

STATEMENT TO PRESS ON EARTHQUAKE
INTRODUCTION OF GEN. SHALIKASHVILI

BEFORE I INTRODUCE GEN. SHALIKASHVILI, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY DEEP SADNESS OVER THE TREMENDOUS DEVASTATION AND INJURY CAUSED BY YESTERDAY'S EARTHQUAKE IN THE KOBE REGION. OUR HEARTS GO OUT TO THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE OF THE MAGNIFICENT CITY OF KOBE AT THIS TIME OF TRAGIC LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY.

YESTERDAY MORNING, ONLY HOURS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE HIT, AND AS THE EXTENT OF THE TRAGEDY BECAME APPARENT, I SPOKE WITH OUR PRESIDENT WHO EXPRESSED HIS PROFOUND CONDOLENCES AND AFFIRMED OUR GOVERNMENT'S READINESS TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO ASSIST IN THIS AWFUL SITUATION.

A TEAM OF EXPERTS FROM THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IS BEING DISPATCHED TO ASSIST JAPANESE AUTHORITIES AND WE ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO ANY FURTHER REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT WAS IN CALIFORNIA TO COMMEMORATE LAST YEAR'S EARTHQUAKE IN LOS ANGELES. WE WELL REMEMBER THE GENEROUS OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE JAPANESE AT THAT TIME.

AT THE MOMENT, OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN OSAKA-KOBE IS SEEKING TO VERIFY THE WHEREABOUTS OF AMERICANS IN THE REGION. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT ONE AMERICAN IN KOBE HAS DIED. OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE TRACKING THE SITUATION CLOSELY.

TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED LOSS, MY SYMPATHY IS WITH YOU. I KNOW THAT MANY AMERICANS SHARE MY CONCERN THAT THE JAPANESE PEOPLE NOT SUFFER THIS ALONE. MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE STAND READY TO HELP.

NOW, LET ME TURN YOU OVER TO GEN. SHALIKASHVILI.



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