



## B.C. Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WW II in Asia (ALPHA)

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September 26, 2013

### **A reminder ignored: History Denied = Justice Denied**

Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, was received on Monday by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. On Monday, we issued several reminders to Prime Minister Harper.

On Monday, we reminded Prime Minister Harper of a Motion which passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 2007. The Motion states: "That the Government of Canada should therefore encourage the Government of Japan to...take full responsibility for the involvement of the Japanese Imperial Forces in the system of forced prostitution, including through a formal and sincere apology expressed in the Diet to all of those who were victims; and to continue to address those affected in a spirit of reconciliation."

On Monday, we reminded Prime Minister Harper of the obligation to raise this with Mr. Abe, particularly in light of harsh remarks claiming the necessity of military sexual slavery by Hashimoto, the Mayor of Osaka, in May 2013.

Today, we are disappointed to learn that rather than raising this issue, Prime Minister Harper has agreed to "strengthen defence relations with Japan." (1). Dr. Joseph Wong, Co-chair of Canada ALPHA, reflects on this proposed agreement, "Japan's government to date is in denial mode, as there has been no indication that Japan has understood and reflected on the issue, nor has Japan officially recognized the grave mistakes and atrocities committed in WWII. It would shock the world if Germany behaved as the Japanese Government continues to."

It is not too late. Cooperation based on a solid foundation of reconciliation and peace – not historical amnesia, will truly show that "our two countries share a set of common principles and values, including promoting and upholding democracy, human rights and the rule of law." (2).

Today, we urge Prime Minister Harper to use this moment of proposed military cooperation to raise the issue of military sexual slavery with Prime Minister Abe. In addition to an apology, Prime Minister Harper must encourage Prime Minister Abe to ensure that every single Japanese student knows about this history, and uses this knowledge to build a peaceful and just future, both within and beyond Japan. As Thekla Lit, another Co-chair of Canada ALPHA concludes, "this is precisely what we are doing with our work alongside educators and students in Canada."

Written by Sarah Bleiwas on behalf of Canada ALPHA's official position

(1) From the Prime Minister's office at:

[www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=1&featureId=6&id=5683](http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=1&featureId=6&id=5683)

(2) From the Prime Minister's office at:

<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=1&featureId=6&id=5683>