

NOVEMBER 20, 1974

## PCOL REPORT

### Dinner at Akasaka Palace

President Ford's dinner for the Emperor and Empress was held in a baroque banquet hall on the second floor of the Akasaka Palace. Called the "Bird and Flower" banquet hall, it held ten tables of twelve and a head table with twelve places. Places were set with White House china - white with blue border.

The "Bird and Flower" room is heavily paneled in dark wood with gilded, ornate trim. Tapestries and plate sized oval paintings of various birds in elaborately wooded settings were placed in the paneling about every four feet throughout the 40' by 200' hall. The ceilings were a series of blue sky scenes graced by various birds in flight and an occasional sitting peacock. Inexplicably, at each corner of the ceiling, there was a panel containing a dead deer draped over a balcony.

As twenty-four white gloved, black tied waiters stood by, guests began filing into the room at 8:10. Once the room was filled, the Emperor's family entered and then, at 8:15, everyone stood, anticipating the arrival of President Ford and the Emperor. They remained standing, silently, for five minutes until Mr. Ford and the Emperor entered the room and walked to their places at the head table. It was eerily quiet, the stillness broken only by the shuffling of chairs as the Emperor and Ford sat down, the Emperor to the President's right with an interpreter seated closely behind.

Prime Minister Tanaka and Mrs. Tanaka were seated at the opposite, extreme end of the table. Kissinger sat to the Emperor's right. At the other tables, Hartmann, Rumsfeld and Scowcroft had interpreters. The men were dressed in business suits. Japanese women were in traditional kimonos. Following the national anthems - Japan's first - we were led out.

Tom Brokaw - NBC