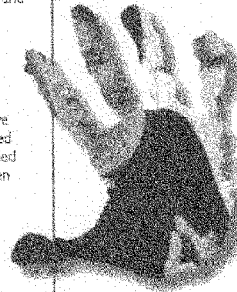
In 1998 a Japanese district court ruled in favour of these South Korean women who courageously filed a suit against Japan. However, in line with the Japanese Government's argument that all claims were settled by peace treaties that formally ended the war, the Hiroshima High Court overruled the decision. No other cases filed have been successful.

A continuing violation

The experiences of women during World War II is not unique. Women continue to suffer from systematic rape and assault in war and conflict. Women in the former Yugoslavia were targeted, and women in Darfur, Sudan, have reported deliberate and systematic rape and abuse in the current conflict. These crimes are war crimes and human rights violations of grave magnitude.

This system of forced sexual slavery is a crime against humanity that does not lapse with the passing of time. The denial of a just remedy for surviving former 'comfort women' is a human rights violation being committed against them today — 60 years after the end of World War II. Victims' needs have to be at the core of any attempt to address past violations. So far, Japan's actions have ignored victims' needs and actually compounded the initial human rights violations committed against them. Given the age of the survivors, there is an urgent need to act on this issue. Japan still has the opportunity to right this terrible wrong.

Australian Jan Ruff O'Herne has bravely spoken about her experience because she believes women deserve justice and to prevent these war crimes from happening again.



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Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Ms. O'Herne. I would like to invite now Ms. Kim, and our translator for Ms. Kim's testimony. Ms. Kim, you may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF MS. KOON JA KIM, SURVIVING COMFORT
WOMAN, NATIONAL KOREAN AMERICAN SERVICE AND EDU-
CATION CONSORTIUM**

Ms. KIM. Chairman and members of the committee, in front of you I get to speak out my rancor, my compressed anger and suffering in the bottom of my soul, and I feel like by speaking to you some of that is evaporating. When I was little we lost our parents. In our family there is only three girls but all of those three girls because we were orphans we were sent to other people's houses to live with them.

So I was sent to a family in Gangwon Do, Gangwon Province, and that house was in front of a train station, and when I was 17 years old I was sent outside for an errand by that family, and that is when I was captured and taken away. So when I was taken away, we boarded a train, and there were lots of soldiers, and there were lots of women who were forcibly taken away and put on that train.

And where that was where we were I mean is the border between Korean, Russia and China. There was a place called Hunchun. So after we arrived, we spent the night, and the next day the soldiers were lining up, and they were coming in. I did not speak English. Sorry. I did not speak Japanese. I did not learn. So I could not understand what the soldiers were saying, and I could not understand them, and the soldier hit on this ear, and my ear-drums popped or it ripped so I cannot hear from this side.

So I was crying and I was crying, and the soldier grab a hold of me and then started to rip all of my clothes off. So after he ripped all of my clothes off, he just grabbed me, and he was just on top of me, and after it finished—

TRANSLATOR. Let me just make a note she is refusing to say the word "rape."

Ms. KIM. And then I was lying there naked, and I did not even have time to put my clothes back on, and then another soldier came in. So it was as if we were dead. We did not even get up, and I was just lying there as if I was dead. I did not even move, and they still came on top of me. They still came. All I can remember was that there was a Saturday but I do not even remember how many, for how long because I lost consciousness. I lost consciousness, and the soldiers they still came.

So after that day, the next day the soldiers were gone. There were hardly anyone around, and I gained some of my consciousness back but the day after that it was the same as the first day. The soldiers starting lining up again. So soldiers they lined up, and they came in, and the soldiers they have the thing that they have to put on their—

TRANSLATOR. She is referring to condom.

Ms. KIM. They have to use that but everyone refused. They refused to wear condoms. They have to use that so that disease do not spread, and with women they have to use that so that they will not get pregnant but all of them they just refused to use it. So days just went on just like that. I was speechless. I was completely dumbfounded, and I was hurting so much. So I was going to commit suicide. I was going to die.

So I wrapped a rope around me, around my neck, and I tried to commit suicide but I did not succeed. Instead, I was found by the owner, and I nearly died from the beating. So days went on and on like that. I rather have died. I really wanted to die but I could not even die because they were watching over me. Because there were guards watching me.

And the soldiers the low ranking ones have a little knife and the generals they have a bigger knife, and these soldiers if they cannot do as they please they stabbed you with the knife. It is okay if they just stab you and pull the knife away but what they do is they put the knife in. They stab, and they twist. So days went on. Days went on just like that. And the place we were at it was Hunchun, and then we were taken to Kokashi. That was the front line of the war. The soldiers were sent to the front line, and the women had to be sent with them.

There it was a battlefield, and the Japanese soldiers they went worse. They became more violent because they did not know whether they were going to die. They beat me, and they punched me here, and they beat me like that, and sometimes they put me up against the wall and my head was hurting, and I felt like I was going to die. It felt like I was going to die, and I often lost consciousness.

And there the soldiers they were so mean, and it was so hard. I suffered so much, and really I wanted to die. When they came in, they became so violent, and they would hit me, and they would punch me, and clothes like this they will hold it like this, and they will rip them, and it was so difficult. It really was so hard on the front line at the battlefield where they were fighting. I think they were going crazy, the soldiers. I think they were going crazy. So they get given this thing to wear. They are given this thing.

TRANSLATOR. She is talking about condom again.

Ms. KIM. But they never ever use it. They just rip it off.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. Translator, can we try to sum it up for the next 2 minutes? I would appreciate it.

Ms. KIM. I think they go crazy. They did not recognize me as a person. They just wanted to kill me, and when they saw me they wrapped their hand around my neck, and they wanted to choke me. So at Kokashi the war ended, and the owner just told us you go. You just go. You go off on your own but there we did not have any money. We did not know where the roads went to, and there were not even cars.

So we did not even know what was going on but later I found out at that point America dropped the nuclear bomb on Japan, and then Japan defeated. There were 20 women all together but because the owner told us to just go that the seven women we set off. So we were walking. We walked for 1½ months, and we would just survive by pulling out radish from the field, and we walked all the way to Baekdu Mountain.

So when we were crossing the Duman River, there were seven of us but one of them got swept away and she drowned, and there is six of us. All we could do was let her drown because if we went after her, we would drown ourselves. So when we walked and we walked, we reached a city, and there were trains, and the trains were full of people, and there were people on top of the train, inside

the train, and it was so crowded that I grab onto the outside of the train, and that is how I traveled. Would you like me to end there?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. It is so difficult for me to try to limit the time of the testimonies of our friends, especially having traveled 10,000 miles to come and share with us their experiences but if I may because our witnesses have already spoken for over 15 minutes, and I would like to maybe allow her maybe another minute and a half. Tasimeda.

Ms. KIM. For all of you, you gave me the chance to come here to meet you and to speak to you, and even though this is a very short while, even though this is just a moment, I really am grateful for this opportunity, and I really do think of it as an honor, and by speaking to you I feel it is as though the years and years of han—han is a Korean word for rancor, deep sorrow—I feel as though some of it is evaporating.

For us we have never received official apology. To us they have never ever apologized. So I say to them, if you do not officially apologize or give me compensation, then give me back my youth. I will end here.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kim follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. KOON JA KIM, SURVIVING COMFORT WOMAN,
NATIONAL KOREAN AMERICAN SERVICE AND EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

My name is Koon Ja Kim. I was born in Pyongchang, Gangwon province in 1926. I became an orphan when I was 14 and I was placed in the home of Choi Chul Ji, a colonial police officer. As his "foster child," I cooked and cleaned for Mr. Choi. I had a boyfriend and we wanted to be married. However, his family objected because I was an orphan.

I remember the day that changed my life forever. I was wearing a black skirt, a green shirt, and black shoes. It was March of 1942, and I was 16 years old. I had been sent out of the house by police officer Choi and told that I needed to go and make some money. I found a Korean man wearing a military uniform and he told me that he would send me on an errand and I would be paid for this errand. I followed him and he told me to board a train—a freight car. I did not know where I was going but I saw seven other young girls and another man in a military uniform on this freight train. There were other soldiers in different cars on the train, but I didn't see them until we came to a stop and I got off the train. A Japanese soldier with a ranking badge was waiting for us by a truck. The soldiers got on the truck and the other girls and I were put on the back of the truck.

Eventually the truck stopped in front of a house that looked like an old inn. I was later told that the name of the town was Hunchun, China. The next evening, a Japanese officer came to the house. He spoke Japanese, which I did not understand. I did not know what he was saying or what he wanted until he raped me. When I refused and fought back, he punched me in the face and the blow split my eardrum. That was the first of many days and nights that I was raped. On a daily basis, I was raped by Japanese soldiers, and it was common to be raped by 20 different soldiers a day, and on some days, it was as high as 40. If we fought or resisted the rapes, we would be punished, beaten or stabbed by the soldiers. There were soldier overseers to make sure that we complied and, if we resisted, they would punish us. My body is forever marked and scarred with those beatings and in some cases stabbings with a knife. Many soldiers refused to wear condoms. We would be beaten for insisting that they wear condoms. It was common for girls to become pregnant and to contract sexually transmitted diseases. But if a girl became pregnant, she was forced to have an abortion. I was one of those girls. Eventually, we were moved to the front lines of the war to a town called Kokashi (Japanese name for a town in China). I did not believe it could get worse, but it was. The soldiers on the front lines believed they were going to die and so they acted out their fears and stress on us by being more violent than one can imagine.

After three years of this nightmare, the war ended and, I thought, so would my nightmare. After years of imprisonment and threats against our lives, we were simply told to leave. We had no money and no idea where we were or how we would get home again. Six other girls and I walked to the border of China and Korea. It

took us several weeks by foot to arrive at Baekdu mountain, which is in the border of China and North Korea. We survived by eating roots and vegetation from the ground. We had to cross the Duman River near the border to survive. We clasped hands and held on to each other as we crossed the river. One of the girls drowned and we could not save her.

I eventually made it back to my hometown but I did not have anyplace to go. I had no family or friends and I would never go back to Mr. Choi's house. To survive, I worked in a hostess bar. There, I met my old boyfriend again. We wanted to be together again, but his family again objected because I was an orphan. After mounting pressure and difficulty with his family, he committed suicide. After his death, I found out I was pregnant with his child. His family and other people in the town blamed me for my boyfriend's suicide, so I left to go to Seoul. I first worked at a hostess bar and then found a job as a housekeeper. My baby girl was born but only lived for five months. All the money that I made as a housekeeper, I spent seeking religious healing. I really wanted to know why fate had been so cruel to me. I sought healing and answers from Buddhist temples, world churches, and other religions. I am a Catholic now. Government social services eventually introduced me to the House of Sharing (a home for former comfort women), where I now reside.

My body has so many physical scars and reminders of those three violent years of my life as a young girl. There are memories that I will never be able to erase. In addition to these physical and emotional scars, the Japanese government continues to torture and punish me every day that it continues to deny the truth of those camps and what it did to me and other young girls. The war has ended but for 62 years, I have had to live a life with a scar in my heart. Not only does the Japanese government deny these barbaric actions, it claims that we voluntarily submitted to its repeated rapes and torture. The Japanese government continues to treat us as if we are not human. I believe that the officers in the Japanese government are fathers and mothers—would they act the same way if their daughters were in my situation? We were dragged there when we were young and our youth was robbed. As young girls, our innocence and youth were beaten and taken from us and our voices and cries for help were muffled and smothered with the stench of Japanese soldiers. Now, as elderly women, although we may be physically frail, we have the strength of spirit to give voice to those young girls.

The Japanese government must acknowledge and admit to its crimes and claim responsibility for these atrocities. The Japanese government is mistaken if it is simply waiting for all of us to die. Eighteen former comfort women died last year. Many have died but our memories and history live on in the voices of the younger generation and written resolutions, such as this one introduced by Congressman Honda. The Japanese government should officially apologize and provide reparations. Reparations symbolize the Japanese government's acknowledgment and responsibility for these atrocities. I am 81 years old. Money will not change my life, heal my scars, or make my memories change. I have received money in the past from the Korean government, but I donated my one hundred million won (approximately \$100,000 US) to different charities and foundations, particularly ones that work with orphans and orphanages. I was not able to study or receive an education as a young girl because I was an orphan. If I had been able to receive an education, perhaps I wouldn't have been in the situation I was in as a young girl. I don't want the money that will come from reparations. I want the responsibility of the Japanese government that the reparations symbolize. Governments must know that there is a price to pay for human rights violations and war crimes. Governments must know that our bodies and our innocence have real value and worth. Governments must know that we will not forget. There are nine of us living in a "House of Sharing" with me. We are all in our eighties. Time continues to slip away for us, but not for our cause. We sincerely recognize the U.S. Congress for caring about the cause we have waged and the unbearable pain we have all carried. My wish is that the resolution passes as soon as possible. And that it will send a strong message to the Japanese government to acknowledge its crimes and provide official redress, including an apology and reparations.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I am still learning how to speak English, and I just cannot find any words adequate enough to say for us how honored we are as members of the committee to have our distinguished witnesses to travel some 10,000 miles away to come to this country and share with us their sufferings. That is something that I find it difficult myself even to sense the emotions and for the years that you had to bear this tremendous burden.

I do have some questions but I would like to turn the time over to my friend, Congressman Honda, for some questions if he has any.

Mr. HONDA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no questions but I do want to share and thank our witnesses for their candor and for their willingness to self-disclose that which they have experienced. The comments I have heard today, such as "I have forgiven but I have not forgotten," give me an opportunity to evaporate some of my rancor. That comes with grace and time, and it is hopeful on my part that countries such as Japan can achieve that level of maturity to be able to reflect upon themselves, as great as they are, and as democratically they have become, that maturity comes when one is able to confront their past and make peace with those that they have offended.

We cannot give back people's youth, but we can certainly struggle to bring people and countries and nations to a point of maturity where they can reconcile themselves to the victims and in some way become a good reflection for the future generations. So thank you for coming these long distances to share and enlighten not only this body but the rest of the world.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. My apologies but I hope our translator will—

TRANSLATOR. She would like to speak.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Yes. Please by all means.

Ms. LEE. I have been thinking, and I have been thinking, and there is something very, very strange. I have to ask you this. Before gentleman over there said that there is a document, there is a document which says that Japanese Government has already apologized but as a victim and as a surviving comfort woman, I have never received anything. Why is it that when I have not received anything that that gentleman over there has received a document with Japanese Government's apology? From justice, can you not tell the Japanese Government is lying? So I really want to ask you how is it that he has an apology and I do not?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I will give the gentleman from California for a response before I would respond to that, and by the way for the record the gentlelady is making reference to our colleague from California, Congressman Rohrabacher for his statement about the official document that was read earlier. Can somebody also help Ms. Kim with the translation process? Can you shorten it in sentences so that the translator can—

TRANSLATOR. Hold on. Because she does not understand the procedure she is asking that gentleman who she is referring to—

Ms. LEE. So she is saying how come that gentleman said what he said before, and then he left, and now he cannot answer my question? Why is he so irresponsible? If he said something he cannot take responsibility for, he should not have said it. How is it that as a victim and as a survivor I am here, and I have never received an apology, and he has, and now he cannot even answer my question? So I do not understand the procedure but if he has said something he cannot be responsible for, I just do not understand.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I think Ms. Lee should be an attorney here.

Ms. LEE. Once in a lifetime the Chairman Faleomavaega has organized this forum, this opportunity, and I am so grateful for that,

and yet that gentleman over there he said something which I think ruins this forum. Thank you.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Could you translate for my friend, Ms. Lee? If I may just assist here. The document that I think my friend was referring to was a statement issued by the ministry of—

TRANSLATOR. Sorry. Excuse me. Can you give me a break so I can translate? Because I cannot listen and talk at the same time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. You are absolutely correct.

Ms. LEE. I love you. I respect you, and this is a sign of I love you. That man has to take responsibility.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. This document was issued on May 2004, 3 years ago. Translate it in the microphone so that our friend, Ms. Kim, could also understand.

Ms. LEE. It is just strange to me that the victims and the survivors have not received it. It is just strange.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I want to say to Ms. Lee that her point is well taken. I would like to ask Ms. O'Herne a question. As you may have heard again this is what Members of Congress do. They ask questions. They make statements. If in your opinion the statements that were issued by the former prime ministers of Japan, do you consider this to be a sufficient apology or what is it that you would like to see as a preference of what a real apology should be?

Ms. O'HERNE. Well as I said earlier on, a real apology to me is if it is followed by action, and what is action? Action is taking responsibility for their actions and owning up to their wartime atrocities which they never have done. When I was in Tokyo, they showed me in a museum a train, and underneath it said this train was built by Japanese military. This train that went through Burma, the famous Burma railway was built by prisoners of war like my father. Thousands died on that railway. They were all prisoners of war, and then they dare put under it that it was built by Japanese military.

The history they teach to their students and to the young people is totally wrong. This is what I would like to see happen that they are told the real history of their wartime atrocities. That is part of the apology.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. One of the questions that was raised earlier is the fact that only 283 of the comfort women were willing or were compensated by this fund that was established by the Japanese Government. Out of some 200,000 women that were tortured and raped?

Ms. O'HERNE. Two hundred thousand. That is the official number, 200,000. So most of them, including myself, refused it you know. It was such an insult. How dare they because by doing this they still did not take the responsibility like the private people doing, and if we would have accepted it that would have been the worst mistake because then we would have said, you see they are not responsible. They have never been responsible but by refusing it we have shown the government has to take a responsibility. It must not come from private funds.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. If I could ask the same question to Ms. Lee and Ms. Kim? Could you translate that?

TRANSLATOR. Can you word your question again please?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. They say that only 283 women were supposedly compensated by the Japanese Government through this fund out of some 200,000 women that were tortured and raped.

TRANSLATOR. So what do they consider an official acceptable apology? Is that the question?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. The concern is why only 283?

Ms. KIM. I have never received Asian Women's Fund.

TRANSLATOR. Can I ask her why?

[Written response follows:]

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM MS. KOON JA KIM AFTER THE HEARING

I did in fact receive money from the Asian Women's Fund, as it is private fund not related to the Japanese government. I immediately donated all of the money to the Beautiful Foundation to further their campaign of encouraging a healthy culture of philanthropy. I did so in 2000 because I wanted the money to be used for positive change. I maintain the money from the Asian Women's Fund is not from the Japanese government and does not in any way constitute an apology or reparations from the Japanese government.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. The concern that I have is how can we increase the number? You know as I realize I think the fund is going to end next month. Has there been any serious effort to communicate or is it just difficult for our comfort women to come forward? Has this been the real reason why hardly anybody pays attention to this? Let me ask Ms. O'Herne for her response to my question is if it is all right with you.

My question again: Out of 200,000 women that were tortured and gone through this forced prostitution they only end up with only 283 that were identified apparently by the Japanese Government to be compensated, and I wanted to ask you is it because they did not bother making contact?

Ms. O'HERNE. We have too much pride. We have pride. We are not taking it from a private fund. It has got to come from the government. Through this private fund is useless. It is totally an insult. So we will never take it from private fund. I will only take money if it comes from the government. It is just an insult they even dare offer it to us.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Ms. Lee? Ms. Kim?

Ms. LEE. So about the Asian Women's Fund. Okay.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Can you translate please?

Ms. LEE. The Japanese citizens fund, they in that fund they call us so-called comfort women. Why am I comfort women? I am Lee Yong Soo. That is the name my mom and my dad has given to me. When I went to the Japanese Diet I asked them, what is this name comfort women? Give me an explanation. Because comfort woman implies that we the victims, survivors have voluntarily walked to them. Went up to them and said, okay, we will provide comfort and sex to the soldiers. They are saying by calling us comfort woman that that is what we did. That we did it voluntarily.

But the truth is they took us away by force against our will, and then after doing such a thing they give such a dirty name, this comfort women. So they said you voluntarily went to earn some money, did you not? So here is some money from the private individuals, and we will give it to you to make you feel better. When I went to the Japanese Diet I said, give me all the names. Give me

the names of people who have accepted this money, and what they told me was, I cannot give you those names because when we give that money to them we promised them that we will keep their names as a secret. That will be confidential information.

And I said, if you cannot give me the names of people who accepted the money, well then you are a thief, are you not? So I fought them over this.

Ms. O'HERNE. Can I just add one more thing?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Please.

Ms. O'HERNE. I know one person that received the private women's fund, and by accepting it she got the money, and she got a letter with an apology. A private apology to that person. Now she gets an apology because she accepts the Asia Women Fund. Why do we not get an apology that do not accept it?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Point well taken. Can you translate that last portion?

Ms. LEE. I was taken away by force, and I was forced into becoming this so-called dirty comfort women. This is such a dirty thing. So even if the Japanese tell me they will give me all of their money, I said I am not interested. So I have a question for the chairman. I want to know——

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. It is supposed to be the other way around but how could I refuse not getting a question?

Ms. LEE. But you brought it up. Because I strongly disagree with the Women's Fund. So you brought it up so I am asking you a question.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Please.

Ms. LEE. The Japanese Government they are at it again because they sent to you to the United States this 283, because I asked them for their names when I went to the Japanese Diet. They would not give it to me but they gave it to you. So the Japanese are at it again. I think you know this well, Chairman. So I am going to ask a question which is: Chairman, how do you know about the 283 women who accepted the fund? How do you know about that?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I still think you should be an attorney.

Ms. LEE. No, I am a victim. I am the victim, and the Japanese Government when I asked them directly, they would not give that information to me, and then they gave that information to you. So I just do not understand.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. They gave me——

Ms. LEE. I am going to Japan on the 17th.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Okay. The information was given——

Ms. LEE. I am sorry.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. The information was given to me by an official of the Japanese Government.

Ms. LEE. So officially they gave it to here. So for sure I hope I get to find out these things officially. So you have started to take on our cause. So while you are at it, Chairman, if you can give me this information I promise you I will keep it confidential. I am sorry.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Officially they gave it to me because officially I asked them.

Ms. LEE. So on the 17th I must go to the Japanese Diet again and ask them for it again. So I do not understand this number 283 because in fact the entire total of survivors at this point is a bit over 100. It does not reach as high as 283. So if you say 283 accepted those funds, I do not understand how that number could be, because there is not that many of us alive.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I just want to say to our attorney, Ms. Lee, that Congressman Honda and I will be more than delighted to accompany her on her next visit with the Diet in Tokyo.

Ms. LEE. In fact, Mr. Chairman, since you bring it up, I have always wanted to be a lawyer, and in 1996 in Dongpuk University I have actually enrolled as an honorary student to study international human rights law. It was too difficult though. So I went through the 4 years and graduated, and then I went to graduate school and did 2 years and graduated. But since I did not have any of the basics, even after all that I could not become a lawyer but I did learn a bit.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I want to thank Ms. Lee, and I now have a question by my colleague Mr. Honda.

Mr. HONDA. I kept quiet at first because I thought the chairman should direct the heat toward him. There are a couple of things. One is that there are many members of this subcommittee who are not present, and it is not because they do not want to be here. They have conflicting schedules, and those who have appeared, appeared and then left to do other things, and I do not think it is from their lack of interest.

Having said that, these proceedings are being recorded and transcribed so it will be shared by those members and the public for their information and their edification. So if you would let Ms. Lee and Ms. Kim know that quickly and I will continue my comments.

The other folks who made comments that we do not agree with raise it as a matter of information that they received from other people, other sources or other lobbyists, and they raise these comments as a matter of point of discussion. Our process in this body is that we invite points that are contrary to ours so we can debate it, and so it can be responded to, as Ms. Lee has responded to it in saying, "How do you get that information?" Dialogue is part of the process of teaching us to arrive at a conclusion that is factual and appropriate.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Will the gentleman yield? I think something also to understand in terms of our procedures in a committee, and I think in listening to the statements made by other members of the committee, one of the fundamental issues that is being questioned on this proposed resolution how far back do we have to go to bring out the sins of the past so to speak? I think that was one of the issues that my friend from California raised.

They have already made the apologies. How many more apologies do you need? That is really the essence of the arguments that are being made now by our friends from the other side, and it is a valid point. And of course, Mr. Honda, if I wanted to ask you what would be your response because their proposed resolution does call for the Government of Japan to issue a formal apology.

TRANSLATOR. Excuse me, please. Would you like me to translate that?

Mr. HONDA. Yes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Quickly. We have one more panel that we have to go. In a real quick fashion that I am responding to our chief sponsor of the legislation for his response. And I want to note for the record that their response and the statements made by all three witnesses were very, very to the point in pointing out the fact that this is not just a piece of paper that you want. There is a moral issue here that has not been settled, and I think your testimonies absolutely verifies that question not only before here this committee but relationships among nations and among people.

This is the issue that we are trying to get at, and I am sorry, I wanted to ask you what is your response to our friend from California's statement that the Government of Japan has already made the apologies? What more do you need, Mike?

Mr. HONDA. What I was moving toward with our witnesses was to ask them, since Ms. Lee had been to the Diet, a question leading toward clarification. We spoke of the Asia Women's Fund, which on the whole was rejected for the motivation for which it was established, but my question would be: When you go to the Diet, what is it that you expected the Diet to do?

Ms. O'HERNE. I know what I would like to tell the Japanese Government. I would like to give them this message. As you disband in March the Asian Women's Fund, then start a proper government compensation fund. So when one finishes let them start the proper one of compensation from the government.

Mr. HONDA. Okay.

Ms. O'HERNE. And it is never too late.

Mr. HONDA. Moving from the fund, I was looking at motivation for the establishment of the first fund but if you are in front of the Diet in terms of apologies—let me be more direct. The reason I worded the resolution as unambiguous, unequivocal and clear to me means that the Diet, as a government body, should act upon the apology, and as a body, as a government, apologize to the victims, and then the prime minister, on behalf of that action, apologize to the victims.

The wording of Koizumi and the other prime ministers may have said that they represent the government, but they said "my" regrets. It was a personal acknowledgement of their regrets, and to me, in my opinion—and I am not an expert on parliamentary government in Japan—but it seems to me that it does not represent the government, and when the government has an entity to make a clear action by the government and then the prime minister says to the country, we acknowledge the mistake and the terrible policies that we have victimized the women of the other countries, and it will not happen again, that they will be clear in their textbooks and the instruction of their own people that this is unequivocal. There should be no room for ambiguity as to what their position is.

That is why I bring up the action of the United States Government. Congress apologizing as an act of Congress. Then the act being signed into law by the President as a clear, unequivocal action of this government in its apology, and I look for parallel action made by the Japanese Government.

If we were to go with you to Japan, that would be my expectation and basis for debate with them, and that would be my position, and my expectation in terms of this resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman and to our good translator.

TRANSLATOR. Is there a question?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. No, no more questions.

TRANSLATOR. No more questions. Okay.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I do not mean to offend our witnesses who traveled so far but we do have another panel that we have to bring on. But again I want to thank Ms. O'Herne and Ms. Kim and Ms. Lee for a most touching and a very not only just informative but certainly hopefully as a real education to the American people as well what you three have had to endure and what you have had to go through. At this time, I again thank you ladies.

I would like to ask Ms. Mindy Kotler, the director of the Asia Policy Point. If we could add maybe two more chairs. Let us have our friends there sit there. That is okay. Ms. Kotler, we can pull up another chair there. We are not that formal.

Mr. HONDA. And, Mr. Chairman, as they come up we could say to our witnesses, Gamsa Hahm-nida.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Ms. Kotler, and we also have Ms. Soh.

Ms. LEE. I just want to tell you for sure, Mr. Chairman, for sure I think the number of people who accepted the Asian Women's Fund cannot be over 50 because in 1992 when we started publicly speaking out there were in total 300 survivors, and to say that 283 has accepted the fund, there is not enough survivors alive for there to be that number. So what I am telling you is that that is a manipulation by the Japanese Government. That is an indication that this is one of their lies, and because the survivors are old and dying, there is no way that number can be 283, and I would just like to thank you for today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you. Dr. Soh. Please. You can sit there, Ms. Lee. You do not have to go. I may ask further questions. I want to maximize your presence here. So you do not have to leave the table. Yes. We are very happy to have Ms. Kotler. Ms. Kotler is the founder and director of the Asia Policy Point, formerly the Japanese Information Access Project, and it is a nonprofit research center here in Washington studying United States policy relationships with Japan and other countries in northeast Asia.

Personal research focuses on how Japan is integrating its security and foreign policies with international norms in the Asian regional politics. Ms. Kotler comments regularly in both the American and Asian press on issues affecting the United States/Japan relationships.

We also have Dr. Soh. I do not know what happened here. Somebody stole the bio for Dr. Soh. I am going to kill the staff here for not putting this thing in the proper sequence. Anyway, I will make that known for the record later but at this time I would like to ask Ms. Kotler to proceed.

STATEMENT OF MS. MINDY KOTLER, DIRECTOR, ASIA POLICY POINT

Ms. KOTLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Japan's contemporary responsibilities for its war crimes of Imperial Japan from 1932 to 1945. I am honored and humbled to be here with Ms. O'Herne, Grandma Kim and Grandma Yong. Before I proceed, I would like to submit for the record five supporting documents on Japan's involvement in establishing the Imperial military's comfort women system.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Without objection.

Ms. KOTLER. And one of them is an excerpt from former Prime Minister Nakasone's memoirs where he describes how he set up a comfort station in the Dutch East Indies. Another is a chart that outlines how the six leading publishers of Japanese textbooks as of this year, the 2006 edition, has no mention whatsoever of comfort women.

I am delighted that Representative Honda was right in identifying the word equivocal as the most important element in Japan's war crime apologies. It is the Government of Japan's continual splitting of hairs in its apologies that has allowed this issue to fester for so long. None—and I repeat none—of the apologies to the comfort women by Japanese Government officials would constitute an official apology in Japan.

They have been kabuki theater, representations of remorse for the benefit of a foreign audience unfamiliar with Japanese law. The reasons that this resolution is important is that the answer is in many ways twofold: Japan is a great nation, and an important ally to the United States. Its reasons for refusing an unequivocal apology to the comfort women, unfortunately undermine these positions.

The explanations have unsettling parallel to the dismissal of the Holocaust where the victims are recast as aggressors. More troubling and unlike today's Germany, most Japanese leaders—and especially the current Shinzo Abe government—hold retrogressive, pseudo-notions of Japan's history. You will probably be surprised to learn that over the past few months Japan's most respected and widest circulation, *News Daily*, which is equivalent to the *New York Times* in Japan, published two editorials calling the comfort women system a historical fabrication, and senior advisers to the prime minister have publicly expressed a desire to dilute or rescind the Kono Statement, the closest statement Japan has on record apologizing for the comfort women tragedy.

And within this past week alone prominent members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party decided to initiate Diet efforts to revise the Kono Statement and to send at least one of their colleagues to Washington to meet with you on this matter. For the United States, we do have an interest in our ally's political statements, especially those that have the potential to enflame emotions among our most important regional allies such as South Korea, Singapore, Australia, the Philippines and countries of great strategic importance to the United States such as China.

I actually was pleased by Representative Rohrabacher's statement, as it was in many parts a near line-for-line rendition of the lobbying document put out by Hogan and Hartson for the Embassy

of Japan, and I would like to in many respects address those issues, misstatements and misrepresentations. And I want to repeat, and I want to say this very carefully, the Government of Japan has not extended an official government apology.

An apology by a Japanese prime minister is an individual's opinion. For an apology to be official, it would have to be: A statement by a minister in a session of the Diet, which is their Parliament; a line or a line in an official communiqué while on an overseas visit; or to be definitive, a statement ratified by the Cabinet. None—and I repeat none—of these conditions have been met.

The few apologies given by prime ministers on this issue can be viewed as the equivalent of the President signing a treaty, but the Senate never ratifying it. The letters of apology which you have heard so much about today, which have been given by a number of prime ministers, Hashimoto, Obuchi, Mori, and Koizumi, are all the same letter, and they do not constitute a government—I repeat a government—apology.

Again, the prime minister is not putting out these letters with the approval of his Cabinet. Thus, these letters are only his personal views. Each letter is the same and does not personally address the individual recipient. Most important, note the first sentence of the so-called apology letter which reads, "In cooperation with the Japanese Government." An official apology should read on "behalf of," which it clearly does not.

Thus, all Japanese prime ministers view these letters as a burden and an obligation. Also, these letters only—and this is where some of the confusion has appeared—only accompany the disbursement of funds to those women who are willing to accept Japan's, and they call it, atonement money. They also have not been included in the atonement settlement with the Dutch nor sent to any Indonesian survivors.

Moreover, like all other Japanese war crime apologies, the letters appear insincere. In 1996, the then Prime Minister Hashimoto said point blank in public he would not sign the letters. The public disclosure of this led many to question the whole sincerity of the process, but in the end he did. The Kono Statement, which you have also heard so much about, which was issued on August 4, 1993—which so happens to be Lane Evans' birthday, my birthday, and Barak Obama's birthday—by then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono reporting the results of an investigation on the comfort women issue.

He announced a comfort women system actually existed, undeniably an act with the involvement of military authorities of the day, and then he said the Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend sincere apologies. However, he ends his statement with a hint that the government will continue to study the issue and pay attention to it. But most important, again, Mr. Kono was Chief Cabinet Secretary which is the approximate equivalent of a White House press secretary. Basically an important government apology does not come from a press secretary.

In addition, the statement was offered shortly—within days—after the fall of one prime minister and barely 5 days before the beginning of another's government. In a word, Mr. Kono was a lame duck responsible to no one.

The current prime minister, Mr. Abe, has said very reluctantly and only under duress that he would support the Kono Statement. One week before he went to China in October, he did not even say that he supported it. He says he “respects,” and I put that in quotes, the Kono Statement but says right after that, “In a narrow sense, there are no facts to endorse the existence of such a system of forced labor.” His first expression of respect was so reluctantly made that members of the Diet made him repeat it, and then shortly after that a member of his inner circle said that “although the prime minister says he respects the Kono Statement, I do not think that is what he means.”

The prime minister is a member of several conservative groups, notwithstanding documentary evidence, that believe comfort women were well paid prostitutes supervised by independent operators outside military control. The Asian Women’s Fund which you have also heard so much about, which was designed to compensate comfort women is not—and I repeat not—a government entity, and in fact, it is interesting and to some scholars amusing to see in the Japanese lobbying document that the foreign ministry is finally, for the first time, taking ownership of this wayward institution.

In fact, for many years, in fact always, the foreign ministry has tried to distance itself from this institution. When it was created in 1995, it was created as an outside entity to sidestep right-wing criticism of the acceptance of the comfort women history. To be sure, many senior foreign ministry officials did work with prominent Japanese citizens to establish it. Government funds were allocated to provide the operating expenses and medical care disbursements. Funds raised from the Japanese citizens were used for the atonement payments to the survivors.

This is not the definition of reparation, one which implies a government payment? The majority of comfort women wanted the national Government of Japan, as Mr. Honda has so carefully pointed out, to take responsibility for the history. Also, the Asian Women’s Fund was never designed to compensate all the comfort women. Only—and I repeat only—women from South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines were considered part of the fund.

Korean women left behind by retreating Japanese troops in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, China and North Korea were not included. Survivors who came from United States territories such as Guam where Japanese troops were stationed or those who immigrated to the United States were not included. The compensation for Indonesian survivors went directly to the Indonesian Government to build apartments of which none have ever been inhabited by any comfort women.

And also but more important, the survivors were only given 3 years to respond to the appeals to come forward to identify themselves, and may I say men who as boys claimed to have also been abused in the system were also not included, and there is testimony to that effect.

For elderly, poor, generally illiterate and outcast women, 3 years is simply not enough time. To be sure the Dutch Government negotiated its own settlement, but even there there were problems. Organizations that usually handled reparation payment refused to handle this kind of organization and the indirectness of it, and so

the Japanese Government through the foreign ministry had to set up a separate NGO in the Netherlands called the Project Implementation Committee in the Netherlands to identify survivors and manage disbursement funds, and the only apology letter the Dutch women got it was not to them. It was to the head of the Dutch Government.

And I have numbers in my paper about how much money was disbursed and where and what, and it is not true, blatantly not true, that the Asian Women's Fund was terminated because so few women remain. It is estimated that only 40 percent of the remaining survivors have been compensation by the fund, and also the fund was never intended by anyone to be a permanent body, and its mandate was only 10 years.

When the time was up, the fund was supposed to just disappear and go away. It is not in any way comparable to the well-known German Future Fund. It is a fund intended simply to deal with one past issue, and then move on. It was a formula.

And then I could go on about the treaties but that is all very technical historian type things, and there is a lot of complaint that this may affect U.S. foreign policy. Yes, it will. For the positive. The Japanese Government's unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing could demonstrate a deep commitment to historical truth and human rights. Such a public commitment could only strengthen, not weaken the United States-Japan relationship that is now said to be based on common values. An unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing really removes a lingering, corrosive issue weakening the ties between Japan and America's major allies in the region.

And an unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing would highlight the differences between the murderous, kidnapping, criminal regime in control of North Korea and democratic open Japan, and for the Japanese themselves an unequivocal apology for a past program of a state-sponsored sexual violence against women, solidifies Japan's long support of the myriad international standards and rulings regarding war crimes, crimes against humanity, sexual violence and human trafficking.

In fact, in 2004 there was a wonderful quote by a Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations where he noted, "The manner in which women are often obliged to live during armed conflict is indeed a moral outrage. They are usually neither the initiators of conflict nor the wagers of war, and yet their gender is often specifically targeted. This situation should in no way be tolerated." That is from the Japanese Ambassador to the U.N.

Can Japan do the right thing? Absolutely. Of course they can pass a Diet resolution. Of course the prime minister can go to the Cabinet. But even more interestingly, over the last few years, Japan has set its own precedent for leadership by what a prime minister can do when the political process breaks down. Quite frankly, if you understand the Japanese political process, the right wing is so strong that many politicians, many historians, many newspaper people are terrified to say something against the regime. They will get phone calls in the night. They will get funny little things turning up at their door. They will get threatened and roughed up. This is unbelievable and inexcusable. I know too many scholars, American scholars, who have been threatened.

Anyway, in July of last year, Prime Minister Koizumi brushed aside legal and bureaucratic arguments in order to resolve a long-standing injustice about a government sponsored campaign encouraging emigration to the Dominican Republic. And basically he said, "Throughout this period, the emigrants had faced tremendous difficulties in settling down because of the insufficient preliminary research and disclosure of information. The emigrants went under the years of hardship that were combined with unfortunate circumstances."

And then he went on to say, "The government is truly remorseful and apologized for the immense hardship the emigrants have undergone caused by the response." And concluded, "The government has judged in full consideration of facts that the emigrants are now aged," dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. "In light of this, the government has decided to offer a special compensation for these people." In so many ways that Koizumi has—

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Ms. Kotler, can you—

Ms. KOTLER. Yes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I have already given you 15 minutes.

Ms. KOTLER. Okay.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. If you could wrap it up I would appreciate it.

Ms. KOTLER. Okay. This resolution carries the political will of Congress and the American people. It asks the Government of Japan—and I repeat the government not an individual prime minister—to cease injuring itself through a craven and unnecessary denial of objective facts. It asks the Japanese Government to cease tarnishing the reputation of the Japan-United States security relationship, an alliance vital to regional security.

Passing this resolution is a good and decent thing to do. Reconciliation and regional peace in Asia are at the heart of Mr. Honda's resolution. The comfort women issue is not yesterday's problem. It is today's, and if it is not dealt with now, it will be tomorrow's problem as well. A multitude of United States vital interests are served by a definitive resolution of this moral issue currently dividing the governments and peoples of Asia.

It is also good for our close ally Japan as a government that seeks long overdue recognition of its 60-year history of constructive, responsible and resolutely peaceful membership in the modern world modern world community. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kotler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. MINDY KOTLER, DIRECTOR, ASIA POLICY POINT

PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF COMFORT WOMEN

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Japan's contemporary responsibilities for the war crimes of Imperial Japan from 1932 to 1945. I am honored and humbled to be here with Mrs. Jan Ruff O'Herne, Grandma Kim Koon-ja, and Grandma Yong Soo Lee. Thank you Mr. Honda for your inspiring opening to this hearing. I am director of Asia Policy Point, a nonprofit research center studying the U.S. policy relationship with Japan and Northeast Asia. My personal research focus is how historical reconciliation or lack thereof affects U.S. foreign policy in Asia.

If I may, I would like to first submit, for the record, five supporting documents on Japan's involvement in establishing the Imperial Military's Comfort Woman system.

They are: an excerpt from the 1978 wartime memoirs of former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone where he states he established comfort stations (*iansho*) in Balikpapan, Netherlands East Indies (Borneo); the August 4, 1993 “Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of ‘comfort women’”; a translation of an October 16, 2006 editorial in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* dismissing the Comfort Woman history; a chart outlining the disappearance of any mention of comfort women in Japanese textbooks from 1997 to 2006; a map of “Where ‘Comfort Stations’ Were”; and a paper by Professor Alexis Dudden on the December 2000 Woman’s International Tribunal on Military Sexual Slavery by Japan; and a paper on the Asian Woman’s Fund by Professor Andrew Horvat of Tokyo Keizai University’s International Center for the Study of Historical Reconciliation.

I am tasked with bringing today’s issue, House Resolution 121 calling on Japan to formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its establishment and coordination of military rape camps or more euphemistically the wartime “comfort stations, into the present and responding to the Government of Japan’s response to the Resolution.

Why is a war crime, a crime against humanity that happened over 60 years ago relevant to the United States and to its leadership in the world? Why is it important for Japan now to give an unequivocal apology for one of its greatest, albeit long ago misdeeds?

The answer is two-fold. *Japan is a great nation and important ally to the United States.* It is that simple.

Japan’s reasons for refusing an unequivocal apology to the Comfort Women unfortunately undermine these positions. The explanations have unsettling parallels to the dismissal of the Holocaust, where the victims are recast as aggressors. More troubling, and unlike today’s Germany, most Japanese leaders and especially the current Shinzo Abe government, hold retrogressive and pseudo-notions of Japan’s wartime history.

You will be surprised to learn that over the past few months, Japan’s most respected and widest circulation daily published editorials calling the Comfort Women system a “historical fabrication” and senior advisers to the Prime Minister have publicly expressed a desire to dilute or rescind the Kono Statement, the closest statement Japan has on record apologizing for the Comfort Women tragedy. And within this past week, prominent members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) decided to initiate Diet efforts to revise the Kono Statement and to send their colleagues to Washington to meet with U.S. congressional leaders on this matter.

The United States has an interest in its ally’s political statements, especially those that have the potential to inflame emotions among our important regional allies such as South Korea, Singapore, Australia, The Philippines, and countries of great strategic importance to the United States such as China.

Japan’s Equivocations

It is unfortunate that the Embassy of Japan has chosen to defend its government record on the Comfort Women with overstatements and misrepresentations:

1. *The Government of Japan has not extended an official government apology.* An apology by a Japanese Prime Minister is an individual’s opinion. For an apology to be official it would have to be a statement by a minister in a session of the Diet, a line in an official communiqué while on overseas visit, or to be definitive, a statement ratified by the Cabinet. None of these conditions have been met. The few apologies given by prime ministers on this issue can be viewed as the equivalent of the President signing a treaty, but the Senate never ratifying it.

2. *The letters of apology to the Comfort Women by Japanese Prime Ministers (Hashimoto, Obuchi, Mori and Koizumi) do not constitute a government apology.* The prime minister is not doing this with the approval of his Cabinet, thus these letters are only his personal views. Each letter is the same and does not personally address the individual recipient. Most important, note the first sentence of the so-called apology letter, which reads “in cooperation with the Government of Japan.” An official apology should, however, read “on behalf of,” which it clearly does not. Thus, Japanese prime ministers view these letters simply as a burden and an obligation.

The letters also *only* accompany the disbursement of funds to those women who are willing to accept Japan’s atonement money. They have also not been included in the “atonement” settlement with the Dutch nor sent to any Indonesian survivors. Moreover, like all other Japanese war crime apologies, the letters are insincere. In 1996, then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said he would not sign the letters. The public disclosure of his reluctance led many to question the sincerity of the process. In the end, he did sign the letters and issued the first for the Fund in August 1996.

3. *The “Kono Statement” is not an apology.* On August 4, 1993, then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono issued a statement reporting on the results of an investigation of the veracity of the Comfort Women’s claims. He announced that the Comfort Woman system was “Undeniably . . . an act, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day” and said that the “Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.” He, however, ends the statement with a hint that the Government will continue to study the issue (“continue to pay full attention to this matter, including private researched related thereto”).

Most important, a Chief Cabinet Secretary is an approximate equivalent of a White House Press Secretary. An important government apology does not come from a press secretary. In addition, the statement was offered shortly after the fall of the one prime minister and barely five days before the beginning of another’s government. In a word, Mr Kono was a lame duck, responsible to no one.

4. *Current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has said he would support the Kono Statement, but only under duress.* The Prime Minister, under pressure from the Opposition party, said twice in the week before his early October trip to China that his government “respects” the Kono Statement but said, “in a narrow sense, there are no facts that endorse the existence of such a system of forced labor.” His first expression of “respect” was so reluctantly made, that he was made to repeat it. Shortly after this admission, a senior member of the LDP said, “although the prime minister says he respects the Kono Statement, I don’t think that is what he means.” The Prime Minister is a member of several conservative groups, notwithstanding documentary evidence, that believe the Comfort Women were well-paid prostitutes supervised by independent operators outside military control.¹

On January 29, 2007, the Tokyo High Court ruled that the government-owned broadcaster, NHK had altered a program on Comfort Women after meeting with then Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe (now PM) and possibly also with the current chairman of the LDP Policy Research Council Shoichi Nakagawa. The Court ordered NHK to pay compensation to a Japanese woman’s rights group for the alteration of the program.

5. *The Asian Woman’s Fund (AWF), designed to compensate the Comfort Women is not a government fund.* Although a laudable and notable effort, AWF is not a government organization. Indeed, the Foreign Ministry worked very hard to distance itself from any institutional association. Scholars now find it strange that the Embassy of Japan claims ownership of the Fund.

In order to side step rightwing criticism of acceptance of the Comfort Women history, some senior Foreign Ministry officials worked with prominent Japanese citizens to establish AWF in 1995. Government funds were allocated to provide the operating expenses and medical care disbursements. Funds raised from Japanese citizens were used for the “atonement” payments to the survivors. This is not the definition of “reparation,” which implies it is a government payment. The majority of comfort women wanted the national government of Japan to take responsibility for their history—not just some well-meaning citizens.

6. *The Asian Women’s Fund was never designed to compensate all the Comfort Women.* Only women from South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines are considered part of the Fund. Korean women left behind by retreating Japanese troops in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, China, and North Korea were not included. Survivors who came from U.S. territories such as Guam where Japanese troops were stationed or those who emigrated to the U.S. were not included. The compensation for Indonesian survivors went directly to the government to build apartments; none of which have benefited any Indonesian Comfort Women. Survivors were also only given three years to respond to appeals from the Asian Woman’s Fund to identify themselves. Men, who as boys claimed to have been also abused in this system, were also not included. For elderly, poor, generally illiterate and outcast women this was simply too little time for many to come forward.

The Dutch government negotiated a separate agreement with the Government of Japan for medical compensation for its survivors. In fact, the issue was so contentious in the Netherlands that the Dutch foundation that usually coordinated Japanese war crime compensation, the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts, refused to work with the AWF. The Fund thus had to “create” a new foundation in the Netherlands, the Project Implementation Committee in the Netherlands (PICN), to identify survivors and to manage the disbursement of funds.

¹“LDP Panel Starts Review of Kono Statement, Arranging US Visit,” *Sankei Shimbun* (27 January 2007) p 5, Translation by the US Embassy, Tokyo.

Recently, the Government of Japan released in a Diet session the figures of compensation and sources of funding. From 1995 through 2002, the AWF raised roughly \$5 million from the public for “atonement payments” and through 2007 used \$14 million from the Government of Japan for medical and other payments. Altogether the Fund spent \$19 million for the Comfort Women with operating cost being \$27 million.

The breakdown is as follows:

- a) total government money for support projects is “about 1,400,000,000 yen”
- b) total government grants for AWF’s running cost and other projects is about 2,791,000,000 yen
- c) total donations is “565,005,636 yen”
- d) total amount government spent on AWF is about 4,191,000,000 yen (a+b)
- e) total money AWF spent for former comfort women is about 1,965,000,000 yen (a+c)
- f) total AWF spent is 4,756,000,000 yen (a+b+c)

7. *It is not true that the Asian Woman’s Fund was terminated because so few women remain.* It is estimated that only 40 percent of the remaining survivors have been compensated by the AWF. The Fund was never intended by anyone to be a permanent body and its mandate was only for 10 years. The time was up. The AWF is not comparable to the German Future Fund (GFF). It is a Fund intended simply to deal with one past issue and then move on. Unlike the GFF, AWF was never designed to be an organization on which to build a new, open relationship of trust. It was a formula, a modality.

8. *Treaties have not taken care of all compensation issues.* Neither the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal from 1946–48 nor the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty note or include the Comfort Women atrocity in their documents. The reality of this war crime was not acknowledged in the international community until 1993.

The boiler plate expression “subsequent international agreements” used by Japanese diplomats to summarize other war crime related accords, refers primarily to the 1965 Japan-Korea Treaty of Normalization by which Korea gave up all further demands for reparations from Japan, and the 1972 agreement between Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka and Chinese leaders that the PRC would not seek compensation from Japan for war damages. In return, however, it was understood that Japan would actively support the PRC’s economic development. In the case of both China and Korea, Japan did this by means of soft loans.

Again, in neither case was the issue of Comfort Women mentioned or recognized. Both treaties were signed out by brutal, dictatorial regimes eager to win cover for their own egregious human rights record.

9. *Mention of Hwang Geum Joo v. Japan is simply not relevant.* It was a decision about U.S. federal court jurisdiction. It has no relevance to resolutions passed by Congress.

Effect On US Foreign Policy

The Japanese government’s unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing would demonstrate a deep commitment to historical truth and to human rights. Such a public commitment could only strengthen, not weaken the U.S.-Japan relationship that is now said to be based on “common values.”

An unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing would remove a lingering, corrosive issue weakening the ties between Japan and major U. S. allies in the region, namely ties with South Korea, the Philippines and Australia.

An unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing would highlight the differences between the murderous, kidnapping criminal regime in control of North Korea and democratic, open Japan.

For Japan

An unequivocal apology for a past program of state-sponsored sexual violence against women solidifies Japan’s long support of the myriad international standards and rulings regarding war crimes, crimes against humanity, sexual violence, and human trafficking.

Among the most important are:

- 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children.
- 1930 ILO Convention # 29 Against Forced Labor
- The Geneva Convention and its additional protocols.

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 of the Declaration identifies the right to “seek, receive, and impart information,” under which experts have included survivor rights to know the truth.
- The 2000 UN Security Council resolution 1325, which asked member states to guarantee the protection of women in conflict situations. Japan it should be noted is a leading member of Friends of 1325, who advocates for the resolution’s implementation.
- Support by the G-8 and the OECD for Resolution 1325 (Japan is a member of both)
- Japan’s new (2005) enforceable laws against human trafficking. However, the US State Department still reports that Tokyo does “not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.”

For the International Community

Japan is the precedent for today’s understanding of humanitarian issues and sexual violence in war. The most important tool in prosecuting/stopping sexual violence in war in the future is the precedent of past recognition of sexual violence, enslavement, and exploitation. Japan’s wartime military rape camps are the modern precedent for all the issues of sexual slavery, sexual violence in war, and human trafficking that so dominate today’s discussion of war and civil conflict—Bosnia, Rwanda, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Darfur, Burma.

The Japanese “comfort women system—complete with doctors assigned to military units to check with STDs and condoms (with the brand name, Attack #1!) requisitioned by the thousands—consisted of the legalized military rape of subject women on a scale, over a period of time that was previously undocumented.

Japan is not oblivious to the sufferings of women during wartime. In 2004, the Japanese ambassador to the United Nations noted, “the manner in which women are often obliged to live during armed conflict is indeed a moral outrage. They are usually neither the initiators of conflict nor the wagers of war, and yet their gender is often specifically targeted. This situation should in no way be tolerated.”

Japanese diplomats and citizens do understand that the legal battles and emotional and physical traumas of the Comfort Women have led to justice and restored honor many women survivors of today’s ethnic and sectarian violence.

Can Japan Do the Right Thing?

Yes, and there is precedent for leadership by the prime minister to circumvent Japan’s political process. That example was just last year.²

In July 2006, Prime Minister Koizumi brushed aside legal and bureaucratic prevarication in order to resolve a longstanding injustice: a misleading government-sponsored campaign of the mid-1950s encouraging emigration to the Dominican Republic.

Koizumi said, “Throughout this period the emigrants had faced tremendous difficulties in settling down because of the insufficient preliminary research and disclosure of the information. The emigrants thereafter underwent the years of hardship that were combined with unfortunate circumstances.”

Instead of appealing a landmark court decision, Koizumi declared, “The Government is truly remorseful and apologizes for the immense hardship the emigrants have undergone caused by the response of the Government at that time.”

He added the “the Government has judged, in full consideration of the facts that the emigrants are now aged, among other factors, that the case of the emigrants to the Dominican Republic must be solved as early and as fully as possible. In light of this, the Government has decided to offer a special one-time payment for each of the emigrants.”

In so many ways what Koizumi has offered these hapless victims of the Japanese government deception is the same as what the comfort women want. A Government apology, a government reparation, and a government not hiding behind a legal sophistry.

² *Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi toward the Early and comprehensive Solution of the Case of the Emigrants to the Dominican Republic*, July 21, 2006, <http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2006/07/21danwa—e.html>. Another good example happened just a few days before this hearing. On February 6, 2007, Japan’s Supreme Court ordered the government to pay healthcare benefits to Japanese atomic bomb survivors who emigrated abroad. As the Presiding Judge Tokiyasu Fujita said, “To claim that the time limit had expired goes against the principles of faith and trust, and is not acceptable.” “Top Court: Hiroshima Must Pay Hibakusha,” *The Asahi Shimbun* (English Edition) (7 February 2007), p 1.

Conclusion

Rep Mike Honda (D-CA) was right in identifying “equivocal” as the most important element in Japan’s war crime apologies. It is the Government of Japan’s continual splitting of hairs in its apologies that has allowed this issue to fester and responsibility to be avoided. None of the apologies to the Comfort Woman by Japanese government officials would constitute an official apology in Japan. They have been *kabuki* theater, representations of remorse for the benefit of a foreign audience unfamiliar with Japanese law.

This resolution carries the force of the political will of Congress and the American people. It asks the Japanese government to cease injuring itself through a craven and unnecessary denial of objective fact. It asks the Japanese government to cease tarnishing the reputation of the Japan-U.S. security relationship, an alliance vital to the security of the region. For governments in the region, U.S. silence on the Comfort Women contributes to a sense of U.S. complicity in trying to bury the past. And bury is the right word in this instance—for the comfort women themselves—the only persons who can accept an apology—are passing on.

Passing this resolution is a good and decent thing to do. There is wide, bipartisan support for it. H.Res.121 projects U.S. leadership and attention to the important—but currently unresolved—issues of currently dividing America’s Asian allies and exacerbating differences between countries in Asia. .

Reconciliation and regional peace in Asia are at the heart of Mr. Honda’s resolution. The Comfort Women issue is not yesterday’s problem. It is today’s and, if it is not dealt with now, it will be tomorrow’s problem as well. A multitude of vital U.S. interests are served by a definitive resolution of this moral issue currently dividing the governments and peoples of Asia. It is also good for our very close ally Japan, as its government seeks long-overdue recognition of Japan’s sixty-year history of constructive, responsible and resolutely peaceful membership in the modern world community.

Mr. FALCOMAEGA. Thank you, Ms. Kotler. Our next witness is Dr. Ok Cha Soh. Dr. Soh has served as the President of the Washington Coalition of Comfort Women Issues that was established in 2001. This organization is a nonprofit educational organization founded since 1992 to promote, research and education pertaining to crimes against comfort women during World War II. Dr. Soh has been conducting numerous seminars, workshops and forums on U.S. campuses and engaging the public awareness of comfort women internationally.

By profession, Dr. Soh is a professor at the Department of Psychology and Counseling at the Washington Bible College/Capital Bible Seminary in Lanham, Maryland. She received her highest education degree, a Ph.D. in social psychology, from the Union Institute and University in Cincinnati. Also a great citizen in our Korean American community, and I would like to give this opportunity now to Dr. Soh for her statement.

STATEMENT OF OK CHA SOH, Ph.D., PRESIDENT, WASHINGTON COALITION FOR COMFORT WOMEN ISSUES

Ms. SOH. Thank you, Chairman Faleomavaega, and members of the subcommittee. It is an honor to appear before you this afternoon. I am grateful to the chairman that this important topic is the first to be addressed in a hearing by the subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment during the 110th Congress.

Over six decades have passed since the end of World War II yet the atrocities of the Japanese Imperial Army still remains as grief and sorrow in the heart of each individual. The wounds of the victims are yet to be healed. It has been almost 15 years since we began to pay attention to the long considered history of sex slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. Stripped of their dignity, robbed of their honor, surviving comfort women were

forced for many years to live their lives under the veil of shame, silent to be shouldering the burden of their horrific experiences.

They waited a very long time. We believe they should wait no longer. Issue to be noted that there was also racial discrimination of the comfort women by the allied forces, primarily meaning the United States. At the end of World War II, the Japanese were defeated. Naturally the power of dealing with the war crimes was in the hands of the allied forces, the United States.

If those some 200,000 girls and women who were subject to this brutal sexual slavery were primarily European or American wives, do you think that issue of the surviving comfort women would have kept ignored as it has been for all these years? The example of the Batavia trial speaks eloquently of this. In 1946, the Batavia trial took place in Chocata, Indonesia. That was the only military tribunal concerning the sexual victims of the comfort women system, and the Batavia trial convicted Washio Awochi and other Japanese war criminals for kidnapping Dutch nurses and forcing them into sexual slavery.

Awochi was sentenced to 10 years in military prison for his crime. That trial is often cited today as a key legal precedent in prosecution of suspects who organize mass rapes in war time as a crime against humanity. However, the Dutch trial concerns only crimes against nurses, women, who happened to be in Asia at the outbreak of the war.

The fact remains that no Japanese Government official, military official or cooperation was ever prosecute for the far larger, longer running and even more deadly organized crimes committed against hundreds of thousands of Asian women during World War II. In particular, our country, the United States, had clear evidence at the time of the criminal nature and operation of Japan's systematic sexual slavery of these women and girls yet did not bring charges against those who had persecuted and murdered them.

The Asian Women's Fund was required that any surviving comfort women sign legal papers that would end any legal rights she has to seek redress in the courts of any country for the suffering she has faced at the hands of Japanese Government or Japanese cooperation. Similarly the supposed called atonement fund was refused to pay damages to the families of comfort women who were murdered during World War II or died during the 50-plus years between 1945 and when the fund was created.

This practice raised questions. If the fund is truly intended to express remorse and atonement as Japanese Government claim for the crimes committed, through what sort of logic does it now require the surviving comfort women to abandon their rights? They have attempted to divert and to deny any legal responsibility by means of private funds, and I wish to also mention about the issue of the apology.

The most basic problem is that the comments expressed they used the euphemism. They use very careful words. The words are very carefully worded, and also very evasive. They use the words like we express remorse for bad things that happened to comfort women yet refuse Japanese Imperial Government's responsibility for doing bad things. Japanese give government actually from actually accepting responsibility.

And related to the Asian private fund, if they pay the money from the government, it would be a clear admission that the government is responsible for the crime. If they refuse to pay from the government and instead give it to a private front organization, then the government can say, hey, the payments are charity and not an admission of responsibility. That is precisely the argument the Japanese Government makes today.

Also, there is an easier way to understand why the statements are inadequate from the formal apologies. These are all as I say full of euphemisms that have the effect of concealing the truth. None of the statements mention the word like rape or slavery, kidnapping, imprisonment or the summary of execution of women and girls. Equally important none of the statements say frankly that this treatment of tens of thousands women and girls were authorized and organized at the highest level of the Japanese Imperial government and the military, a fact that by now has been clearly established.

Now when the government like Japanese Government use euphemism like this, the thing that we must do is look at the actual actions and deeds of the Japanese Government. We have the records of the Japanese actions, the convincing statements from others. What are they been doing is refusal of cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice tried to get the watch list to find the war criminals related to comfort women issues. They have not cooperated. We have an issue of textbook censorship. Also, we all know about Yakunishkrine's repeated visit.

The Japanese Government and some sympathizers argue that nothing more than these euphemisms and the form of forced charity of the Asian Women's Fund can be expected because of Asian's concern about face. Concerns of face have no standing when you come to the issue of responsibility for mass enslavement and rape of women and girls, especially considering the present day Japanese Government's ongoing effort to hide information about the crime.

Japan's refusal to accept an unequivocal responsibility for the war crime is not merely an injustice for surviving comfort women. It also undermines international law on the greatest issue of rape during the war. This affects not only World War II survivors but also from women from Yugoslavia, Africa, Latin America and other parts of the world where rape has been used as a weapon of war. This issue is not redressed or that history got it wrong. It is also essential to the success of future prosecutions of criminals who use rape as a weapon of war.

The Japanese Government today refused to assist the U.S. Department of Justice in identify as I say World War II criminals responsible crimes against comfort women. They also simply refused to cooperate. To date, the Japanese Government's effort to carry out the United Nations' recommendation on comfort women have clearly been inadequate.

It is in Japan's own interest as well as in the best interest of the United States/Japan alliance for the present Japanese Government to squarely face its obligation under international law. Permit me to conclude by recalling former Congressman Lane Evans, who used to say regarding comfort women, "I believe we have a duty.

We have a duty to help those who need our help. We have a duty to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves because in the end people will remember not the words of their enemies but the silence of their friends. We must not remain silent.”

It is our duty that we give those women the dignity and the respect they deserve. Chairman Faleomavaega, thank you once again for the invitation to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you or the members committee might have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Soh follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF OK CHA SOH, PH.D., PRESIDENT, WASHINGTON COALITION FOR COMFORT WOMEN ISSUES

Chairman Faleomavaega and Members of the Subcommittee:

It is an honor to appear before you this afternoon. I am grateful to the Chairman that this important topic is the first to be addressed in a hearing by the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment during the 110th Congress.

I appreciate the opportunity to share this panel with Dr. Mindy Kotler, who has done such significant work in bringing the issue of Comfort Women to the attention of the public, the press, and policymakers like yourselves.

I also am grateful for the remarks of Representative Michael Honda, who by introducing House Resolution 121 has taken on the mantle of your former colleague, Congressman Lane Evans of Illinois, who before his retirement last year championed the issue of Comfort Women through indefatigable efforts. Congressman Honda deserves much praise for his willingness to continue this effort.

Mr. Chairman,

We see the present through the past and see the future through the present.

The term “*Comfort Women*” is a euphemism referring to young women and girls who were tricked or abducted into sexual slavery during World War II by the Japanese Imperial government’s *Ken Pei Tai* security police and the Imperial Military. The total number of victims is unknown. Most experts agree that as many as 200,000 women and girls became sexual slaves in an international network of brothels and rape camps organized under Japanese government sponsorship for use by Japanese officers and enlistees. The large majority of the victims were Koreans, but the Japanese military also captured and used Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, Dutch, and Indonesian women in this system. This wartime rape has been identified as a war crime and as a crime against fundamental human rights. It is simultaneously recognized as a form of slavery and trafficking in women and children.

Over six decades have passed since the end of World War II, yet the atrocities of the Japanese Imperial Army still remain as grief and sorrow in the heart of each individual; the wounds of the victims are yet to be healed. It has been almost 15 years since we began to pay attention to the long-concealed history of sex slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army. Stripped of their dignity and robbed of their honor even in their home countries, surviving Comfort Women were forced for many years to live their lives under the veil of shame, silently shouldering the burden of their horrific experience.

It is indeed difficult for them to stand up as witness to the crimes committed against them. The consequences of revealing their long-kept stories may lead to embarrassment and pain. Nevertheless, they broke the silence to proclaim that they can not die in peace unless they receive an official apology and reparations from the Japanese government during their life time. To resolve the issue of sexual slavery during WWII, the surviving Comfort Women strenuously knocked on the doors of the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, numerous non-governmental organizations, and many other international human right groups. As a result, many international organizations have repeatedly petitioned the Japanese government to accept its responsibilities and to extend appropriate reparations to the victims.

Thus far, the Japanese government has largely ignored these recommendations and has failed to come forward with a minimally adequate apology, as I will disclose in a moment. The handful of surviving victims today are still anxiously awaiting justice. Time is running out for these women because the survivors are advanced in age. They have waited a very long time. We believe they should wait no longer. As time passes by, more and more victims are passing away.

Racial, Ethnic, and Class Discrimination against Comfort Women

Overall, the Comfort Women system, defined as sexual slavery, is clearly an international crime regardless the ethnic and racial background of the individual Comfort Women. The women were treated as objects and used as property, deprived of their free will and liberty, and forced to provide sexual services to the Japanese Imperial Army. But in addition to this, there is ample evidence of pervasive and often violent discrimination within the Comfort Women system. [1], [2], [3], [4]. Women of non-Japanese or non-European origin were generally treated even worse in terms of conditions of life in the comfort stations. They face beatings and summary executions much more often. The evidence shows that indigenous women were treated most brutally of all. In short, the Japanese discriminated according to race, ethnicity, and poverty.

There was also post-war racial discrimination of Comfort Women by the Allied forces, including the United States. At the end of World War II, the Japanese were defeated. Naturally, the power of dealing with the war crimes was in the hands of Allied forces, the United States. If those 200,000 girls and women who were subject to this brutal sexual slavery had been primarily European or American whites, do you think that the issue of the surviving Comfort Women would have kept ignored as it has been for all these years?

The example of the Batavia Trial speaks eloquently for this. In 1946, an Allied Military Tribunal convicted Washio Awochi and other Japanese war criminals for kidnapping Dutch nurses and forcing them into sexual slavery. Awochi was sentenced to ten years in military prison for his crime. That trial is often cited today as a key legal precedent in prosecution of suspects who organize mass rapes in war time as a crime against humanity. However, the Allied Tribunal concerned only crimes against Dutch women who happened to be in Asia at the outbreak of the war. Awochi surely deserved punishment for crimes against these women. Nevertheless, the fact remains that no Japanese government official, military officer or corporation was ever prosecuted for the far larger, longer-running, and even more deadly organized crimes committed against hundreds of thousands of *Asian* women during World War II. In particular, the Intelligence Services of our country, the United States, had clear evidence at the time of the criminal nature and operation of Japan's systematic sexual slavery of these women and girls, yet the U.S. did not bring charges against those who had persecuted and murdered these women.

It is no secret that at that time there were pervasive, demeaning stereotypes of Asian cultures in general and Asian women in particular that were common in the West. Whether it was intentional or not, these prejudices had the practical effect of protecting the criminals who approved and operated the Comfort Women system of sexual slavery from prosecution for their crimes.

Japan's continuing refusal to acknowledge responsibility for the war crimes is not only an injustice for surviving comfort women. As important as that is, Japan's present actions undermine international law, particularly law against organized rape and sexual enslavement during war. This affects not only World War II survivors, but also women from Yugoslavia, Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world where rape recently has been used a weapon of war. The issue before us today is not simply redress for a historical wrong, it is also essential to the success of future prosecutions of criminals who use rape as a weapon of war.

Asian Women's Fund

The former Japanese prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama offered a "near apology" for war time atrocities against Korea, China, and other Asian nations and announced the establishment of a private fund for payments to surviving Comfort Women. The private fund plan explicitly rejected Japanese governmental responsibility for the system of military brothels. The Comfort Women themselves and many supporters strongly criticized the private fund plan.

The private fund, called the Asian Women's Fund, was headed by Mrs. Miki Mutusko, widow of former Prime Minister, Miki Takeo. In 1996, she resigned as Chair of the Asian Women's Fund, protesting her own government's delay in offering apologies and the lack of sufficient public interest in fund. The fund's announced goal was to raise \$20 million, but actually raised only about one quarter of that. It has issued payments directly to 285 former Comfort Women. The 285 women undoubtedly represent a very small percentage of former Comfort Women, some in the Philippines and Taiwan, but not many in Korea. The majority of surviving Comfort Women, especially in Korea, refused to accept the funds. There are several reasons for this. The South Korean government and other governments at last began providing old age pensions and medical help to many survivors. For example, equally important, without a minimally acceptable official apology from the Japanese gov-

ernment, many Comfort Women regarded the Japanese money as a thinly veiled insult—a perception that was re-enforced by public comments from Japanese officials.

For quite some time now, the issue of payment of reparations to Comfort Women has not been about the money as such, which is almost negligible in Japan economy. The issue is *responsibility*. In the absence of an unequivocal spoken apology from the Japanese government, the payment of reparations would not constitute acceptance of responsibility for past acts. Japan today seeks to avoid payment of reparations for the same reason. It has failed to make a clear apology: it is unwilling, or unable, to accept responsibility for the crimes it committed, even in the egregious case of enslavement, rape and murder of thousands of women and girls.

The Asian Women's Fund requires any surviving Comfort Women to sign legal papers that would end any legal rights she has to seek redress in the courts of any country for the suffering she has faced at the hands of the Japanese government or Japanese corporations. Similarly, the supposed 'atonement' fund refuses to pay damages to the families of Comfort Women who were murdered during World War II or died during the 50-plus years between 1945 and when the fund was created. This practice raises questions. If the fund is truly intended to express remorse and atonement for crimes committed, though what sort of logic does it now require the surviving Comfort Women to abandon their rights?

The Asia Women's Fund is to be disbanded on March 31, 2007, just a few weeks from today.

Apology Issues

The Japanese government has acted specifically to avoid responsibility for clearly recognized international crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, crimes such as mass impressments of women into slavery, trafficking in slaves, organized rape, massacres of Comfort Women in Burma and in other war zones, horrific medical 'treatments' calculated to induce sterility, torture, and extrajudicial executions of women who refused or became too ill to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.

During the past 15 years a few Japanese government officials have made near-apology statements regarding Comfort Women issues. Nevertheless, even the personal spokesman for former Prime Minister Murayama specifically denied under questioning that the Prime Minister had acknowledged that there was a 'system or organization' committing crimes against these women, and specifically denied that the Japanese Imperial Army was responsible for obvious and well-documented crimes. It is also worth noting that Murayama was the only Prime Minister from an opposition party elected since 1945 and that his term in office was cut short due to rejection by their military and Diet of even his weakly worded statement of regret. He failed to obtain support in the Diet for an official apology by a margin of almost 2 to 1. In the end, Murayama's remorse has been directly rejected by subsequent governments, who have preferred to water such statements down even further.

This rejection stance is embraced to this day by many of the most senior figures in the Japanese government, including the increasingly influential armed forces. One of the recent examples is the ongoing rejection of responsibility for war crimes by the current education minister, who has barred textbooks that even mention the abuse of comfort women until the government can come up with an even more innocuous explanation for how these were treated.

Ranking members of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) speak openly of seeking a 'biological solution to the Comfort Women problem.' These men do not face sanctions or reprimands from LDP leaders. The 'biological solution' group favors refusing to make any acknowledgment of crimes against these Comfort Women, reasoning that once they die, the anger at the Japanese government will die with them.

Furthermore, the Japanese government today refuses to assist the U.S. Department of Justice in identifying World War II-era criminals responsible for crimes against Comfort Women, U.S. prisoners of war, and for biological warfare experimentation on prisoners. The U.S. Department of Justice is mandated to exclude such people from traveling to the United States, and has repeatedly requested records and other routine assistance in this task from the Japanese Ministry of Justice. Japan's government refuses to cooperate. How can this be squared with that government's claims of accepting responsibility for its WWII era crimes?

The excuse that the issue is over 60 years old is also weak. It was not until the 1980s, for example, that the United States formally apologized and paid compensation—\$20,000 per person—for the illegal internment of Japanese Americans during the WWII and it took 46 years for the United States fully apologize for its actions.

I do not agree that Japan's current government has ever frankly acknowledged that the Japanese Imperial Army played a central determinative and organizing

role in crimes against these Comfort Women. Not even close. Public relations gestures simply do not add up to an apology, most particularly when even that gesture has been subsequently rejected by the government.

Legal Issues

Fifteen former Comfort Women filed suit in U.S. District court in September 2000, seeking redress from the Japanese government and from corporations under the terms of the U.S. Alien Tort Claims Act. After many years of court hearings and petitions, the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in February 2006 that the claims of the women constituted non-judicial “political questions,” thus leaving it to the Executive Branch to seek redress for these women. The Executive Branch has not been helpful. Indeed, it went out of its way to frustrate the Comfort Women’s legal petition. There is a striking difference between how the Executive Branch has aggressively assisted certain claims made by the Holocaust victims and other Europeans against Germany after the WWII, yet has ignored, denied or even obstructed similar claims made by Asian victims seeking reparations from the Japanese government and corporations.

This inconsistency can also be found in the U.S. government’s position concerning slave-labor victims from Europe and forced laborers during Japan’s war time expansion. Japan has paid reparations for exploitation of slave laborers to several countries (including the Netherlands and Switzerland) and Japan is now responsible for making equal settlements with other countries. But the United States has not sought reparations on behalf of surviving U.S. nationals who survived slave labor at Japanese corporations.

Overall, the difference between modern Japan’s reaction to crimes against humanity during WWII is strikingly different from that of modern Germany. Germany has formally apologized and compensated many victims. Japan refuses. Unfortunately, the U.S. government has tacitly accepted Japan’s refusal, and at some points even abetted it.

One standard—and unconvincing—argument is that Japan has already addressed their obligations under the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty. The Treaty mandated that Japan enter into reparations agreements with Allied countries, whose territories had been occupied by Japan. The United States negotiated this treaty, while China, Taiwan, and North and South Korea, who were most directly affected by the Japanese war machine, were not allowed to participate. Further, in 1951, correspondence with the Dutch government, Japan agreed that the 1951 Treaty did not bar individual damage claims arising from the war. But today, Japan has discarded that statement and now says that such claims are barred by the Treaty. Perhaps most fundamentally, Japan today claims that its government-to-government deals in 1951 have freed it from either moral or legal responsibility to frankly admit, either in words or in deed, its responsibility for the crimes of the Comfort Women system. Our view is that the 1951 treaty cannot block private litigation even it was intended to waive reparations between governments.

The Japan-Korea Basic Treaty was signed in 1965. In the Treaty, the issues of Comfort Women were not discussed at that time. Funds paid to Korea under the Treaty were focused on the overall economic modernization of Korea as a whole, rather than for individual compensation.

Comfort Women issues at the U.N. and ILO

The issues of military sexual slavery by Japan was raised at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1992. Radhika Coomaraswamy (1996) and Gay McDougall (1998), special rapporteurs on systematic rape, sexual slavery, and slavery-like practices during wartime for the Sub-Commission subsequently visited Korea and other Asian countries, interviewing dozens of surviving Comfort Women and experts in international humanitarian law. Their formal reports to the United Nations unequivocally stated that Japan has violated international human right laws. Both recommended that Japanese government accept the demands of victims for formal apology and legal reparations. A parallel investigation by the expert committee appointed by the International Labor Organization reached much the same conclusions.

In September 2001, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made concluding observations concerning the Comfort Women issues. The Committee expresses its concerns that compensation offered to wartime Comfort Women by the Asian Women’s Fund, which is primarily financed through private funding, has not been deemed an acceptable measure by the women concerned. [5] Precisely because it was viewed as a device through which the Japanese government was attempting to evade its responsibilities rather than fulfill them. The U.N.

Committee urged Japan to find an appropriate arrangement in consultation with the organizations representing the Comfort Women a means to compensate the victims in a manner that would meet their expectations, before it is too late. The Committee also urged Japan to ensure that school textbooks and other teaching materials present these issues in a fair and balanced fashion, which reflects the aims and objectives of education. Finally the Committee requested that Japanese government submit a report to the U.N. detailing the steps that it had taken to fulfill these requests. Special rapporteur Coomaraswamy completed her nine year term in 2004, she reported that the Japanese government had still not fulfilled its obligations for apology and redress for victims of military sexual slavery.

To date, the Japanese government's effort efforts to carry out the U.N. recommendations has been clearly inadequate. [6] In 2005, 42 million people signed a worldwide petition saying that the Japanese government should not be granted a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council unless they admit the issues of Japanese military sexual slavery and officially apologize for those war crimes committed during WWII. These petitions were part of the reason that Japan was not granted a permanent seat on the United Security Council.

Conclusion

Japanese government continues to reject its responsibility for systematic sexual slavery, rape and other crimes against the Comfort Women of WWII. It is in Japan's own interest, as well as in the best interests of the U.S.-Japanese relations, for the present Japanese government to squarely face its obligations under international law.

We request that the Japanese government openly acknowledge and accept the responsibility for the war crimes committed by the Japanese Imperial government and Army during WWII.

They should open the archives that are now in the Japanese government's hands of Japan's Imperial government, military, and corporations and encourage research in these files. They should assist governments around the world in investigating and prosecuting Japanese Imperial-era criminals, particularly those responsible for crimes against Comfort Women. Finally the Japanese government should encourage open study and discussion of Imperial-era Japanese government and military crimes. They should publicly repudiate current Japanese officials who demean and attack surviving Comfort Women, or who promote 'biological solutions' to Japan's historical problems.

Permit me to recall former Congressman Lane Evans, who used to say regarding Comfort Women: "I believe we have a duty; we have a duty to help those who need our help. We have a duty to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. . . . Because in the end, people will remember not the words of their enemies, but the silence of their friends. We must not remain silent."

It is our duty that we give those women the dignity and the respect they deserve.

Chairman Faleomavaega, thank you once again for the invitation to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you or the Members of the Subcommittee might have.

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Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Dr. Soh. To my knowledge I believe this is probably the first time ever that Congress has ever held a hearing on this subject matter, and I do not say this as a matter of boasting or bragging about it but certainly I wanted to note for the record that this resolution was passed by this committee under the leadership of my dear friend and former chairman of this committee, Henry Hyde, who has retired, a great friend and certainly one of our stalwarts and whom I consider personally as an icon here in the Congress.

And noting also the difference of opinion as expressed by my good friend from California, I just want to let our witnesses and the public know that this is part of the process. We have disagreements, and someone once said that we are entitled to our own opinions but we certainly should not be entitled to our own facts. Then the question here, are these facts?

But I do want to commend Ms. Kotler and Dr. Soh for your testimony and our friends who have traveled so far. I sincerely hope that we will—this subcommittee as well as the Committee on Foreign Affairs—will make some results of this proposed legislation and see what we can do to get the legislation moving within the committee, and hopefully that issue will be brought before the floor of the house for consideration.

Yes, there have been issues. There are concerns. If this resolution is going to affect our relationship with Japan, I do not like the idea that somehow it is going to ruin our relationship with Japan. I think Japan is better than that, its leaders and the good people that live there. I have been to Japan several times, mainly because I have relatives who are Sumo wrestlers. One of them who retired a couple of years ago is a cousin of mine. He weighed only 570 pounds, and he wrestled by the name of Koniski.

So I do have a very fond affection for the Japanese people but as an institution or as a government, I think this is where we have to look at as a matter of what the government needs to do as an institution to address this very issue. I wanted to ask, Ms. Kotler, I noted with interest that you went point-by-point on all the issues that my good friend Congressman Rohrabacher expressed on the contrary saying that all these things have already been done. That we are reinventing the wheel so-to-speak. Why are we going through the process?

What I want to ask, Ms. Kotler, is there anything else that you think that is important that we should look at closely not only in terms of the provisions of the proposed resolution but any other issue that you feel that will be helpful also to the members of the committee and especially to my colleague, Congressman Honda, that we may have missed?

Ms. KOTLER. I would have to go back and look at the resolution again. I think in general it was quite well done, and putting the word unequivocal was essential. What I would do is look again at what we are expecting in terms of an apology. We need to make it very clear it is from the Government of Japan not just merely a blanket apology because yes, there have been apologies but not one of them can be considered an apology directly to the comfort women. Yes, Mr. Murayama as prime minister had but it was a blanket apology in general.

There have been actually 40 some—in fact, you can count them which is sort of sad—apologies in terms of World War II and the Greater East Asian War, because you are not really just talking 1941 to 1945. You are really talking 1931, 1932. I would look very carefully and with a scholar of the Japanese political system to word the sentence about what you want exactly from the Government of Japan.

Mr. HONDA. If the chairman would yield?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I am glad to yield.

Mr. HONDA. I think you hit it on the head. It would be helpful if you helped us wordsmith in Japanese the wording that would be unequivocal and unambiguous, and then the process I think you laid out that it has to be an action of the Diet and then the prime minister and the Cabinet. So with your work and with the scholars that you are working with it would be helpful to us.

Ms. KOTLER. They all have Ph.D.'s.

Mr. HONDA. That is okay as long as they are correct. Thank you.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Dr. Soh?

Ms. SOH. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I think you did address also the question of the apology question, and again I just wanted to note if you feel that there are any other provisions of the proposed resolution that you feel that maybe we could make improvements on? We do intend to continue collaborations with our Republican friends and those because this truly is a bipartisan resolution, and I am so happy that you also quoted the statements made by our former colleague, Lane Evans, a very dear friend of mine. And we are just saddened by losing him and for him not coming back because of his illness.

You had made an interesting quote in the latter part of your statement saying that in the end we will not remember the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends. I think that was from Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ms. SOH. You are right.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And so correct and very appropriate in terms of where is the commitment. One of the concerns that was brought to my attention is the fact that do we have the right to tell another sovereign country what to do? Now we can internalize and say now if the comfort women were done here in America, then this is something that is internal or domestic and that we have to do it by way of the Congress and all of this but we are telling a sovereign nation get with the program. Do something. And I wonder if it has been questioned by some of our friends to suggest that do we have the right to do this?

Ms. SOH. I think as a member of U.S. Congress we are living for the global justice and living for the helping we said those that need help. It does not have to be necessarily happen to be in Japan because the issue has been long overdue already and also by international like you, United Nations, ILO. Also the International Commission of Jurists. So a lot of issues. We have been waiting too long.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Ms. Kotler?

Ms. KOTLER. The resolution is not a law. You cannot enforce it. It is a suggestion. It is a suggestion of one ally to the next. It is a suggestion that Japan live up to the treaties that it has signed of the organizations that it is a member of from the OECD and the G7 and all the organizations which it has signed on and supported to say it is against sexual violence in conflict. That it supports human security, human rights, democracy. So we are suggesting.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Does not the United Nations also have as a matter of principle—

Ms. KOTLER. 1325.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA [continuing]. The rights of women?

Ms. KOTLER. To be exact. Yes. In fact, Japan is one of the small groups of nations that is promoting and considered a special friend of 1325, and the quote that I said from the Ambassador was in support of 1325.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mike?

Mr. HONDA. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I certainly second everything that has been said. And just to reiterate again, when I was in the State Assembly we struggled with AJR 27 which met with a lot of resistance, but was passed unanimously by voice vote. I was told at that time that I was merely a State Representative, and I do not have anything to do with international foreign relations, but we passed it anyway, asking Congress to pass a similar resolution.

They picked it up. I am here today, and so in our current position we continue to push the resolution to encourage Japan again to do the right thing as an ally, and Congress has a purview of not only domestic but also foreign relations. So we are in the right arena, doing the right thing, asking the right questions.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman. I want to thank our panel and our distinguished witnesses, and especially our dear friends who have traveled so far to come all the way here in Washington, DC, to get the snow which I hate. I know exactly how you feel. I hate this. It is not that I hate the snow but I just do not like the cold. I would rather be eating my coconuts and strumming my ukulele under a coconut tree than being here I will tell you that.

But I sincerely do want to say that—as I have said earlier—I do not know of any words that I could express what I have heard from Ms. O’Herne and Ms. Kim and Ms. Lee. I hope it will be as a lesson to our community of nations, learning from the past, but more than anything looking to the future that we hope just as we have witnessed the Holocaust Museum, and I think the phrase that I got from that experience in going through was never again.

I think that is the phrase that I hope that if as a result that we might create a positive result, and hopefully also in a constructive way in dealing with the leaders of the Japanese Government that they will see your point of view and in such a way that they will respond in a positive way and appreciating and understanding the depth of what you had to endure for all these years.

And I do have every intention to call on the leadership of our committee to see that we do move this legislation in the best way possible and collaboration also with my dear friend from California during this. I am sorry. I wish had some kahlua pig to give you for your journey. I feel helpless in not offering you any food or something to celebrate your coming here but sincerely I really wish you Godspeed on your return to Australia.

I do not know if that is the correct way of pronouncing, Ms. O’Herne, but you will definitely hear from us on this issue. That I promise, and with that, the subcommittee hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:43 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONALD A. MANZULLO, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

I question whether the United States House of Representatives is the proper forum to address historical grievances between third parties. While House Resolution 121 is well intentioned, I fail to see how it will do anything to provide closure to the survivors of this situation, and I fear this resolution could pit ally against ally and American citizens against each other.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GARY L. ACKERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

I want to thank and commend the Chairman, Mr. Faleomavaega for holding today's hearing. I also want to commend our colleague Mr. Honda for introducing his resolution and for carrying on the work of our former colleague Lane Evans to bring attention to the issue of comfort women and their families.

Mr. Chairman, every August our nation and other nations across the globe pause to remember the end of the most horrific conflict of the 20th Century. Yet for a small and dwindling number of women, that conflict never ended. During World War II, the Japanese Imperial Army forced as many as 200,000 women across Asia into sexual slavery. The vast majority of these women were from Korea but all of the women were subjected to unspeakable crimes for years at a time at the hands of Japanese soldiers. The fact that "comfort women" existed and the fact they were abused as a deliberate policy of the Imperial Japanese Army are not in dispute. These facts have been documented by war crimes tribunals, the United Nations and even the government of Japan has acknowledged the abusive treatment of "comfort women." The Japanese government and many Japanese citizens have worked hard to establish the Asian Women's Fund to extend "atonement" from the Japanese people to the comfort women, but I don't think compensation is the total issue.

The issue is that while successive Japanese Prime Ministers have written personal letters of apology to the surviving comfort women, no Prime Minister has made a public apology on behalf of the Japanese government. Beyond that, it seems the gestures that have been made don't strike the intended recipients as genuine. There are two issues here that make today's hearing important and Mr. Honda's resolution necessary. The first is that all of the comfort women deserve an apology and acceptance of responsibility that they perceive as genuine. The second is that calling attention to such atrocities reminds us in the Congress as well as the rest of international community, that we must continue the work of preventing them from ever occurring again.

Mr. Chairman, I think all of us wish a clear and unequivocal public apology had been issued and accepted long ago and that the pain and suffering endured by these women had been appropriately acknowledged and responsibility taken by the Japanese government, but until it is, I think it is incumbent on us to continue to speak out.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I look forward to hearing today's witnesses.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DIANE E. WATSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Thank you, Chairman Faleomavaega, for holding this important and historic hearing—and I should note your first since being elevated to Chairman of the Asia Subcommittee—on the sexual enslavement of over 200,000 women by the Japanese Imperial Army during its colonial occupation.

I also want to thank my friend and colleague, Representative Michael Honda, for providing the leadership in introducing House Resolution 121, a resolution that expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known as "Comfort Women," from the 1930s through the duration of World War II.

I commend Mr. Honda for his appreciation and understanding that people, institutions, and governments must take responsibility for their actions, both good and evil, and that apologies on matters of historical import are critical to the process of healing and reconciliation. Knowledge of the past, as well as acknowledgment of the past, is key to understanding the present. To paraphrase Lord Ackton, knowledge of the past is the safest and surest emancipation.

So it is in the spirit of emancipation from the past, as well as reconciliation and justice for the so-called Comfort Women, that I am certain Mr. Honda has introduced House Resolution 121 and appears here today before the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee. The purpose of H. Res. 121 is not to bash the Government of Japan but rather to speak to truth, to speak to the fact that the historical and current plight of Comfort Women has not been properly witnessed, nor has compensation to the victims been sufficiently provided.

Mr. Honda's heritage as a Japanese-American and the fact that he lived in a Japanese-American internment camp in California during World War II are also pertinent and instructive. Approximately 40 years after internment, the U.S. Government formally apologized for its role and offered reparations.

No nation's hands are clean when it comes to human rights violations. We cannot selectively speak or seek the truth. We must speak it and seek it wherever it lies. Japan is an important ally of the United States. That will not change. But I am certain that Japan's bilateral, as well as multilateral relations, will be strengthened, particularly on the Asian continent, when it fully and with due diligence confronts its past. By honestly and openly facing its past, Japan will enrich its future.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I also want to thank the women who lived through the horrifying experience of enslavement and have traveled a long distance to offer their testimony to the Subcommittee today.

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Trafficking of Women in Support of Japanese Military Forces during World War II

- The trafficking in women that occurred during World War II was a grave human rights violation of enormous proportions.
- The Government of Japan has taken steps to address this issue.
- In a 2001 letter, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi wrote, "The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women. As Prime Minister of Japan, I thus extend anew my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences. . . . I believe that our country, painfully aware of its moral responsibilities, with feelings of apology and remorse, should face up squarely to its past history and accurately convey it to future generations."
- Prime Minister Koizumi's official apology followed earlier apologies and statements issued by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in 1995 and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono in 1993.
- In October 2006, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reaffirmed these statements.
- A statement on "comfort women" that condemns Japan's abuses in World War Two without reflecting such public statements by Japanese leaders will likely be seen as incomplete and unfair.
- It is important for Japan to continue to work with its neighbors to address and settle unresolved differences concerning atrocities committed against civilians by the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II, including the "comfort women."
- Japan's effort in this regard will carry more meaning if it originates within Japan and is not perceived to be the product of foreign pressure.

THE DAILY YOMIURI

LDP split over 'comfort women' / Lawmakers plan to seek revision of 1993 statement on culpability

621 words

24 December 2006

Daily Yomiuri

3

English

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Friction is emerging within the Liberal Democratic Party over the issue of so-called **comfort women** who purportedly were forced to provide sexual services for Japanese soldiers on the Korean Peninsula and other parts of Asia during World War II.

A voluntary group set up by LDP lawmakers to study what should be taught in schools on the subject of national history held a subpanel meeting Friday to discuss the **comfort women** issue for the first time.

The group plans to request the government to revise the 1993 statement that left the impression the government officially acknowledged that the Imperial Japanese Army forcibly recruited women.

Some other LDP lawmakers, meanwhile, have expressed concern over the move and speculate that the study group might be serving to represent the real view of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who had been critical of the 1993 government statement before becoming prime minister, but has officially upheld the statement since assuming his post in September.

At the subpanel meeting of the study group, lawmakers pointed out flaws in the government statement issued by the chief cabinet secretary at the time, Yohei Kono.

Kono's statement expressed "sincere apologies and remorse" to former **comfort women**, with an apparent acknowledgement that the army and government officials recruited women by force, despite the fact that conclusive evidence has never been discovered.

"I've heard that a recruiting poster for **comfort women** has been discovered. I think we should obtain a copy and examine it to prove that there wasn't any forced recruitment," one member of the study group said at the meeting.

About 15 lawmakers, including former Education, Science and Technology Minister Nariaki Nakayama, who heads the study group, and former Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Minelchi Iwanaga, attended the meeting.

The subpanel plans to examine the issue with the help of experts and to submit a request to the government in spring, calling for a review on the Kono statement.

The study group has been inactive for the past year because core members of the group were expelled from the party in August 2005 for opposing the postal privatization bills, but the group resumed activities after Abe became prime minister.

Abe was one of the junior lawmakers who founded a group of Diet members in 1997 that was the predecessor of the study group.

Members of the study group predict that another Japan bashing campaign is likely to erupt in 2007 overseas because the year marks the 70th anniversary of the Nanjing massacre during the Sino-Japanese war.

"We need to be prepared to firmly account for Japan's stance in such an event," a member said.

Members of the study group include Hakubun Shimomura, a deputy chief cabinet secretary, and Eriko Yamatani, an assistant to the prime minister.

Shimomura had met with Nakayama at the Prime Minister's Office several times this month prior to the meeting.

The study group also has Shoichi Nakagawa, the LDP Policy Research Council chairman, as its advisor.

The recent move by the study group has alarmed other LDP lawmakers who advocate improving bilateral relations with China and South Korea.

Former LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato said, "The activities of the study group won't necessarily give a good impression to other Asian countries."

"People might think that the group is acting on behalf of the Prime Minister's Office," he said.

Kato, as the head of another group of politicians that study diplomacy and security affairs of Asia, met with his policy allies, Ichiro Aisawa and former Education Minister Tadamori Oshima, Thursday night, to confirm their intentions to work in close cooperation on this matter.

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LEAD: 'Kono Statement' on 'comfort women' should be reviewed: Shimomura

Kyodo

232 words

25 October 2006

08:36

Kyodo News

English

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TOKYO, Oct. 25 -- Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary **Nakuhiko Shimomura** said Wednesday it is necessary to review the relevance of history-related facts that led the government to issue a statement in 1993 to apologize for the sufferings of the "comfort women."

In the 1993 statement, then Chief Cabinet Secretary **Yoshiro Kono** officially acknowledged that the Imperial Japanese Army forced Asian women into sexual servitude for its soldiers.

Shimomura said in a speech in Tokyo the Kono statement should be reconsidered "by studying more about the facts after collecting objective and scientific knowledge."

While Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** said he accepts the statement in a House of Representatives Budget Committee session earlier this month, the remark by Shimomura, a political follower who he appointed to the government post, is likely to draw fire from the opposition camp.

Shimomura said, however, the government is unlikely to consider revising the statement as well as a 1995 statement in which then Prime Minister **Tomichi Murayama** apologized for Japan's wartime aggression and colonial rule, due to a lack of time.

The matter is "an issue I myself am going to study," he said.

"If the Cabinet-endorsed statements are to be amended, they will have to go through another Cabinet decision," he said. "But now is not the time to discuss the matter."

==Kyodo

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AFP

Japan still apologetic over 'comfort women': spokesman

OH

425 words

26 October 2006

06:55

Agence France Presse

English

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TOKYO, Oct 26, 2006 (AFP) -

Japan stands by its past apology to women forced into sexual slavery during World War II, the top government spokesman said Thursday, after a senior official questioned the official line.

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hakubun Shimomura called Wednesday for a review of the landmark 1993 statement in which Japan apologized to "comfort women," who were forced into sex when Japanese troops invaded other Asian countries.

"The government will not change the stance expressed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in parliament," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, the top government spokesman.

Abe earlier this month told parliament that he accepted the 1993 statement.

"The government takes the stance of the statement" of 1993, Shiozaki told reporters.

Abe said, however, he had no problem with Shimomura voicing his views on the emotionally charged issue.

"There is no problem at all because he spoke as an individual lawmaker. What I mention is an opinion of the cabinet," the prime minister told reporters.

"I also expressed various opinions in the capacity of an individual lawmaker when I was deputy chief cabinet secretary," Abe said.

Abe, whose grandfather was a cabinet member during World War II, is known for his hawkish views on history. Before taking office a month ago he pointedly refused to clarify his views on the wartime past.

But as prime minister he has tried to repair relations with neighboring countries that suffered under Japanese occupation. He visited China and South Korea on October 8-9 and acknowledged Japan's past wrongdoing.

Historians say at least 200,000 young women, mostly Korean but also from Taiwan, China, the Philippines and Indonesia, were forced to serve as sex slaves in Japanese army brothels.

In the 1993 statement, then chief cabinet secretary Yohei Kono officially acknowledged and apologized for the enslavement of so-called "comfort women."

Shimomura said in a speech that he personally believed the 1993 statement needed to be reviewed "by studying more about the facts after collecting objective and scientific knowledge."

Shiozaki, who is Shimomura's superior, also indicated that the deputy government spokesman would not be reprimanded as he was speaking in a personal capacity.

"It is up to Mr. Shimomura to make a judgment as a politician," Shiozaki said. "He is not a child."

Aides to Abe have repeatedly made harder line statements than the prime minister, with two top officials calling for Japan to debate possessing atomic weapons in response to North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

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Asia Policy Point, 11/13/06

Japan's Alliance Responsibility

In the midst of the current crisis with North Korea, Japan has sent conflicting signals regarding its commitment to regional peace and cooperation. At senior levels, long taboo discussions are taking place on whether Japan should possess nuclear weapons and if the government bore any responsibility for the Imperial Army's sexual slavery system. Just as Washington is working hard to unite Asia against a nuclear North Korea, America's closest ally, Tokyo, is resurrecting inflammatory issues that renew Chinese and Korean mistrust.

Seemingly unrelated, these two issues both serve as strong reassurances of a peaceful Japan to former adversaries and victims. A hallmark of postwar Japan is its commitment to nonproliferation and to never possessing nuclear weapons. In 1993, the then-Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono admitted to the Imperial Japanese Army's involvement in forcing women to provide sexual services for soldiers. The "Kono Statement" on comfort woman, as these women were sometimes called, has been Japanese government policy ever since.

With the October 8th North Korean nuclear test, Foreign Minister Taro Aso in tandem with LDP Policy Research Council Shoichi Nakagawa have felt comfortable to publicly question if Japan's non-nuclear policy continues to be practical. They both on a number of occasions have called for a larger debate. Despite Prime Minister Abe's insistence that he would not consider initiating such a debate, he has not silenced nor fired these men and they continue to discuss aloud the issue.

Prior to the Pyongyang's nuclear experiment and Abe's trip to Beijing and Seoul, the Prime Minister found himself twice affirming his commitment to the Kono Statement. This is a position he had long been outspokenly against and one can surmise his discomfort by his repeated references to "so-called" before his mention of "comfort women." Whether and in what form the comfort women exist is one of the central issues for Japan's conservatives hoping to do away with their country's "apologetic diplomacy."

Abe's unease was further reflected on the editorial page the Japan's largest circulation newspaper, the Yomiuri Shimbun. Twice in October, the editors who had recently completed a year-long study of Japan's wartime leadership responsibility, took issue with a U.S. House of Representatives Resolution, H Res. 759, that asks the Japanese government to "acknowledge and take responsibility for" the Imperial Army's comfort women system. The first editorial (Oct 14) said that the "Japanese

government should properly rebut such a questionable resolution," and asserts that the enslavement of these women by Japan in the 1930s and 1940s was a "fabrication" based on "groundless" reports.

The second editorial (Oct 27) emphasized that Japan's "apology" to the Comfort women" as represented in the 1993 Kono Statement by was not based on "objective and scientific knowledge" and should be reconsidered. The crux of the issue being no documentation other than the words of the victims existed to support "the transportation of women for forced labor."

Further, these editorials echoed words by Abe appointee, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shimomura who said in a speech in Tokyo (Oct 24) and to others that it was necessary to review the 1993 Kono Statement "by studying more about the facts after collecting objective and scientific knowledge."

The fact is that this brutal practice, considered the most extensive cases of human trafficking in the 20th century, is a critical issue for both China and South Korea. It is one measure in which Japan's sincerity is evaluated. The 50 congressmen who sponsored H Res 759 felt that they were furthering reconciliation to Asia with a non-controversial expression of basic human rights supported by their growing Asian-American constituencies.

For now, the U.S. Congress has not questioned Japanese foreign policies and it is doubtful that the House Comfort Women resolution will come to a vote. This Congress is likely to close by the end of this week. Japan's ill-firmed and ill-considered statements on both nuclear weapons and comfort

~~women, however, have angered many in Congress, on both sides of the aisle. The next Congress is unlikely to be as understanding or tame.~~

Japan's continued debate on its nuclear stance and wartime abuses have alarmed both its Asia allies and American policymakers. Tokyo's new "assertive" foreign policy appears working at cross purposes to Washington's efforts and its own stated goals of resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis through regional cooperation. Japan is America's most important ally in Asia. We expect more of the Japanese than many others. For the sake of regional peace and historical justice, Japan must acknowledge its past misdeeds and make its intentions clear. The United States needs Japan to be "assertive" as an internationally responsible ally.

Mindy L. Kotler

Asia Policy Calendar

Asia Policy Point, 11/13/06

(5) Editorial -- Kono statement on military comfort women: The heart of dispute is whether there was "transportation of women for forced labor as sex slaves"

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Slightly abridged)
October 31, 2006

We wonder why these remarks are problematic?

The remarks in question are the ones recently made by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hakubun Shimomura, in which he indicated the need to study the so-called "Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono's statement on military comfort women."

The opposition parties, including the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), cite a contradiction between Shimomura's remarks and Prime Minister Abe's Diet replies, in which Abe stated he would follow the Kono statement, to criticize the government as there being a discord in the cabinet.

Shimomura's remarks were specifically something like: "Personally, there is a need to study the facts more carefully, and we should take time to collect objective and scientific knowledge and consider the results [of the studies]."

The Kono statement offered an apology and expressed remorse to former military comfort women.

A threshold of the comfort-women issue was some nationwide dailies' false reports describing the women volunteer corps organized under the labor mobilization system as a means to "hunt military comfort women." To add to that, even a Japanese who "confessed" that he gathered comfort women emerged, but this confession, too, was a fabricated story.

Obviously,  Heading these circumstances, Shimomura indicated the need to study the statement.

Nonetheless, if Minshuto and other parties challenge Shimomura's remarks, they should first show what is their view about the question of whether there was transportation of women for forced labor, the crux of the Kono statement, and then should pursue the government.

Prime Minister Abe stated he abides by the Kono statement, but at the same time he commented that "No data supporting transportation of women for forced labor as sex slaves" have been found even now, "by employing the expression of 'enforcement in a narrow sense.'" Shimomura's remarks are not contradictory to Abe's replies.

The government's view is not necessarily the golden rule. It is only natural to correct it if there is something wrong with it.

The point is the facts.

Namely, was there the fact of transportation of people by the military or police authorities for forced labor? Aside from political calculations or excessive diplomatic consideration, this question should be considered; for that reason, it should be entrusted to historians and other experts' research.

As a result of the research, if no facts demonstrating transportation for forced labor are found, the Kono statement must be revised

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comfort woman yuan.txt

yuan zhulin's story:

Haunted by violent memories as a wartime sex slave for Japanese troops, yuan zhulin, 84, says it is impossible to sleep at night. As she sits awake holed up in the dank and spartan room she calls home in central China's wuhan city, the memories of atrocities committed against her ravage her mind.

She is not alone, as up to 200,000 other women across the region were forced into wartime sex slavery during Japan's conquest of Asia, although the number still alive to tell their story is rapidly dwindling.

"I can't forget the past, it's always on my mind," Yuan told AFP in an interview as China staged widespread anti-Japanese protests over the past two weekends. She often weeps uncontrollably, burying her head in her arms as she recounts a personal history so full of pain and suffering it is hard to believe her story is not some fictional horror.

But her tears and the physical scars bear testament to the awful truth, one that after decades of silence she says must be told before she goes, willingly, to her Catholic God -- where she hopes to "suffer no more."

And so each time, after drying her eyes and regaining her composure, yuan continues her harrowing tale.

"More than 10 Japanese soldiers waited outside my room everyday," said the frail woman, who was 17 when troops arrived in wuhan and promptly renamed her Masako and forced her into prostitution.

"They had no patience when waiting outside. They would kick the door with their boots and they would scare me to death and I cried and cried. After the 10 soldiers had left I couldn't even sit, it was so painful," Yuan said.

"I'm a little embarrassed talking about this but many of us couldn't even walk," she weeps, adding that her years as a comfort woman, the euphemistic term for forced prostitution, had done her body irreparable damage.

After an abortion endangered her life, she had to continue serving soldiers despite pain so excruciating that she was eventually given medicine.

"But after taking the pills I could never get pregnant again," Yuan said.

Less than a year after she arrived at the brothel -- around the time that wuhan, under months of gas bombardments, finally fell to Imperial troops in October 1938 -- yuan and some other young women hatched an escape plan.

But unable to surmount the electric wire surrounding their prison home, they were caught and beaten to within an inch of their lives.

"They kicked us and bashed us, and there is still a scar on my back and it's still very painful," Yuan said, showing the large crater-like scars on her lower waist.

"My bones were broken by the kicks."

Things took a mild turn for the better when one sympathetic Japanese soldier promised to come to her aid.

"He left my room without sleeping with me, he knew that I was suffering. He was a good man. He told me to wait for him to one day come and take me away," said Yuan, who sometimes has trouble remembering names and precise dates.

In the meantime, another Japanese officer took a liking to her round-faced good looks and pulled her out of the den to make her his sole concubine.

Six months later, the kind Japanese soldier kept his word, helping to end her one-and-half life-altering years in the brothel.

"We had nothing, life was hard, but better than living in there," she said of the ensuing relationship with the man that lasted until the end of the war.

It was a Chinese woman named Zhang Xiuying, however, who tricked Yuan and a handful of other women into prostitution, by promising employment in a hotel as a maid along with a small advance.

At the time, yuan was desperate to feed her newborn child and accepted the proposal in hopes of helping her family, only to find herself a sex slave.

Her destitute parents had already given away her two younger sisters because there was not enough to eat, and her father later died of malnutrition.

After the Japanese arrived and Yuan was forced into the brothel she never saw her

comfort woman yuan.txt

child again.

"My poor little baby. She was so pretty and our neighbors would drop in my place to see her, and she just died like that (at 9 months)," she said as her asthmatic breathing became hard.

"You can tell how much I hate the Japanese."

Speaking of crimes in wuhan internment camps where the Japanese forced a huge number of Chinese to live, Yuan tells of one man who was beaten for forgetting his identification before being thrown into the Yangtze river and left for dead.

"If someone got sick or had a fever, they would just burn them to death because they were afraid of the plague," she said.

According to official Chinese estimates, 35 million Chinese were killed or injured in the Sino-Japanese war between 1937-45.

Asked how she saw modern Japan, Yuan said: "There are good people in Japan," before adding that "it's fine that we do business with the Japanese, but we shouldn't be bullied by Japan anymore."

Like many women in China, South Korea, North Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and even Japan who were forced into slavery by Imperial troops, Yuan's anger is directed at Tokyo's refusal to financially compensate for damages.

She was in Tokyo in 2000 for a lawsuit brought by Chinese comfort women, but the court ruled against them.

Japan has repeatedly refused to compensate sex slaves and forced laborers from world war II, saying a 20-year period for suits had expired and treaties provided for reparations to states, not individuals.

According to Su Zhiliang, an expert on comfort women at Shanghai Normal University, not one former sex slave has managed to get an apology or money from the Japanese government.

The issue, along with Tokyo's approval of a nationalist school textbook which glosses over wartime atrocities, and its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, has sparked two weekends of violent protests in China.

"My wish is that Japan apologizes to me and admits their mistake and gives me proper compensation," said Yuan, who only draws a monthly state pension of 230 yuan (27.70 dollars).

Credits to AP.

Zhou Xixiang, 74, from Shanxi Province, is one of six former sex slaves from China who are bringing two separate suits against the Japanese government, seeking 20 million yen each and the publication of an apology.

The symposium at which Zhou and an expert on the so-called "comfort women" issue spoke was organized by a committee of civic groups which support the women's fight against the government.

Zhou told the audience that she was abducted and raped by Japanese soldiers at the age of 19 in 1944 while working as the head of the Chinese Communist Party's women's organization in the village of Lixhuang, where she used to live.

She said four to seven Japanese soldiers raped her every night, laying their unsheathed swords beside her to threaten her.

"I could not resist...out of fear that they might kill me with those swords," Zhou said through an interpreter.

She said she was tortured by the soldiers, who hit her arms and shoulders with their guns, demanding she give them the names of the Chinese Communist Party members in the village.

"Even now when I recall those horrible memories my head starts to ache and I cannot sleep at night," Zhou said, breaking down and sobbing often as she spoke.

60-Year Sadness of Chinese Comfort Women

Editor's Notes: The "September 18" National Humiliation Day is approaching again. The aggression and disaster of those years have moved farther and farther away and the blood color is fading gradually. However, only when a nation bears those years firmly in mind, only when it refuses to tamper with and forget history and only when it dares to face up to the suffering and filth it had experienced, can it stand up on the new stage, and avoid history to repeat itself.

It is precisely because of this that old people bring up past humiliation again. Recent news reports say that the new editions of Japanese textbooks either make no mention of or only lightly touch the Nanjing massacre and comfort women. If the bloody history is forgotten even by our posterity, then, it is not impossible that the tragedy would be re-staged.

The Comfort Women system carried out by the Japanese army during the Second World War was the ugliest, filthiest, darkest sexual slave system in human history of the 20th century. Enslaved by this system, about 200,000 Chinese women suffered devastation, but only about 200 of them can be checked against historical records. Many of those old people, for various reasons, are still trembling in the twilight of history.

At the time when the wheel of the times has "rumbled" into the 21st century, some Japanese Right-wingers are still trying to cover up their atrocities, such as the "Comfort Women" system and the Nanjing Massacre, committed during Japan's invasion of China, and to revive their old dream of "Great Japan Empire", striking an inharmonious note in the times of peace.

This December, a group of Chinese women ravaged by the Japanese troops will file a suit to the court of Tokyo to claim compensation.

Eighty-three-year-old Meizhi was once a comfort woman. She was taken away from home on Chongming Islet of Shanghai by Japanese army one day in April 1938 when she was 21.

Meizhi was taken to a "Comfort Station" to serve as a sex slave, henceforth starting her life of a hell on earth.

Early this year, Meizhi raged again when she saw on TV Japanese Right-wingers assembled in Osaka, openly denying the Nanjing Massacre atrocities. Recommended by another old man living in the same village, Meizhi attended the "International Academic Seminar on China Comfort Women" held late last March and denounced the atrocities of Japanese

army with her experience of blood and tears. In order to participate in the Tokyo Women's International Court of War Criminal, the stepson of Meizhi, Wang Anzhang, with the help of staff of the legislation service office of the township and Professor Su Zhiliang of the China "Comfort Women" Research Center, has finished the complaint and is still gathering materials at present.

The 83-year-old Meizhi said: "Why don't they admit what they have done indeed?" "I must win this lawsuit. As long as justice can't be upheld, I won't cease the lawsuit," said she with tears covering faces already.

Zhou Mei, living in the same town with Meizhi, was also a comfort woman once and suffered from mental and physical pain too in those days. The 91 years old woman, thought living a forlorn life now, still keeps a clear memory of the shocking and horrible experience happening more than 60 years ago.

Zhou Xie, son of Zhou Mei, witnessed all those when he was only five years old. The seed of hatred has long been rooted in his heart. Later on he took part in the war to resist US aggression and aid Korea, becoming an excellent pilot. He also has written the complaint and prepared for the opening of the Tokyo court this December.

LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 13, 2007, AND MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD, BY
AMBASSADOR RYOZO KATO, EMBASSY OF JAPAN, WASHINGTON, DC



EMBASSY OF JAPAN
WASHINGTON, D. C.

February 13, 2007

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide detailed information on the initiatives and measures undertaken by the Government of Japan on the issue of World War II-era comfort women. I hope you will find the attached materials helpful during your consideration of the issue and of the measure pending in your Subcommittee, House Resolution 121.

The fact that some respected members of Congress have offered this resolution suggests that perhaps we in Japan may not have done an adequate job in explaining to our friends in the U.S. all that we have done on this matter. Considering the importance of our bilateral relationship, it is critical that each of us have all the relevant facts in such circumstances.

1. Since 1991, the Government of Japan has proceeded in an open and transparent manner to fully and responsibly address this issue (attachment 1), and Japan has taken many appropriate and significant measures (summary attachment 2). In addition to acknowledging and accepting responsibility, the Japanese Government has extended official apologies from the highest levels on many occasions.

I would call your attention to the statement made in 1994 by then Prime Minister Murayama, which I quote in part below:

"On the issue of wartime "comfort women," which seriously stained the honor and dignity of many women, I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound and sincere remorse."

Since 1996, every Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Hashimoto, Obuchi, Mori and Koizumi, has extended his sincere apology in a letter, together with the atonement money, to each individual comfort woman "*As Prime Minister of Japan*" wherein they apologized for "*all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women*" (text of letter from then Prime Minister Koizumi attachment 3). Further, in 2005, Prime Minister Koizumi addressed this apology before a Japanese Diet Committee (attachment 4). And current Prime Minister Abe announced to the Diet in October 2006 that the position of the government on comfort women continues to stand (attachment 5).

2. In 1995, the Asian Women's Fund was established with the cooperation of the Government of Japan and the Japanese people. Relevant parts of attachments 1 & 2 set forth the amounts raised and distributed by the Fund, including direct payments to many of the women. The Fund has also implemented significant international medical, welfare and social projects throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The Government has contributed a total of \$40 million for operations of the Fund. Now, after more than a decade of efforts to provide the benefits to former comfort women, the Fund is scheduled to terminate its operations. I am glad to add that the Fund has received many expressions of appreciation for its activities from many people and governments concerned.

3. I would also like to point out that the Diet (Japanese Parliament) itself has debated and passed formal Resolutions in 1995 and 2005 (the 50th and the 60th anniversaries of the end of World War II) related to this issue and Japan's actions in World War II (attachments 6 & 7). The 2005 Resolution, for example, specifically apologizes and acknowledges "*the many sufferings that our country in the past inflicted on the people of other countries, in particular, of Asia, and reiterate our sincerest sympathy for all the victims.*"

4. Finally, it is important to note that Japan has publicized information, materials and official documents on the comfort women issue in numerous forms, including school textbooks and information materials by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Asian Women's Fund and the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, among others (attachment 8 for websites).

We hope that all this information provided sheds additional light on this issue. The Government of Japan has recognized its heavy responsibility on this issue and has clearly apologized and acknowledged its actions. These steps reflect a consensus among the Japanese public. While not forgetting the past, we wish to move forward.

Mr. Chairman, I remain very grateful for your sensitivity to these matters, and for how much you value the bilateral relationship of our two countries. I look forward to further working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryozi Kato', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ryozi Kato
Ambassador of Japan

Attachments



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RECENT POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN ON THE ISSUE KNOWN AS "WARTIME COMFORT WOMEN"

May, 2004

The Government of Japan has been conducting a thorough fact-finding study on the issue known as "wartime comfort women" since December 1991 and announced its results in July 1992 and in August 1993. Public documents found as a result of such study are now open to the public at the Cabinet Secretariat. On the occasion of the announcement of the findings in 1993, then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono released a statement and expressed in it sincere apologies and remorse, recognizing this issue was, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, a grave affront to the honor and dignity of a large number of women. The Government of Japan has since expressed its sincere apologies and remorse to the former "wartime comfort women" on many occasions.

Recognizing that the issue known as "wartime comfort women" was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of a large number of women, the Government of Japan, together with the people of Japan, seriously discussed what could be done for expressing their sincere apologies and remorse to the former "wartime comfort women." As a result, the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) was established on July 19, 1995 in order to extend atonement from Japanese people to the former "wartime comfort women." Having decided to provide necessary assistance for the AWF by a Cabinet decision in August 1995, the Government of Japan, with a view to fulfilling its moral responsibility, has been providing all possible assistance for the AWF, including bearing the total operational costs of the AWF, assisting its fund-raising and providing the necessary funds to implement its activities (approximately 4.2 billion yen from the AWF's founding through fiscal year of 2002), in order for the AWF to attain its goals.

1. Cooperation for the Asian Women's Fund

The Government of Japan has been cooperating with the AWF in implementing the activities. And the atonement projects were completed in the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan by the end of September 2002. Some of former comfort women who received atonement projects expressed their gratitude in various ways.

In addition, the AWF is implementing activities tailored to domestic conditions in the Netherlands and Indonesia as well. Activities in the Netherlands were completed successfully on 14 July 2001. The Government of Japan will continue its effort to seek the understanding from the Governments and authorities and other parties of the countries and regions concerned with regard to the activities of the AWF.

(1) The Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan

The AWF makes it its principle to respect the intention of each of the aged former "wartime comfort women" in the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan where the identification processes of "wartime comfort women" have been implemented by their Governments or organizations. Based upon such principle, the AWF, making use of the money donated by the Japanese people as its resource, provides the former "wartime comfort women" with the atonement money which expresses the feeling of atonement by the Japanese people and, making use of the fund disbursed by the Government of Japan, implements medical and welfare support projects aimed at improving their medical and welfare condition. When the atonement money is provided, the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, sends a letter expressing apologies and remorse directly to each former "wartime comfort woman." The details are as follows;

a. Letter from the Prime Minister of Japan

The Government of Japan has expressed its sincere apologies and remorse regarding the issue known as "wartime comfort women" on various occasions. When the atonement money and medical and welfare support project are provided, the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, sends a letter expressing apologies and remorse directly to each former "wartime comfort woman."

b. Atonement from the Japanese People

The Government of Japan has been making great efforts to raise public awareness and gain a better understanding of the issue known as "wartime comfort women." The Government has provided all possible assistance to the AWF for its fund raising from the public to express atonement to the former "wartime comfort women."

As a result, a wide range of individuals, enterprises, labor unions, political parties, Diet members and Cabinet Ministers have shown their support for the aims of the AWF. As of now, a total of more than 590 million yen, including contributions to its basic assets, has been donated to the AWF.

In July 1996, the AWF decided that the Fund would provide 2 million yen (the atonement money) to each former "wartime comfort woman" in the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan from these contributions.

Together with the atonement money and the letter from the Prime Minister of Japan, a letter from the President of the AWF, explaining the purpose and expected result of the AWF's activities, and messages from the contributors are also conveyed to each victim.

c. Medical and Welfare Support Projects funded by Governmental Resources

In order to fulfill its moral responsibility, the Government of Japan has decided to disburse about 700 million yen from the national budget for the medical and welfare projects of the AWF to assist the former "wartime comfort women" in the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan over a 5-year period.

Such plans as (i) the improvement of housing, (ii) nursing services and (iii) assistance in the provision of medical services and medicines are some examples of these projects. They are being carried out with the cooperation of the respective governments and authorities, and other

relevant organizations, taking fully into account the actual circumstances of each of the former wartime comfort women."

(2) Indonesia

The Government of Japan and the AWF have explored the most appropriate project to be implemented in Indonesia in order to express atonement from the Japanese people. As a result, the AWF has decided to support a project proposed by the Government of Indonesia called the "Promotion of Social Welfare Services for Elderly People in Indonesia" through a fund disbursed by the Government of Japan. This decision was made partly because the Government of Indonesia found it difficult to identify the former "wartime comfort women." In March 1997, the AWF concluded the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Indonesia to provide financial support (380million yen over 10 years) to the project. In this project, new facilities will be built for the elderly who have no family or relatives to look after them and are unable to work due to illness or physical handicaps. These facilities will be annexed to the public homes for elderly run by the Department of Social Affairs.

The priority entrance into these facilities will be given to those who proclaim themselves as former "wartime comfort women". The facilities will be established mainly in the regions where former "wartime comfort women" are thought to live. 21 social welfare facilities for elderly people have been established. In total, 200 people are accommodated in those facilities (as of May 2003).

(3) The Netherlands

The Government of Japan and the AWF, in consultation with the Dutch people concerned, had explored what appropriate project could be implemented in the Netherlands, where no authorities identify former "wartime comfort women," in order to convey atonement from the Japanese people. As a result, on July 16, 1998, the AWF concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Project Implementation Committee in the Netherlands (PICN) on a project concerning the issue known as "wartime comfort women" aimed at helping to enhance the living conditions of those who suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds during World War II.

In accordance with the MOU, the AWF, making use of a fund disbursed by the Government of Japan, has provided the PICN with financial support totaling up to 241.5 million yen over 3 years and the PICN has implemented the project for 79 recipients. This project was successfully completed on July 14, 2001.

(4) Programs Underscoring the Lessons of History

Recognizing the importance of passing on the facts related to this issue to future generations as a lesson of history in order to ensure that such an issue may never be repeated, the AWF, in cooperation with the Government of Japan, is actively compiling documents and materials relating to the issue known as "wartime comfort women."

2. Efforts to Address Contemporary Issues Concerning the Honor and Dignity of Women

The Government of Japan considers that it is its responsibility to address contemporary issues related to women, such as violence against women. The Government of Japan is providing financial contributions to the AWF for its activities toward the solution of such issues. In this context, the AWF has been actively implementing the following activities.

- (1) The organization of international fora (with the Government of the Philippines and the support of international organizations such as UNICEF, ILO, and ESCAP on the theme of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children in November 1997, with the Government of Thailand and international organizations such as ESCAP, ILO, IOM on the theme of International Trafficking in November 1998, with the support of the Government of Japan on the theme of Violence Against Women in September 1999)
- (2) The provision of public relations support to other NGOs engaged in various contemporary issues on women through financial assistance.
- (3) The initiation of research and fact-finding projects on contemporary women's human rights problems, such as violence against women, their causes, and necessary counter-measures and policies.
- (4) The initiation of projects to counsel the women who suffered from problems such as violence against women and to research and develop new counseling and mental care techniques to help improve the skills of counseling and health care professionals. The implementation of these kinds of activities is also significant from the standpoint of enhancing international mutual understanding concerning contemporary issues regarding women.

3. Discussions in International Human Rights Fora

In August 1997, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities under the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution, as adopted by the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which recognized the above-mentioned measures implemented by the Government of Japan in cooperation with the AWF as "positive steps" towards the settlement of this issue. In addition, the Coomaraswamy Report of 1998 recognized the measures implemented by the Government of Japan in cooperation with the AWF as "welcome efforts." The Government of Japan believes that the international community has demonstrated a certain level of understanding towards its efforts concerning this issue. The implementation of these kinds of activities is also significant from the standpoint of enhancing international mutual understanding concerning contemporary issues regarding women.

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H. RES. 121
 FACTUAL BACKGROUND ON ACTIONS TAKEN BY
 THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN ON THE COMFORT WOMEN MATTER

- I. Japan has extended official, high-level and public acknowledgements of responsibility and apologies many times.
- Former Prime Minister Koizumi has extended his apologies "As Prime Minister of Japan"
 - See attached text of letter addressed to individual comfort women from Prime Minister Koizumi which expressly states, "As Prime Minister of Japan, I thus extend anew my most sincere apologies to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds..."
 - Prime Minister Koizumi's letter also states, that "We must not evade the weight of the past, nor should we evade our responsibilities for the future."
 - Former Prime Minister Murayama in 1994 extended an apology that stated in part, "On the issue of wartime 'comfort women', which seriously stained the honor and dignity of many women, I would like to take this opportunity once again to express my profound and sincere remorse and apologies."
 - As recently as October 2006, current Prime Minister Abe confirmed to the Japanese Diet there is no change in the position of the Government of Japan on this issue.
- II. Japan has offered compensation and other benefits for former comfort women
- The Asian Women Fund was established in 1995 for the former comfort women with funding and cooperation of the Government of Japan and the Japanese people.
 - The Fund has offered payments, donated by the Japanese people, to former comfort women, and the Fund has implemented medical and welfare projects.
 - Cash payments offered to all former comfort women
 2 million yen (about \$17,000) per person was accepted by a total of 285 former comfort women in the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan
 - Medical and welfare projects
 700 million yen (about \$5.8 million) in assistance has been given to former comfort women in the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan
 - Project in the Netherlands to help comfort women
 255 million yen (about \$2.12 million)
 - Social welfare service in Indonesia
 380 million yen (about \$3.2 million)
 - After more than a decade of efforts by Japan to provide the benefits of the Asian Women's Fund to former comfort women, the Fund is scheduled to terminate its operations on March 31, 2007. Since so few women have accepted the cash payments

offered by Japan, no effort has been undertaken to extend the life of the Fund.

III. Japanese history textbooks address the suffering caused by Japan during WWII

As in the U.S., the central government in Japan does not select or recommend textbooks. Textbooks are chosen by individual schools, and local boards of education, from a list approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology. One of the criteria employed in the textbook approval process is sensitivity to neighboring countries.

There are eighteen approved history textbooks for use in high schools (ages 15 to 18) in Japan in 2006. Of these, sixteen specifically refer to comfort women and these sixteen are used by over 96% of all high schools in Japan. All eighteen approved textbooks, including the ones that do not mention comfort women, describe the suffering that the people in neighboring countries had to endure before and during World War II and Japan's responsibility, as well as its regret. Middle school (ages 12 to 15) textbooks do not address the "comfort women" issue because the subject matter is considered not to be age-appropriate.

February 2007

Letter from Prime Minister to the former comfort women

Page 1 of 1

(Translation)

Letter from Prime Minister Koizumi to the former comfort
women

The Year of 2001

Dear Madam,

On the occasion that the Asian Women's Fund, in cooperation with the Government and the people of Japan, offers atonement from the Japanese people to the former wartime comfort women, I wish to express my feelings as well.

The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women.

As Prime Minister of Japan, I thus extend anew my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

We must not evade the weight of the past, nor should we evade our responsibilities for the future.

I believe that our country, painfully aware of its moral responsibilities, with feelings of apology and remorse, should face up squarely to its past history and accurately convey it to future generations.

Furthermore, Japan also should take an active part in dealing with violence and other forms of injustice to the honor and dignity of women.

Finally, I pray from the bottom of my heart that each of you will find peace for the rest of your lives.

Respectfully yours,

Junichiro Koizumi
Prime Minister of Japan

**Excerpt of transcript of the Committee
on Budget, House of Councilors (March 23, 2005) (translation)**

Congresswoman Yoshikawa: Prime Minister, you signed letters addressed to people who accepted funds from the Asian Women's Fund. Could you explain the contents of the letter?

Prime Minister Koizumi: Would you like me to read the entire text?

Cong. Yoshikawa: That is fine with me.

PM Koizumi: I would like to summarize it. This is a letter that expresses my feeling as we conduct national compensation for people who suffered as comfort women. The point is that I expressed my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the people who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women. I also expressed that I should take an active part in dealing with violence and other forms of injustice to the honor and dignity of women. Finally, I wrote to pray from the bottom of my heart that each of you will find peace for the rest of your lives. These were my points in the letter.

Excerpt from the transcript of the Plenary Session,
House of Representative on October 3, 2006

The Diet of Japan

Prime Minister Abe: I would like to respond to Rep. Kazuo Shii (Communist Party). There were questions regarding my views on the war, history, and visit to Yasukuni Shrine.

Comments by politicians have political and diplomatic meanings and hence I think politicians must be modest when they talk about the propriety of specific views on war and history.

Separate from views on war and history, and speaking of my visit to Yasukuni Shrine, I think I would like to continue having condolence and respect to the people who sacrificed their life for the country (applause).

There was a question regarding my understanding of history. The understanding of the last war is already expressed in the statement by the Prime Minister and other forms on August 15, 1995 and August 15, 2005.

There was a question regarding the comfort women issue. The basic stance of the Government has been to stand by the statement of the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono.

END

Resolution Renewing Japan's Determination for Peace, Taking to Heart the Lessons of History

Plenary Session of the House of Representatives,
National Diet of Japan, 9 June 1995

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, this House expresses its grief for the war dead and the victims of wars and conflicts throughout the world.

Solemnly reflecting upon the many instances of colonial rule and acts of aggression that occurred in modern world history, and recognizing that Japan carried out such acts in the past and inflicted suffering on the people of other countries, especially in Asia, the Members of this House hereby express deep remorse.

We must learn in all humility the lessons of history, and promote peace in the international community, overcoming the various differences in ideology that exist regarding the understanding of history related to the war in the past.

Japan Lower House Adopts Resolution at the 60th Anniversary of WWII

August 4, 2005

Resolution of Japan's pledge to contribute further to the building of International peace on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, the end of World War II, and the atomic bombing.

The House of Representatives of Japan resolves as follows:

Although the realization of international peace is the fervent desire of human beings throughout the world, the earth has never been without wars and other calamities.

The loss of life caused by war, terrorism, famine and disease, destruction of the natural environment and other disasters continues to plague us, while the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons is also feared.

Under such realities of the international society, this House pays deep tribute to the United Nations for its efforts and wisdom in creating and maintaining international peace in the past sixty years since its establishment.

Bearing in mind the Resolution to Renew the Determination for Peace on the basis of Lessons Learned from History adopted ten years ago, we the Members of this House reflect deeply on the many sufferings that our country in the past inflicted on the people of other countries, in particular, of Asia, and reiterate our sincerest sympathy for all the victims.

Under the ideal of permanent peace advocated by Japan's Constitution, the Government of Japan, as the only country that suffered atomic bombings, should make its utmost efforts to work hand in hand with all the other peoples of the world, and pave the way for the future and the sustainable development of human beings to live in harmony; that is, the abolishment of nuclear and other weapons, elimination of all kinds of war, and the pursuit of ways to create a World Federation.

Listing of websites of publicly available materials on comfort women

-Ministry of Foreign Affairs: www.mofa.go.jp

Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohel Kono on the result of the study on the issue of "comfort women"

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html>

Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama on the occasion of the establishment of the "Asian Women's Fund"

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9507.html>

Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama on the "Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative"

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/pm/murayama/state9408.html>

Letter from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the former comfort women

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/pmletter.html>

-Asian Women's Fund: www.awf.or.jp

-Japan Center for Asian Historical Records: www.jacar.go.jp

Official Joint Statement by Surviving "Comfort Women" Testifying at
U.S. Congressional Hearing

Date: 15th February 2007

We, the surviving "Comfort Women," have waited over 60 years to witness a just resolution for "comfort women".

Despite efforts from survivors for over 15 years as well as the recommendations by the UN and other concerned international organizations, the Japanese government has not accepted its responsibility nor apologized for its war crimes against "Comfort Women".

Today we stand before the conscience of the international community to urge the Japanese Prime Minister, on behalf of the Japanese government, to officially, unambiguously, and sincerely apologize for the gross human rights violations inflicted upon us through Japanese Military Sexual Slavery during WWII.

We have continuously demanded truth and justice, but most of the survivors, at the age of 70s and 80s, are dying without an official apology from Japan.

We, the surviving "Comfort Women", welcome House Resolution 121 and urge the US Congress to pass this resolution which we believe will greatly influence the Japanese government to bring justice to their past war crimes.

We have respectfully made a long journey to testify at US Congressional hearing as witnesses in order to restore the dignity and honor of "Comfort Women".

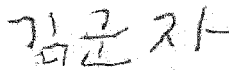
As survivors of human rights abuse, we, the surviving "Comfort Women", want to break the cycle of impunity which war criminals continue to use to breed violence against women during and after times of war.



Lee Yong Soo



Jan Ruff O'Herne



Kim Koon Ja

- surviving "Comfort Women"

[NOTE: The signatures acquired by the Petition Drive in Support of House Resolution 121, which were submitted for the record, are not reprinted here but are filed with the committee's records.]

