

Mr. ABE MUST APOLOGIZE


TO THE VICTIMS OF MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY BY IMPERIAL JAPAN DURING WWII

(H.RES. 121 adopted unanimously by US House of Representatives in 2007)
BEFORE SEEKING A SPEECH TO A JOINT SESSION OF US CONGRESS



2007, WASHINGTON, D.C.:
FORMER "COMFORT WOMEN"
JAN RUFF O'HERNE AND
YONG-SOO LEE TESTIFYING
BEFORE U.S. CONGRESS AT
THE HEARING LEADING TO
THE PASSAGE OF H.RES. 121.

2013, TOKYO: SHINZO ABE
VISITING THE YASUKUNI SHRINE



MR. ABE MUST VOW TO CEASE HIS VISITS TO THE YASUKUNI SHRINE WHERE
14 CLASS A WAR CRIMINALS, INCLUDING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PEARL
HARBOR ATTACKS, ARE ENSHRINED AS WAR HEROES AND GODS.

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR JAPAN'S WAR CRIMES BEFORE ADDRESSING U.S. CONGRESS!

As appeared on *The Hill*, signed by Korean American Forum (KAF) NY/NJ; Korean American Civic Empowerment (KACE); Korean American Forum of California, CA; Service and Education for Korean Americans, Inc.; Korean-American Association of Houston, TX; Korean Community of Anchorage, AK; the Korean American Association of Virginia, VA; the Korean American Association of Greater Atlanta, GA; the Korea Southeast U.S. Chamber of Commerce, GA; Korean-American Citizens League of New England, MA; Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues; KAVoice, IL; and other individuals demanding historical responsibility for WWII war crimes from the Japanese government.



March 10, 2015, 01:00 pm

Time for Japan to apologize

By former Del. [Eni F.H. Faleomavaega \(D-American Samoa\)](#)

This year we will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, the greatest war in human history. When representatives of Imperial Japan surrendered to General Douglas MacArthur on the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, it not only brought that war to an end. It also brought an end to the enslavement of up to 200,000 women and girls who had been coerced into sexual servitude by the Imperial Japanese military. While most have passed away in the intervening years, the survivors who remain deserve justice and closure in their final days. They have waited too long. It is time for Japan to apologize.

One of the major achievements of my two-and-a-half decades serving in the U.S. Congress was the chairing of a hearing on February 15, 2007 entitled “Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women.” Along with other members of the House Foreign Affairs’ Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, I heard the riveting testimony of three Comfort Women survivors: Ms. Yong Soo Lee and Ms. Koon Ja Kim from Korea and Ms. Jan Ruff O’Herne from Australia (formerly of the Dutch East Indies). There were few dry eyes in the hearing room after these three courageous women described in detail the suffering, humiliation and torture which they had endured. The current President of the Republic of Korea was the special guest of our committee on that occasion.

After the hearing, I took every opportunity to visit with some of the Comfort Women survivors at their home at the “House of Sharing” in Gyeonggi Province in South Korea. They are not just affectionately known as “grandmothers;” they are truly grandmothers to myself and many others who cherish their warmth, courage and endurance.

My good friend Rep. Mike Honda (D) of California also gave testimony at that 2007 hearing. In 2007, Honda also introduced House Resolution 121, which expressed “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 Forces’ 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.” I was a proud co-sponsor of that resolution, which was adopted by a voice vote in the House of Representatives on July 30, 2007.

News reports indicate that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, during a planned visit to Washington this spring, would appreciate being invited to address both Houses of Congress. If invited to speak, Abe would appear in the same House chamber where the historic Comfort Women resolution was passed. The House chamber is also the site where President Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave his renowned "date which will live in infamy" speech on December 8, 1941, the day after the Pearl Harbor attack.

If Abe is invited to speak in a chamber of historic significance, it would be only fitting and proper for him to bring final closure to certain historic issues regarding the Second World War. Not only our daily diminishing number of World War II veterans, including former POWs, but women's rights groups and the Korean-American, Filipino-American, Taiwanese-American and Chinese-American communities, among others, would greatly appreciate a sincere expression of remorse in the remarks prepared by the prime minister. Abe could use the occasion of his visit to the American Congress to "formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historic responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner" for the historic human rights violations committed against the Comfort Women.

He could also re-affirm Prime Minister Murayama's statement of 1995. Murayama wrote, in part, that "during a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations." A reaffirmation of this official apology for the aggression of the Pacific War at the site where President Roosevelt spoke would make a deep impression not only on members of Congress but on the American people, the Comfort Women survivors and other neighbors in Asia.

Such a sincere apology would be an act of true statesmanship. And it would go a long way toward providing some comfort to the Comfort Women survivors, such as Bok Dong Kim. Kim commented, during 2013 ceremonies at the unveiling of the Comfort Women monument in Glendale, California, that "we don't have much time left." The time is now, Mr. Abe. Our grandmothers are waiting to hear your apology echo in the very chamber where Resolution 121 was passed.

Faleomavaega served as the non-voting delegate of American Samoa in the House from 1989 to 2015.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/235134-time-for-japan-to-apologize>



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U.S. Should Be Appalled by Japan's Historical Revisionism

Dennis P. Halpin [2]

In a late January address to Parliament, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe directly entered the fray in Tokyo's accelerated attempts to rewrite World War II history.

As the *New York Times* reported at the time, in the speech Mr. Abe vowed "to step up efforts to fight what he called mistaken views abroad concerning Japan's wartime actions [4]."

The prime minister was referring specifically to references to Comfort Women in a McGraw Hill-published textbook used in some California high schools. However, while Japan's historic revisionism may begin with the Comfort Women and the Nanking Massacre, it ends with President Truman and the atomic bomb. If Japan is the victim in the Pacific War, Tokyo would have it, then America must be the aggressor and Harry Truman, not Hideki Tojo, the war criminal.

(Recommended: Japan's Master Plan to Defeat China in a War [5])

Those who argue that the United States should have little interest in the current debate raging over the historic legacy of the Second World War in Asia need to think again. First and foremost, the Pacific War, which ended 70 years ago this coming summer, was very much America's war too.

While the Second World War had raging in both Asia and Europe for years, it began for the United States on December 7, 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Following the surprise attack, America declared war on Imperial Japan, NOT Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. The recent movie "*Unbroken*" is a chilling reminder of what that declaration of war meant for America's Greatest Generation.

(Recommended: Sorry, China: Japan Has the Better Claim over the Senkakus [6])

Tokyo's revisionist logic is centered on the premise of Japan being victimized by the Allied powers, most notably in the fire bombings of Tokyo and the devastating atomic bombings of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which resulted in thousands of civilian casualties.

This revisionist narrative is laid out in detail at the Yushukan museum in Tokyo next to the Yasukuni war shrine. The logic is as follows: Imperial Japan waged the Great East Asia War (Daitowa Senso) in an effort to liberate the Asian peoples from the yoke of Western Imperialism.

The “selfless goal” was to bring the enlightened modernization of Meiji Japan to hopelessly backward Asian brothers and sisters.

The Yushukan museum claims that U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt sought to halt this crusade of “Asia for Asians” by imposing an oil embargo that aimed to cripple Tokyo’s war-making capacity. According to the narrative, then, Japan had no choice but to respond to Roosevelt’s interference by attacking the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor.

The unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor was the greatest such attack on American soil before 9/11. Notably, the Pearl Harbor attack also had civilian casualties, including a seven month-old infant.

(Recommended: [Five Ways Japan Could Have Won World War II](#) [7])

In truth, Pearl Harbor likely had more to do with Japan signing the Tripartite Pact with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in Berlin on September 27, 1940 than with FDR’s oil embargo. Even the bravado of Japanese militarists would likely have been tempered by the sobering thought of taking on the industrial might of the United States all alone.

When the decision to attack Pearl Harbor was reached in the fall of 1941, Nazi troops were engaged in a full-scale invasion of the Soviet Union. It looked as though the Allies would be preoccupied with stopping the Nazi *blitzkrieg*, leaving Tokyo a free hand in Asia. Hitler’s troops reached the outskirts of Moscow before a Soviet counterattack on December 5, 1941 – a mere forty-eight hours before Pearl Harbor. As Japanese bombs fell in the Pacific, the Red Army and a ferocious Russian winter combined to begin to turn the tide against Hitler in Europe. Still, Hitler and Mussolini, foolishly in retrospect, honored their treaty commitment to Tokyo by declaring war on the United States in response to Congress declaring war on Japan.

Unlike in Europe, history revisionists in Tokyo are not limited to isolated neo-Nazis and skinheads. Rather they include respected figures in Japanese society, including politicians and journalists. The crimes committed during the Pacific War which these Japanese opinion leaders now deny are critical to the judgment of history. While the overwhelming majority of the victims in the Nanking massacre, the Sook Ching massacre in Singapore, the sacking of Manila, Tokyo’s slave labor system, Unit 731’s bio-chemical experiments in Manchuria, and the Comfort Women stations, were Asians, rather than Americans or Europeans, these atrocities join other Axis war crimes and crimes against humanity as a major rationale for post-war international tribunals, including Nuremberg.

(Recommended: [Germany's New Confrontation with the Holocaust](#) [8])

(The torture of POW slave laborers, as chronicled in “*Unbroken*,” along with the Bataan Death March and Siam-Burma Railway laborer abuse, was directed primarily against Caucasians and African-Americans. One sobering statistic [9]: “Overall, an estimated 40 percent of U.S. Army and Air Force POWs died while in Japanese captivity, compared to 1.2 percent in German and Italian custody.” The *bushido* militarist culture in Imperial Japan preached that any soldier who surrendered rather than dying in battle was below contempt.)

The continued validation of crimes committed by Imperial Japan during the war, thus, remains essential if the Allied narrative of repelling a war of aggression is to prevail. The structure of the United Nations itself, whose five permanent Security Council members are WWII’s victorious

powers, is premised upon this. Remaining silent in the face of Japanese denials of Comfort Women or the Nanking Massacre could ultimately undermine the whole rationale for the post-war international system.

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) was convened in Tokyo to try Japanese leaders—including Hideki Tojo, architect of the Pearl Harbor attack—as war criminals. The IMTFE, however, is widely dismissed in Japan as “victor’s justice.” Many argue that those who were tried were only performing their patriotic duty to the Emperor, whose role in the war was never officially examined. Many also contend that the Allies sitting in judgment had committed far greater war crimes on a helpless Japan, including, as noted previously, the firebombing of Tokyo and the dropping of the atom bombs.

In his excellent book, *Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* [10], Ian Buruma points out that when the United Nations convened a Conference on Disarmament in Hiroshima in July 1992, “all went well” until an American Harvard professor spoke. Buruma records how the professor presented the Greatest Generation’s explanation for the atomic bombing by stating that “it ended World War II and saved a million Japanese lives.” Buruma records that the professor’s statements caused “outrage” among the Japanese public and that the *Asahi Shimbun* opined that unless the United States [11] “disentangled itself from this kind of view” it would face opposition from non-nuclear countries.

Yet without this explanation, the use of atomic bombs on two cities filled with civilians is horrific and unjustifiable. War correspondent John Hersey’s compelling book *Hiroshima*, written in the immediate aftermath of the attack, with its graphic description of melted eyeballs and the shadow of a vaporized victim burned into a tile wall, would stir any person’s conscience. Japanese people cannot be criticized for reacting with horror, especially since their textbooks and educational system reportedly gloss over the war crimes Imperial Japan committed before the atomic bombings.

If the Nanking Massacre “never happened,” as NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) Governor Naoki Hyakuta declared in February [12] of last year, then there is no problem with going to Yasukuni Shrine to honor the spirit tablet of General Iwane Matsui, who commanded the Shanghai Expeditionary Force (SEF) in the assault on Nanking in 1937-38 and was sentenced to death by the IMTFE. However, if, as documented by the IMTFE, at least 200,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed in the massacre, then honoring the memory of Matsui is the equivalent of honoring Adolf Eichmann, who was convicted of murdering 437,000 Hungarian Jews.

Both the Obama administration and Congress should be concerned that, by losing control of the World War II historic narrative, they could pave the way to the ultimate determination that President Harry S. Truman was the real war criminal in WWII. Without the crimes against peace chronicled by the IMTFE, there is little moral justification for the atomic bombings beyond the “they saved lives” narrative (which is largely dismissed in Japan).

One reportedly popular narrative in Japan is that Harry Truman and his advisors were white racists determined to use the ultimate weapon on an Asian people to demonstrate to the Soviet Union the horror of a nuclear holocaust. (This ignores the fact that the bomb was developed to be used against the Nazis, who were busy trying to perfect their own atomic weapon. The plan changed when Nazi Germany surrendered and Imperial Japan kept fighting.)

Those who advocate expressing remorse for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, such as Nancy Pelosi— who placed flowers at the Hiroshima bombing site when she was House Speaker in 2008— should be aware that such gestures will be misrepresented by the revisionist right in Japan to paint Truman as a war criminal.

And such gestures, without some reciprocal official gesture of remorse from Tokyo over the attack on Pearl Harbor, would not only undermine American prestige in Asian countries victimized by Imperial Japan, but would also jeopardize the whole Allied justification for the war. Furthermore, such a one-way American apology would disturb the spirits of the 1,102 sailors and marines enshrined forever in a watery grave in the hull of the *USS Arizona* at the bottom of Pearl Harbor.

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The Opinion Pages | OPINION

The Comfort Women and Japan's War on Truth

MINDY KOTLER NOV. 14, 2014

WASHINGTON — In 1942, a lieutenant paymaster in Japan's Imperial Navy named Yasuhiro Nakasone was stationed at Balikpapan on the island of Borneo, assigned to oversee the construction of an airfield. But he found that sexual misconduct, gambling and fighting were so prevalent among his men that the work was stalled.

Lieutenant Nakasone's solution was to organize a military brothel, or "comfort station." The young officer's success in procuring four Indonesian women "mitigated the mood" of his troops so well that he was commended in a naval report.

Lieutenant Nakasone's decision to provide comfort women to his troops was replicated by thousands of Imperial Japanese Army and Navy officers across the Indo-Pacific both before and during World War II, as a matter of policy. From Nauru to Vietnam, from Burma to Timor, women were treated as the first reward of conquest.

We know of Lieutenant Nakasone's role in setting up a comfort station thanks to his 1978 memoir, "Commander of 3,000 Men at Age 23." At that time, such accounts were relatively commonplace and uncontroversial — and no obstacle to a political career. From 1982 to 1987, Mr. Nakasone was the prime minister of Japan.

Today, however, the Japanese military's involvement in comfort stations is bitterly contested. The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is engaged in an all-out effort to portray the historical record as a tissue of lies designed to discredit the nation. Mr. Abe's administration denies that imperial Japan ran a system of human trafficking and coerced prostitution, implying that comfort women were simply camp-following prostitutes.

The latest move came at the end of October when, with no intended irony, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party appointed Mr. Nakasone's own son, former Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone, to chair a commission established to "consider concrete measures to restore Japan's honor with regard to the comfort women issue."

The official narrative in Japan is fast becoming detached from reality, as it seeks to cast the Japanese people — rather than the comfort women of the Asia-Pacific theater — as the victims of this story. The Abe administration sees this historical revision as integral to restoring Japan's imperial wartime honor and modern-day national pride. But the broader effect of the campaign has been to cause Japan to back away from international efforts against human rights abuses and to weaken its desire to be seen as a responsible partner in prosecuting possible war crimes.

A key objective of Mr. Abe's government has been to dilute the 1993 Kono Statement, named for Japan's chief cabinet secretary at the time, Yohei Kono. This was widely understood as the **Japanese government's formal apology for the wartime network of brothels and front-line encampments** that provided sex for the military and its contractors. The statement was particularly welcomed in South Korea, which was annexed by Japan from 1910 to 1945 and was the source of a majority of the trafficked comfort women.

Imperial Japan's military authorities believed sex was good for morale, and military administration helped control sexually transmitted diseases. Both the army and navy trafficked women, provided medical inspections, established fees and built facilities. Nobutaka Shikanai, later chairman of the Fujisankei Communications Group, learned in his Imperial Army accountancy class how to manage comfort stations, including how to determine the actuarial **"durability or perishability of the women procured."**

Japan's current government has made no secret of its distaste for the Kono Statement. During Mr. Abe's first administration, in 2007, the cabinet undermined the Kono Statement with two declarations: that there was no documentary evidence of coercion in the acquisition of women for the military's comfort stations, and that the statement was not binding government policy.

Shortly before he became prime minister for the second time, in 2012, Mr. Abe (together with, among others, four future cabinet members) signed an advertisement in a New Jersey newspaper protesting a memorial to the comfort women erected in the town of Palisades Park, N.J., where there is a large Korean population. The ad argued that comfort women were simply part of the licensed prostitution system of the day.

In June this year, the government published a review of the Kono Statement. This found that Korean diplomats were involved in drafting the statement, that it relied on the unverified testimonies of 16 Korean former comfort women, and that no documents then available showed that abductions had been committed by Japanese officials.

Then, in August, a prominent liberal newspaper, The Asahi Shimbun, admitted that a series of stories it wrote over 20 years ago on comfort women contained errors. Reporters had relied upon testimony by a labor recruiter, Seiji Yoshida, who claimed to have rounded up Korean women on Jeju Island for military brothels overseas.

The scholarly community had long determined that Mr. Yoshida's claims were fictitious, but Mr. Abe seized on this retraction by The Asahi to denounce the "baseless, slanderous claims" of sexual slavery, in an attempt to negate the entire voluminous and compelling history of comfort women. In October, Mr. Abe directed his government to "step up a strategic campaign of international opinion so that Japan can receive a fair appraisal based on matters of objective fact."

Two weeks later, Japan's ambassador for human rights, Kuni Sato, was sent to New York to ask a former United Nations special rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, to reconsider her 1996 report on the comfort women — an authoritative account of how, during World War II, imperial Japan forced women and girls into sexual slavery. Ms. Coomaraswamy refused, observing that one retraction did not overturn her findings, which were based on ample documents and myriad testimonies of victims throughout Japanese-occupied territories.

There were many ways in which women and girls throughout the Indo-Pacific became entangled in the comfort system, and the victims came from virtually every settlement, plantation and

territory occupied by imperial Japan's military. The accounts of rape and pillage leading to subjugation are strikingly similar whether they are told by Andaman Islanders or Singaporeans, Filipino peasants or Borneo tribespeople. In some cases, young men, including interned Dutch boys, were also seized to satisfy the proclivities of Japanese soldiers.

Japanese soldiers raped an American nurse at Bataan General Hospital 2 in the Philippine Islands; other prisoners of war acted to protect her by shaving her head and dressing her as a man. Interned Dutch mothers traded their bodies in a church at a convent on Java to feed their children. British and Australian women who were shipwrecked off Sumatra after the makeshift hospital ship Vyner Brooke was bombed were given the choice between a brothel or starving in a **P.O.W. camp. Ms. Coomaraswamy noted in her 1996 report that “the consistency of the accounts** of women from quite different parts of Southeast Asia of the manner in which they were recruited and the clear involvement of the military and government at different levels is **indisputable.”**

For its own political reasons, the Abe administration studiously ignores this wider historical **record, and focuses instead on disputing Japan's treatment of its colonial Korean women. Thus** rebuffed by Ms. Coomaraswamy, the chief cabinet secretary, Yoshihide Suga, vowed to continue advocating in international bodies, including the United Nations Human Rights Council, for **Japan's case, which is to seek to remove the designation of comfort women as sex slaves.**

The grave truth about the Abe administration's denialist obsession is that it has led Japan not only to question Ms. Coomaraswamy's report, but also to challenge the United Nations' reporting on more recent and unrelated war crimes, and to dismiss the testimony of their victims. In March, Japan became the only Group of 7 country to withhold support from a United Nations investigation into possible war crimes in Sri Lanka, when it abstained from voting to authorize the inquiry. (Canada is not a member of the Human Rights Council but issued a statement backing the probe.) During an official visit, the parliamentary vice minister for foreign affairs, **Seiji Kihara, told Sri Lanka's president, “We are not ready to accept biased reports prepared by international bodies.”**

Rape and sex trafficking in wartime remain problems worldwide. If we hope to ever reduce these abuses, the efforts of the Abe administration to deny history cannot go unchallenged. The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — all of whom had nationals **entrapped in imperial Japan's comfort women system** — must make clear their objection to the **Abe government's** perverse denial of the historical record of human trafficking and sexual servitude.

The United States, in particular, has a responsibility to remind Japan, its ally, that human rights **and women's rights are pillars of American foreign policy. If we do not speak out, we will be** **complicit not only in Japanese denialism, but also in undermining today's international efforts** to end war crimes involving sexual violence.

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