

STATEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE ASIAN CONFERENCE
IN SOLIDARITY WITH ASIAN WOMEN DRAFTED FOR SEXUAL SERVICES BY JAPAN

10-11 August, 1992
Seoul, Korea

We, participants of Asian Conference on "Comfort Women" acknowledging the significance of obliteration of human dignity and sexual slavery against women conducted by colonial invasion and war, adopt a resolution as follows.

The issue, "Army Comfort Women"--forced, raped, tortured, gang-raped and massacred by militarism of Japan--is a brutal crime unprecedented in the history of all humankind. It illustrates how women were systematically abused and degraded--sexually, physically, psychologically by militarism and war. We declare that the comfort women issue is a form of gender violence and a human right violation of Asian Women. It is a form of subjugation of our cultures, a rape of our nations. Accordingly, our utmost task will be to solve this problem in order to prevent recurrence of war crimes and build up peace. In order to do this we need to examine in more detail the origins of sexual oppression which was highlighted by the comfort women issue. We must name these root causes: patriarchy, resulting in women's subordination and expressed in our various social and family systems; US and Japanese militarism, colonialism and imperialism. This is particularly important because sexual exploitation and violence is a growing phenomenon in Asian and in the world.

However, Japan has not so far shown any sign of repentance for its past wrong doings and has avoided taking responsibility for settlement after war. In addition, it is our great concern that Japan has passed Peace Keeping Operations Bill in the Diet, paving the way for dispatching its peace keeping troops abroad. We call on the Japanese government to take an effort to alleviate the growing anxiety among Asian countries. It should take a sincere and responsible position in its dealing with "Comfort Women" issue and apologize for the shameful past history to the public to be a true neighbor living in peaceful co-existence with others in this region.

We acknowledge the fact that a joint effort of individual groups from South Korea, North Korea, China, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Japan who suffered from the same issue of comfort women is very much essential in solving the problem.

Therefore, we the delegates from six countries--Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Thailand--have established an "Asian Network in Solidarity with Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan." Through this network we resolve to undertake the following actions for the settlement of the "comfort women" issue:

1. We will continue to pursue further investigation of the comfort women issue during the Asian Pacific War of Asian countries.
2. We will urge Japanese government to fully respond to their responsibility of reparations and full compensation as well as disclosure of the hidden documents on the comfort women.

3. We will request the cooperation of the international human rights bodies including the UN to effectively address the issue.
4. We will strengthen our joint efforts by encouraging other Asian countries who were not able to participate in this meeting.

The participants in this Asian Women Conference does it as our collective task to work toward making the Japanese government show signs of repentance by their acceptance of the following demands:

- a. Japanese government should recognize the fact comfort women from Asian countries were forcibly and violently taken to satisfy their purposes.
- b. Japanese government should make surveys for discovering the total picture of comfort women and open the historical facts to the world community in order not to repeat the same mistakes which occurred to the last war.
- c. Japanese government should recognize that it violated internationally recognized basic human rights of peoples of Asia, particularly those of Asian women.
- d. Japanese government should bring out an acceptable compensation and reparations to the comfort women survivors and their families based on international laws.
- e. Japanese government should integrate in their school textbooks the realities of Japan's military invasion of other Asian countries and state the human rights violations it committed against comfort women and other Asian peoples.

We encourage the people of Japan to build a monument to serve as a reminder of the sufferings and the bitter past experiences of the thousands of comfort women to contribute to promoting respect of human rights and the need for peace in Asia and in the world for the coming generations.

Japan Admits It Ran Army Brothels During War

By DAVID E. SANGER

Special to The New York Times

TOKYO, July 8 — Bowing to pressure from neighboring countries to acknowledge a brutal chapter of its wartime history, Japan reversed itself today and admitted that its military had recruited and organized tens of thousands of women in a vast network of Government-run brothels for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

As recently as six months ago, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and other senior officials denied that the

wartime Government had organized and run the brothels, in which the thousands of women died, insisting that they were set up by entrepreneurs. Thus, the officials said, Japan was not in a position to pay compensation.

The admission today illustrates the continuing emotional power of the legacy of World War II in East Asia, where Tokyo's actions remain suspect and

many people feel that Japan has not sufficiently atoned for its wartime behavior.

In recent months, Japan and South Korea have engaged in an increasingly angry diplomatic dispute in which Seoul supported the demands for compensation by women who had survived the brothels. Protests erupted in South Korea and began to spread to China and other countries.

Along with the admission of Government complicity, Japan released a host of documents revealing details about

THE NEW YORK TIMES is available for home or office delivery in most major U.S. cities. Please call this toll-free number: 1-800-631-2500 ADVT



Continued on Page A8, Column 4

JOHN SPROWLS CALL CHARLES IN NEW YORK
— ADVT.

New York Times 7/7/92 P.A1



Japan admitted yesterday that its military had forced tens of thousands of women to work in a network of Government-run brothels for Japanese

soldiers during World War II. Korean women entered a Tokyo court last December to file a suit seeking damages for their suffering.

Japan admitted yesterday that its military had forced tens of thousands of women to work in a network of Government-run brothels for Japanese

soldiers during World War II. Korean women entered a Tokyo court last December to file a suit seeking damages for their suffering.

F-18

Japan Admits It Set Up Army Brothels

Continued From Page A1

how the elaborate system was run. Some documents provided the Japanese high command's justification for the brothels, arguing that it would discourage troops from raping local women, which would have aggravated civilian resistance as the Japanese Army swept through Asia.

Japanese officials said they were searching for a way to provide financial aid for the Korean women, but they declined to use the term compensation. But details were vague, and it was unclear what the Government would do about women in the Philippines, Indonesia, China and other nations who were also forced into brothels.

Japanese officials had offered apologies to the victims of the brothels, but the refusal to accept Government responsibility had been widely condemned in Asia as another example of Tokyo's reluctance to face up to war atrocities.

Taboos against discussing such subjects are still strong in Japan, where schoolchildren learn little of the reasons or details of the invasion of Asia and Japan's ultimate defeat. By releasing the report today, Japan tried to show that its handling of such issues is changing.

Koichi Kato, the chief Cabinet secretary, announced the shift at a news conference. "I would like to express the sincere apology and remorse of the Government of Japan to all those, irrespective of nationality or place of origin, who underwent indescribable pain and suffering as comfort women," he said, using the common term for the women. "My heart really aches when I listen to those who speak of this matter."

Mr. Kato was one of several officials who, six months ago, repeated Japan's

contention that the Government had had nothing to do with the brothels. Prime Minister Miyazawa told Parliament in December that compensation payments might raise taxes and that the issue of compensation had been settled after the war, when Japan provided assistance to South Korea, China and other victims of aggression.

Although many Japanese today remember the brothels, their existence did not become a major public issue until last year, when a group of elderly South Korean women said they had decided to set aside their embarrassment and end their decades of silence.

Japan denied that the Government had been involved, but in January a history professor, Yoshiaki Yoshimi, said he was angry at what he viewed as a Government coverup and made public documents he had stumbled upon in the library of the Japan Self-Defense Agency.

Detailed Records Released

Professor Yoshimi's discovery forced Mr. Miyazawa, during a visit to South Korea earlier this year, to promise President Roh Tae Woo that Japan would conduct a full-scale study. Mr. Kato said today that the study, based on 127 documents in Government archives, "confirmed that there was Government involvement" in the most minute details of running the brothels.

The documents showed that military officials had not merely arranged for troops to visit women, a common practice in wartime, but had kept meticulous records about venereal diseases, revenue generated and prices.

One detail that created a stir at the news conference today was the price system based on nationality: one yen for a Chinese woman, one and a half for a Korean woman and two yen for a Japanese woman.

Mr. Kato said none of the documents confirmed the testimony of several Japanese veterans that many young

girls were kidnapped from their families in Korea and shipped to China.

He said the Government had ruled out hearings where some women could testify. He said that despite the fact that several women had come forward to tell their stories and file suits against the Government, such hearings might violate the privacy of other victims.

Tokyo says formal compensation would be inappropriate because the issue of damages was settled long ago. But Mr. Miyazawa has made it clear that he believes some help should be extended to the survivors.

Asked today why it took 47 years for the Government to confront the truth, Mr. Kato said: "We did our best. Such problems, unthinkable in a time of peace, occurred in the midst of a war in which behavior often defied common sense. But I have to admit that it took a certain amount of time for us to recognize this problem correctly."

In Asia, this question has been revived by Tokyo's plans to dispatch troops abroad for the first time since World War II — as members of United Nations peacekeeping forces. Their tasks are to be limited to humanitarian and logistical functions, but the mere prospect has provoked debate and warnings from South Korea and China.

In Seoul, Japan's action today did little to quiet criticism. The South Korean Foreign Ministry said, "Our tentative examination of the announcement by the Japanese authorities indicates that their investigations have not brought the whole truth to light."

In the report today, Japan placed no exact figures on the number of women forced to work, though estimates by historians range from 100,000 to 200,000. No one knows how many survived, in part because most of the Korean women have refused to talk about it out of fear of becoming objects of derision and shame.