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SENATOR

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March 5, 2007

The Honorable Tom Lantos
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-0001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I was recently advised that my friend, Congressman Mike Honda of San Jose, California, has introduced 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. I have just had an opportunity to read the Resolution and introductory statement by Congressman Honda. In my 48 years of service in the Congress, I have tried my best to avoid expressing my thoughts to a committee through a letter. This would be my first attempt.

The matter covered by the Resolution is obviously a painful and a sensitive issue for the Government of Japan. I am certain that it is a matter that that nation regrets very much, as articulated by Members of the Diet and the leaders of that nation on several occasions through Parliamentary Resolutions, or official statements by Prime Ministers. My research on this matter, which began many decades ago, indicates rather clearly that the Chief Executive of Japan, the Prime Minister, has declared how much that nation regrets the shameful activities that members of the armed services of that nation committed during World War II. I have seen official apology statements beginning with the 1994 statement of then Prime Minister Murayama, and every succeeding Prime Minister of Japan, including that of the current Prime Minister, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. I also note that the Parliament of Japan, on two separate occasions, adopted separate Resolutions – one in 1995 and the other in 2005 – expressing regret and apology. I also note that monetary redress has been provided by the people of Japan. I would think that these actions by the

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Leaders of Japan adequately express their regrets.

I am certain that you realize that I send this letter with some reluctance. As you are well aware, my grandparents came from Japan, as immigrant field workers, and as such, I have a greater level of interest and concern about that nation. I also send this letter with some reluctance because I am, at this moment, discussing with senior leaders of the Japanese Parliament, a Memorandum of Understanding, to establish a U.S. Senate-Japan Interparliamentary Exchange Group.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that House Resolution 121 not be favorably reported by your Committee. It is my hope that I may be able to convince you, not because of my Japanese heritage, nor is it because of my on-going efforts to establish a U.S. Senate-Japan Interparliamentary Exchange Group, but because I sincerely feel that House Resolution 121 is unnecessary and it may adversely impact our relationship with Japan. Since the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, Japan has served as a strong ally and trading partner to the United States. I am certain that you are aware that the Japanese also sent members of their military to assist our nation in the war in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your consideration of this letter. I hope that I may hear from you on this matter of great importance.

Most Respectfully,



**DANIEL K. INOUE
United States Senator**

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