IN 1995, then Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama issued an apology to Asian victims of World War II, including tens of thousands of Filipinos.

Two years earlier, the Japanese Government apologized to women who were forced into wartime brothels for Japanese soldiers.

(Today, the aging Filipino comfort women, as they are called, have neither received official apology or compensation from Tokyo. The Philippine Government, however, had received substantial financial help from Japan through the Tokyo-based Philippine Reparation Commission.)

It was reported Tuesday the current Japanese conservative government will abide by the Murayama apologies over Japanese atrocities in Asia during the war.

The United States clearly was overjoyed by this reaffirmation of apologies made 20 years ago by the leaders of their wartime foes.

And so a breakdown in ties between Japan and South Korea, two important U.S. allies, is less cause for worry by Washington which is bothered by nuclear-powered North Korea and a fast-growing Chinese military.

But is this reason enough for the Obama Administration to deny the recognition of at least 25,000 elderly Filipino veterans who fought with G.I.s in Bataan and Corregidor?

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affair in 2011 required these veterans to present certification that their names appear in both the register of troops and discharge list prepared by the U.S. Army at the end of the war.
The U.S. should at least allow the veterans to submit other official documents and not disqualify them because their names appear only in one list.

To placate the disallowed veterans, the White House created an interagency working group to review the certification process.

The poor Filipino veterans may have dodged deadly enemy fire in combat, but they may not live long enough to benefit from the small rewards they deserve for defending America's freedom.