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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Intolerance of Asians is un-American

The recent hate crimes and discrimination against Asians in major U.S. cities are of great concern for the Japanese and other Asians living in the United States. As the consul general of Japan for Florida, I am very sad that I have had to warn Japanese residents to exercise caution because of our physical appearance.

I understand that many people are frustrated by the prolonged pandemic and its impacts upon their daily lives. Polls show that a large number of people in the United States attribute the cause of the current worldwide spread of COVID-19 to the response of the Chinese government in the early stage.

I emphasize, however, it is entirely wrong to express their frustration in the form of attacks against Asian Americans and Asian residents. Such actions are completely unacceptable and go against the values that Japan and the United States share. In this sense, it is encouraging that many people in the United States have criticized discrimination and violence against Asians. As a Japanese resident, I appreciate their voices.

Asians may look different from you. The vast majority of them, however, are decent people just like you. They are an integral part of U.S. society and contribute to the stability and prosperity of the nation. By exercising decency and reason, this simple fact can be easily understood. And I am confident that in the United States, decency and reason will prevail.

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Kenji Hirata is the consul general of Japan for Florida.