

Matsui Commemorates Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Martyrs™ And Heroes™ Remembrance Day

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May 5, 2005

Thursday, May 5, 2005

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(Washington, DC) – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) submitted the following statement for the Congressional Record in commemoration of Yom Hashoah, a day of remembrance for Holocaust Martyrs™ and Heroes™.

“I rise today to commemorate Yom Hashoah, a day of remembrance for Holocaust Martyrs™ and Heroes™.

“Between 1939 and 1945, over 12 million innocent people – including over 6 million Jews – were murdered because of their religion, their race or because of where they were born. Even today, after the passage of sixty years, it is difficult to fully comprehend the intense hatred and intolerance that so consumed this dark period in human history.

“On this day of remembrance we cannot think of just those who died, but also of those individuals who embodied the triumph of the human spirit, who bravely acted in the face of overpowering hatred, and of the lessons of their actions. Rather than succumbing to the despair of their situation, the Jews fought against their oppressors in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April and May of 1943. In a defiant declaration, the Jews of Terezin proclaimed a theme of liberation each time they sang Verdi’s “Requiem.” The thread of hope continued despite the hopeless moments. As such, when we remember the Holocaust, we remember not only the needless death of so many, but also the heroic voices which continue to inspire us today.

“Sadly, we still struggle as a human race to stamp out the evils of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia. Several years ago in my hometown of Sacramento, we saw the ability of good to overpower intolerance during an act of arson on three area synagogues. We witnessed the heroics of average citizens who rushed into these burning buildings to save precious books, manuscripts and a Torah which had already survived the Holocaust decades earlier.

“While Yom Hashoah is a somber day of remembering those who were killed in the Holocaust, it is also a day that offers hope. Hope that the strength and courage in all of us will overcome injustice and intolerance.”

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