

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTORY VETERANS' BENEFITS PROTECTION ACT

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 5, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, in times of war and in times of peace we must always show our gratitude for those of us who have worn the uniform of the United States military.

In the closing hours of the 109th Congress, legislation was passed a comprehensive bill, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006. Included in this good bill was a bad provision to make it easier for lawyers to be involved in the Veterans claims process at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I have introduced the Veterans' Benefits Protection Act to correct this mistake. Bringing lawyers whose primary goal is their own financial gain into the system will only complicate the process and lead to inequities in a system that we count on to care for those who have served. A number of Veterans in my District have raised concerns that benefits may be slowed or diminished in value.

It is no secret that there are backlog problems that need to be fixed at the VA. Serious reforms should be considered. However, bringing more lawyers into the system will not be beneficial to a majority of Veterans who are patiently waiting for claims that are owed to them by the government.

A Veteran should be able to focus on paying for medicine and other daily necessities and never need to devote a portion of benefits that are owed to pay for legal fees. Turning to a lawyer for assistance should be an option of last resort for a Veteran with claims. There are numbers of resources: individuals, Veterans organizations, and Congressional offices that offer services to assist Veterans at no cost.

I urge my colleagues to consider supporting The Veterans' Benefits Protection Act, repealing a process that will likely lead to inequities in payments for those who have served.

RECOGNIZING STAN COTTRELL

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 5, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, today I introduced a resolution to recognize efforts taken by a Kentuckian to continue the dialogue between the United States and China.

Later this year Stan Cottrell, a distance runner born in Hart County, Kentucky will be involved in a "Friendship Run" across the Great Wall of China. Mr. Cottrell made his first run through China in 1984. Upon completion he will return to the United States to do a relay

with three men from China across our beautiful country.

Madam Speaker, I urge the adoption of this measure recognizing Mr. Cottrell's unique efforts to extend the discourse between the U.S. and China.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JUDY REICH

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend Judy Reich for her efforts on behalf of the community.

For years, Judy has been working to educate and enrich the lives of the people of Southern Nevada. In her capacity as Program Director and Community Affairs Director of KVBC, Channel 3, Las Vegas; Judy has been instrumental in the production of programs such as "Action Seniors," "Youth!" and directed Channel 3's Back to School Fair. Judy also established and coordinated Channel 3's Christmas Angel Tree Program and produced a number of Public Service Announcements.

In addition to her work at Channel 3, Judy has been very active in a number of community outreach, and philanthropic programs. Judy has served on the Marketing Committee and the Board of Directors of the Las Vegas Natural History Museum as well as on the Board of Directors of the After School All Starts Program. In addition, the Kids to Kids program and Desert Pines Middle School have all had the benefit of her leadership.

Among her many passions is her work with a number of public health awareness programs. For several years, Judy has worked with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, where she has served on the Board of Directors, the Government Relations Committee, and as a volunteer lobbyist. Judy has also advocated for public health and awareness through her work with the American Heart Association.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor my friend Judy Reich. Her efforts on behalf of the Southern Nevada community have enriched countless lives and should be applauded. I thank her for her dedication and commitment and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

COMFORT WOMEN

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in shock and disappointment at recent news from Japan, where it was reported that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has denied the historical fact that the Japanese Imperial Army forced as many as 200,000 women into sex slavery

during the Second World War, and publicly stated that Japan will not issue an apology, even if a resolution is passed in the United States House of Representatives.

On February 15, a hearing on this issue was held by the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of this House's Committee on Foreign Affairs. This was truly a historic occasion, because it brought three survivors of the Comfort Women horrors to Washington to tell their very real, very personal stories. Not only did that hearing give us an opportunity to reflect on one of the darker episodes of human history, it provided us with a chance to make history by bringing that darkness and forgotten tragedy to light and justice.

Those three women, now advanced in years—Jan Ruff O'Herne, Yong Soo Lee, and Koon Ja Kim—traveled thousands of miles to bring their stories to us, stories which were for many decades kept only in their hearts for reasons best understood only by those who had to endure what these women—and some 200,000 others throughout Asia—had to endure.

Some might ask: Why, more than 60 years after the end of the Second World War, are we discussing the ordeals of the so-called Comfort Women? Shouldn't this be considered a mere footnote to history? Aren't there more important or more pressing issues at hand in the early years of the 21st century?

Those who ask such questions fail to comprehend the lasting relevance of the experience of these women during the war, and of the continuing, obstinate failure, in the face of overwhelming evidence and international scrutiny, of the Government of Japan to formally acknowledge, apologize and accept unequivocal responsibility for their suffering and torture.

The recent news from Tokyo and Prime Minister Abe's inexplicable denial adds greater resonance to our exploration of this topic. One Japanese Diet Member said, with no apparent irony, that the Comfort Women brothels were no different than a buffet lunchroom. Nariaki Nakayama said bluntly: "Some say it is useful to compare the brothels to college cafeterias run by private companies, who recruit their own staff, procure foodstuffs and set prices."

Madam Speaker, without objection, I wish to insert into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article on this issue that appeared in the New York Times on Thursday, March 1, reporting Prime Minister Abe's remarks.

ABE REJECTS JAPAN'S FILES ON WAR SEX

(By Norimitsu Onishi)

TOKYO, March 1.—Prime Minister Shinzo Abe denied Thursday that Japan's military had forced foreign women into sexual slavery during World War II, contradicting the Japanese government's longtime official position.

Mr. Abe's statement was the clearest so far that the government was preparing to reject a 1993 government statement that acknowledged the military's role in setting up brothels and forcing, either directly or indirectly, women into sexual slavery. That declaration also offered an apology to the women, euphemistically called "comfort women."

"There is no evidence to prove there was coercion, nothing to support it," Mr. Abe

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

told reporters. "So, in respect to this declaration, you have to keep in mind that things have changed greatly."

The United States House of Representatives has begun debating a resolution that would call on Tokyo to "apologize for and acknowledge" the military's role in wartime sex slavery.

But at the same time, in keeping with a recent trend to revise Japan's wartime history, a group of conservatives in the governing Liberal Democratic Party is stepping up calls to rescind the 1993 declaration. Mr. Abe, whose approval ratings have been plummeting over a series of scandals and perceived weak leadership, seemed to side with this group. A nationalist who has led efforts to revise wartime history, Mr. Abe softened his tone after becoming prime minister last fall. In fact, he first said he recognized the validity of the declaration, angering his conservative base.

"Some say it is useful to compare the brothels to college cafeterias run by private companies, who recruit their own staff, procure foodstuffs and set prices," Nariaki Nakayama, the leader of 120 lawmakers who want to revise the declaration, said Thursday.

"Where there's demand, business crops up," Mr. Nakayama said, according to The Associated Press. "But to say women were forced by the Japanese military into service is off the mark. This issue must be reconsidered, based on truth, for the sake of Japanese honor."

Historians believe some 200,000 women—Koreans, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipinos, as well as Japanese, Dutch and other European women—served in Japanese military brothels. For decades, Japan denied that its military had been involved, calling the brothels private enterprises and the women prostitutes.

But in 1992, a Japanese historian, Yoshiaki Yoshimi, outraged by government denials, went to the Self-Defense Agency's library and unearthed, after two days of searching, documents revealing military involvement in establishing brothels. One was titled "Regarding the Recruitment of Women for Military Brothels." Faced with this evidence, the government acknowledged its role and issued the declaration.

But the response angered people across the political spectrum. The women and their supporters said that the government was not fully acknowledging its responsibility because the declaration was issued by Yohei Kono, then chief cabinet secretary, and not adopted by Parliament. It is known inside Japan simply as the "Kono Statement."

What is more, supporters accused the government of evading direct responsibility by establishing a private, nongovernment fund to compensate the women. Many former sex slaves have refused to accept compensation from this fund.

But conservatives said the declaration went too far in acknowledging the military's role in recruiting the women. While the documents showed that the military established the facilities, Mr. Yoshimi did not find documentation that the military had forcibly recruited the women. Conservatives have seized on this distinction to attack the declaration.

Supporters of the women say that the Japanese authorities famously burned incriminating documents or kept them hidden.

At the same time, many former sex slaves have stepped forward in recent years with their stories. Three testified in the United States Congress recently, saying that Japanese soldiers had kidnapped them and forced them to have sex with dozens of soldiers a day.

Given this recent news report, Madam Speaker, it becomes even clearer that the ex-

perience of the Comfort Women is not just an episode that belongs on the backburner of history. Instead, it is a vivid reminder that the human rights of women around the world are never fully secure. We know that rape, sexual abuse and sometimes murder of women and girls in war are still committed by armies and paramilitary forces in various countries. One thinks of Darfur, of Bosnia, of East Timor. I am sure that Members of this House and those listening to these proceedings can think of other examples.

Denial of the unimaginable atrocities committed by Imperial Japan's Armed Forces against the Comfort Women during World War II should not be tolerated. Neither are they to be forgotten nor swept under the rug by those who hope the subject will go away simply because the victims are growing old and will soon be gone. The fact that some political leaders in modern Japan hold onto the view that the Comfort Women issue is a "historic fabrication" is, in a word, appalling.

The Japan Times also recently interviewed Yasuji Kaneko, an 87 year old former foot soldier in the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. He stated that he "still remembers the screams of the countless women he raped in China as a foot soldier . . . They cried out, but it didn't matter to us whether the women lived or died . . . We were the Emperor's soldiers. Whether in military brothels or in the villages, we raped without reluctance." His statement was no historical fabrication.

It is our moral imperative to act and act courageously on this issue. I am a strong proponent of encouraging our friend and ally, the Government of Japan, to set the record straight on the Comfort Women tragedy and educate its future generations properly about what occurred. In doing so, Japan will take an important step in our collective aim to eliminate violence against women in war by making it unambiguously unacceptable.

It is unacceptable to view rape as merely endemic to war, or an incidental adjunct to armed conflict. Rape is a unique weapon focused on non-combatants and intended to instill terror in its victims and to demonstrate the power of the perpetrators. It is a truly uncivilized act, and defending Imperial Japan's widespread use of rape during its Asian conquests is beneath modern, democratic Japan's better values and aspirations.

Madam Speaker, on January 31, along with six of our colleagues, I introduced House Resolution 121, which addresses the issue of protecting the human rights of the Comfort Women. The denial by Prime Minister Abe of Japan that Comfort Women were forced into sexual slavery is unacceptable and stands to underscore why passage of H. Res. 121 is important. It is my hope that we will be able to have a full vote by the House of Representatives sooner rather than later.

I would also like to thank the Comfort Women survivors—Jan Ruff O'Herne, Yong-Soo Lee, and Koon-Ja Kim—for journeying so far last month to testify on behalf of their 200,000 sisters who suffered under Imperial Japan. Their courage and the dignity with which they have lived their lives deserve our admiration and utmost respect.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WILLIAM TELL, IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Black History Month and to spotlight the success of William Tell, Chairman and CEO of 1 Source Consulting Inc. a strategic consulting firm, which provides business strategy and IT solutions. Tell recently made history by acquiring a seven-year contract from the Department of Energy. Tell, whose larger clients include Homeland Security Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, Justice Department and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Information Technology, partnered with RS Information Systems Inc to secure the \$1.4 billion government contract, the largest contract awarded to a small business.

Beyond a commitment to excellence in the business world Tell maintains a commitment to the community to enriching the lives of others, particularly African Americans. In September 2006, 1 Source Consulting Inc. partnered with San Diego Charger Shawne Merriman, to donate \$10,000 to the Frederick Douglass High School Football Program. The company has also assisted in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts and partnered with Goodwill.

William Tell is a living testament to the ingenuity and acumen of black business leaders everywhere. His accomplishments should be celebrated in the spirit of remembering the rich legacy of African American leaders everywhere.

TRIBUTE TO UASA OF SONOMA COUNTY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor United Against Sexual Assault—UASA—of Sonoma County on the occasion of its 33rd anniversary. Founded in 1974 as Women Against Rape, the agency consisted of a phone number to call for emotional support. Today that crisis line operates 24 hours a day, and the organization has an official board, paid staff, and volunteers who last year donated over 10,000 hours.

Over the past 33 years, UASA has greatly expanded the services offered to the people of Sonoma County. It provides extensive training on helping victims, including not only women and girls, but also men, children, and the families of victims. Staff and volunteers also accompany victims and their families for police reporting, court appearances, medical exams, or other personal situations.

Prevention programs include outreach to elementary through high school youths, reaching approximately 6,000 young people every year, as well as parents and school personnel. Other efforts include bilingual outreach to Hispanic teens, teen peer education training, anti-