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*Japanese  
Military's  
"Comfort  
Women" System*

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# Japanese Military's "Comfort Women" System



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# **Introduction**

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This report attempts to discuss the comfort women issue from a number of standpoints. It begins with a discussion of two measures that have triggered the debate between the Japanese government and the U.S. House of Representatives: the 2006 and 2007 resolutions before the House International Relations Committee in 2006 and the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2007 that criticize Japan on the comfort women issue; and the initiative by a special committee of the Japanese parliament (Diet) to amend a key Japanese government pronouncement on the comfort women (the Kono Statement) issued in 1993 that acknowledged and apologized for the Japanese military's direction of the comfort women system. The report tries to summarize in an organized way the numerous statements on the comfort women issue issued by Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and his cabinet since March 1, 2007. It describes the evidence related to the involvement of the Japanese government and military in the system and how the system operated. The report then reviews the Japanese government's past record in addressing the comfort women issue since 1990 and the reactions of former comfort women and their governments to Japan's policies and programs. Other issues covered included the comfort women issue in Japanese history textbooks and comfort women lawsuits in Japanese and U.S. courts. A final "Conclusions" section assesses the credibility of Japan's

policies prior to 2007 and the impact on these policies of the initiative in the Diet

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to revise the Kono Statement and Prime Minister's Abe's statements since March 1 2007.

## **House of Representatives Resolutions**

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The historical issue of the Japanese military's "comfort women" before and during World War II has become an issue of contention between the Japanese government and Diet (parliament) and the U.S. House of Representatives. The issue has received growing attention from the media in Japan, the United States, and several other countries. The issue of the comfort women has gained increased attention since the early 1990s. The current issue of contention between the Japanese government and the House of Representatives stems from two resolutions introduced into the House of Representatives in 2006 and 2007 and the Japanese reactions to them.

H.Res.759. The first resolution, H.Res.759, was passed by the House International Relations Committee on September 13, 2006. The full House of Representatives did not vote on it before the House adjourned in November 2006. The main provisions of H.Res. 759 were: