

STATEMENT OF JAN THOMPSON
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Thank you Rabbi [Abraham] Cooper for moderating today and for having the Museum of Tolerance as the venue for today's meeting.

I thank [Ms.] Kinue Tokodome, Mr. [Hikaru] Kimura, Mr. [Yukio] Okamoto and the Mitsubishi Materials Corporation for inviting me to be a witness to this extraordinary occasion.

I have known Kinue for many years as a dear friend and an advocate for our former POWs. She has worked very hard over the years to bring all of us together today for this important event and she should be recognized for her dedication and perseverance.

I had three roles in the room: one role as a daughter of a former POW, Robert E. Thompson; another role as a filmmaker; and as President of the American Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor [ADBC] Memorial Society.

Being a witness today is meaningful to me.

Seventy years ago our countries were at war and we were enemies. Terrible things happen during war. Our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln stated "We cannot escape history," and perhaps Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe was paying homage by saying at his recent address to Congress: "We cannot avert our eyes..."

For some former POWs an apology is important and they are grateful.

For others, the apology is 70 years too late. Unfortunately for those who have passed away [they] were not able to hear the moving words of Mr. Kimura.

The mission of the ADBC Memorial Society is education and to preserve the legacy of those who had been POWs of Imperial Japan. Our mission is to preserve their history accurately. We see this apology today as an acknowledgment that their use of forced labor for Mitsubishi Mining violated their human rights and their dignity. This apology is important to silence those who deny these facts.

It is obvious that this decision to apologize did not happen overnight. It took people with the same mind, the same goal, and the same courage to make this happen.

Mitsubishi Materials Corporation should be a role model for other Japanese corporations: to come forward and apologize. We hope the citizens of Japan will support today's action. The employees of Mitsubishi Materials Corporation should be proud of their company.

We thank Mr. Kimura for his sincere apology and we hope today starts a relationship between the ADBC Memorial Society and Mitsubishi Materials Corporation to further our goal of reconciliation and education for generations to come.

We see this apology as one very important step forward and we cannot let what happened today die or be forgotten.