

**Dem lawmakers warn Japan against whitewashing 'sexual slavery' in WWII**  
**By Julian Pequet**  
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Lawmakers warned Japan on Thursday that denying the country's World War II regime pressed 200,000 women into sexual slavery would have “grave implications for the U.S.-Japanese relationship.”

Japanese-American Rep. Michael Honda (D-Calif.) and Rep. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) co-authored the [letter](#) to Japanese Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae ahead of Friday's White House visit by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe's conservative Liberal Democratic Party has announced plans to revise the so-called “Kono Statement” of 1993, which apologized for the Imperial Japanese military's war-time use of “comfort women.”

“Nothing is more important right now than for a democratic country like Japan to apologize for systematic atrocity,” Honda and Israel wrote. Revising the statement, they wrote, “could ignite unnecessary tension and provocation with neighboring countries.”

Japan's nationalist surge risks hurting relations with the Obama administration at a time when Japan's reliance on U.S. military protection is only set to increase in the wake of China's territorial ambitions in the region and North Korea's third nuclear test.

Honda and Israel said that instead of revising the Kono statement, Japan should instead go beyond it and offer “a full and formal acknowledgment and apology for the 'comfort women.' ”

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed a [resolution](#) in 2007 expressing Congress's sentiment that Japan should “formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery.”