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On the Occasion of the Luncheon in Honor of Sadaharu Oh

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AMBASSADOR OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TOKYO

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LUNCHEON IN HONOR
OF SADAHARU OH

Residence of the American Ambassador
Tokyo, October 7, 1977

Mr. Oh --

Those who know me can tell you that I reserve my speech-making for only the most important occasions. Well, when a baseball fan meets a Babe Ruth, a Hank Aaron, or a Mr. Oh it's a pretty special occasion.

Those of us who never learned how to hit a curve-ball, and collected more splinters on the bench than hits at the plate, stand in awe of your skills.

But even more we admire the sense of personal commitment with which you have approached your profession. Mr. Oh, you have a quiet dedication that would be welcome on any team, whether baseball or politics or diplomacy.

Since arriving in Japan, I have come to realize that maintaining friendly relations between Japan and the U. S. depends on our ability to understand each other.

We have occasionally gotten our signals crossed; sometimes the U. S. has thrown Japan a curve when Japan has expected a fastball, and vice versa. But if we really try to understand each other, we'll be capable of a perfect game.

Or, to look at it from the other dugout, if we can score often enough with the hit and run and sacrifice bunt, which require each man to read his signals properly, it will take the pressure off the home run hitters, enabling them to concentrate their efforts on the crucial situations.

With some things, there is complete understanding. Mr. Oh, when your foot comes down and another baseball has disappeared beyond the outfielders -- that is something everyone can understand.

In fact, we have with us today a gentleman who has enjoyed considerable success in the major leagues (with the Angels, I believe), and I think that Mr. Wright would agree that when Mr. Oh hits all of a baseball, it's going to go out of any ballpark in any country.

Mr. Oh is not only a man among men, he is a real giant among "Giants".

Finally, I would like to present to you, Mr. Oh, a letter from President Carter, which will end my remarks after only (three) minutes. Now there's one for the record books!

Mike Mansfield