

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND

TAKEO MIKI
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN
MITSUNORI UEKI
MINISTER OF STATE OF JAPAN
AND

ROGER L. STEVENS
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

THE ROSE GARDEN

11:33 A.M. EDT

PRIME MINISTER MIKI: Mr. President, Mr. Stevens, ladies and gentlemen:

This moment fulfills my own wish, as well as a desire of the Japanese people.

In this Bicentennial year of American independence we wished to offer a gift which would be a permanent and living link between our two cultures. The Kennedy Center is the perfect place for this enduring reminder of Japan's friendship.

I am pleased to introduce Minister of State Mitsunori Ueki, who will make the presentation.

MINISTER OF STATE UEKI: Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Stevens, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

This year, the United States of America celebrates the 200th anniversary of its independence.

On behalf of the people of Japan, I should like to express my most heartfelt congratulations to the American people and their Nation on this happiest occasion of the Bicentennial. Also, I wish to pay sincere respects to the American people for their successful efforts in building a prosperous United States, overcoming many difficulties with that frontier spirit which inspires the American people today, as they work for the attainment of everlasting world peace.

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Prime Minister Miki, during his visit here in Washington, D. C. last August, expressed his intention to offer a gift from the people of Japan to the Kennedy Center to complete the construction of a studio theatre, as a token of goodwill and friendship from the Japanese people to the American people on the occasion of the Bicentennial of American Independence.

Today, here in the presence of President Ford and Prime Minister Miki, and fulfilling the Prime Minister's intention, it is the pleasure of the Japanese people, and also my great honor to present to Mr. Stevens, Chairman of the Board of the Trustees of the Kennedy Center, \$3 million, which is the amount required for the completion of the studio theatre.

Upon the completion of construction of this theatre, I sincerely hope and trust that this gift from the Japanese people, who are true friends and partners of the American people, will serve for generations to come as a reminder of the enduring friendship of the Japanese people.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Ueki, and other distinguished guests:

On behalf of the Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, I am thrilled to accept this magnificent gift to the Kennedy Center on the occasion of our Nation's Bicentennial. These funds will enable us to complete the studio theatre, which in effect will mean the completion of the Center itself. It will finally make our dream a reality; namely, a cultural center in our Nation's Capital that will offer the very finest facilities possible for every one of the performing arts.

Fortunately, our operation has been very successful to date, but we have lacked a facility that would aid and encourage creative work in the performing arts. Also, we have badly needed an auditorium where young and unknown performers could be presented to the public. Your gift will enable us to accomplish both of the above-mentioned goals.

When we know the date of the completion of the studio theatre, I would hope that we could plan a festival in honor of your country, using all of the halls simultaneously to present productions worthy of your great artistic heritage.

In closing, I wanted once more to express our deep gratitude to the Government of Japan, the people of Japan, and also to all the private organizations who have generously contributed funds, including the American Japan Society, Keidanren, Japan Federation of Employers Association, the Japan Chamber of Commerce Industry, the Japan Committee for Economic Development, and the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives.

Thank you.

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THE PRESIDENT: Prime Minister Miki, distinguished Japanese guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Let me express to you, Mr. Prime Minister, the deep gratitude of the American people for this very, very generous gift. It is yet another expression of the good relations that the American people have with the Japanese people, the excellent relations that your Government has with our Government.

This is a generous gift in money, but it is also a deeper expression of our relationship between our two peoples. As Mr. Stevens has said, this gift will permit the completion of the Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center is the focal point in the United States for cultural development, cultural performances, and we, of course, are most anxious, as Mr. Stevens said, that when the studio center is completed that it will be possible to have the whole center display the tremendous cultural background and the terrific artistry that comes from the people of Japan.

Again, I thank you and I thank the people of Japan on behalf of the American people.

END (AT 11:45 A.M. EDT)