

the matter and any intent to apologize on the issue?

Also, a question for Mr. President on the comfort women issue. From the view—perspective of human rights and Asian history perceptions, I wonder if you could express your thoughts or views.

Prime Minister Abe. Well, in my meeting with the congressional representatives yesterday, I explained my thoughts, and that is, I do have deep-hearted sympathies that my people had to serve as comfort women, were placed in extreme hardships, and had to suffer that sacrifice; and that I, as Prime Minister of Japan, expressed my apologies, and also expressed my apologies for the fact that they were placed in that sort of circumstance.

Now, the 20th century was a century that human rights were violated in many parts of the world. So we have to make the 21st century a century—a wonderful century in which no human rights are violated. And I myself and Japan wish to make significant contributions to that end. And so I explained these thoughts to President.

President Bush. The comfort women issue is a regrettable chapter in the history of the world, and I accept the Prime Minister's apology. I thought it was a very—I thought his statements, Kono's statement, as well as statements here in the United States were very straightforward and from his heart. And I'm looking forward to working with this man to lead our nations forward. And that's what we spent time discussing today.

We had a personal visit on the issue. And he gave his—he told me what was on his heart about the issue, and I appreciated his candor. And our jobs are to, obviously, learn lessons from the past. All of us need to learn lessons from the past and lead our nations forward. And that's what the Prime Minister is doing in a very capable way.

Listen, we thank you all for coming. Appreciate your time. Have a nice weekend. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:09 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Akie Abe, wife of Prime Minister Abe; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and Yohei Kono, Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives. Prime Minister Abe and some reporters spoke in Japanese,

and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by the United States of America and Japan on Energy Security, Clean Development, and Climate Change

April 27, 2007

President Bush and Prime Minister Abe agreed today that confronting the interlinked challenges of energy security, clean development, and climate change requires sustained and effective global action. The United States and Japan are working to ensure that the energy on which our economies depend remains reliable, affordable, and secure by encouraging efficiency, diversity of supply, and advances in technology. At the same time our nations are making meaningful progress in addressing air pollution and greenhouse gases from our power and transportation systems. We remain committed to the ultimate objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, and will further explore the steps forward to this objective.

The United States and Japan are also advancing the clean energy technology needed to change for the better the way we power our homes, businesses, and automobiles. We are accelerating the development and deployment of these technologies by providing policy incentives to reduce the cost barriers to their full commercialization. We especially note the importance of advancing: energy efficiency and renewable energy, alternative and renewable fuels, hydrogen, near-zero emissions coal, nuclear energy, and fusion energy. We will work together to advance our nationally-defined objectives in these areas, taking advantage of a wide range of policy tools and measures including mandatory programs, incentives, and public-private technology partnerships. We will conduct a joint quantitative study on the economic, technological, and climate benefits of energy efficiency, in recognition of the trend toward national energy efficiency goals and programs throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The United States and Japan will work constructively with our international partners, in particular the major energy consuming nations, to promote the commercialization of advanced clean energy technologies. In this regard, we will also use the G8, the UNFCCC, the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, the International Energy Agency, APEC, the Commission of Sustainable Development, and other multilateral partnerships. We reaffirm the goals of the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3R) Initiative set at the G8 Summit at Sea Island in 2004. This includes the reduction of barriers to the international flow of goods and materials for recycling and remanufacturing, recycled and remanufactured products, and cleaner, more efficient technologies, consistent with existing environmental and trade obligations and frameworks. We also note that a report on the Gleneagles Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development will be received at the G8 summit meeting to be hosted by Japan in 2008.

We will also endeavor under the Montreal Protocol to ensure the recovery of the ozone layer to pre-1980 levels by accelerating the phase-out of HCFCs in a way that supports energy efficiency and climate change objectives. We will continue to exercise leadership in the development of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

The United States and Japan recognize the value of our bilateral High-Level Consultations on Climate Change and will enhance, strengthen, and streamline that dialogue. The United States will send a delegation of senior-level officials to Japan before the G8 Summit in June to discuss further implementation of this statement.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on North Korea Freedom Week

April 27, 2007

I send greetings to all those observing North Korea Freedom Week. Those living in North Korea regrettably know firsthand the meaning of deprivation of freedom. I

have met in the Oval Office with some of the courageous few who have managed to escape from the country. I have heard firsthand accounts of their suffering in North Korea and of their dangerous journeys to freedom. And I have seen how they now live in freedom's light. We will continue to strengthen our commitment to bring freedom to all repressed peoples. I believe the 21st century will be freedom's century for all Koreans. One day every citizen of that peninsula will live in dignity, freedom, and prosperity at home and in peace with their neighbors abroad. Until that day comes, we will not rest in our efforts to support the North Korean people as they strive to achieve the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled as human beings.

Proclamation 8134—National Charter Schools Week, 2007

April 27, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Across our country, charter schools are providing quality education for America's students. During National Charter Schools Week, we recognize the important contributions of charter schools and underscore our commitment to ensuring that all children receive the education they need to lead lives of purpose and success.

Charter schools are public schools that provide families with a valuable educational alternative. Because they are not bound by many regulatory requirements, charter schools have the flexibility to innovate in ways that will best meet students' academic needs. Today, there are about 4,000 charter schools in 40 States and the District of Columbia helping more than one million students realize their full potential.

My Administration is dedicated to providing parents with more choices so that their children will have the best opportunity to gain the skills necessary to compete and succeed in the global economy. Through the No Child Left Behind Act, we are setting high standards, expanding parents' options, and