

NOVEMBER 19, 1974

POOL REPORT
Report from Pool #223
Akasaka Meeting of President Ford and
Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka

The meeting, which began 15 minutes late at 11:15, took place in the Asahi-No-Ma (The Morning Sun Room) on the second floor of the Akasaka Palace in central Tokyo.

The large, high-ceilinged room is ornately decorated in 18th Century French style, much like the Palace at Versailles on which the building is modeled. The basic color scheme is gold, green and ivory with a lavender rug, and the room includes a dozen candelabra and two large, crystal chandeliers.

The ceiling was bordered with frescoes, and most of its area was taken up by a giant fresco of a western woman (apparently a goddess) driving a gold Roman chariot pulled by four white horses through a sea of clouds. Along the walls were 16 fake Corinthian columns of marble, and there were bowls of fresh red and orange roses.

For the meeting, there was a conversational grouping of 11 brocaded, heavily-gilt chairs and a matching settee. The President and Mr. Tanaka arrived in business suits and sat together on the settee for pictures, exchanging small talk while the photographers noisily took pictures.

Not much could be overheard, even from the two interpreters present, but Ford did say that, "I am greatly honored to be the first American President to visit Japan. This is my first overseas trip. I think it is indicative of the importance I place on our relationship with Japan."

Tanaka's interpreter spoke too softly to be heard.

As the meeting convened, hot towels were furnished the participants to refresh themselves. As the photographic session ended, the President told the Prime Minister, "We have a large group of press people. More wanted to come. It's important that the press report this historic visit."

For members of the party, see Page 10 of daily schedule.

Clare Crawford - People
Jim Weighart - New York Daily News
Mort Kondracke - Chicago Sun Times
George Kentera - Detroit News
Phil Jones - CBS