

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
KING HUSSEIN BIN TALAL

STATE DINING ROOM

9:51 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Your Majesties, Mr. Prime Minister and Mrs. Zaid Rifai, honorable guests:

May I, Your Majesty, on behalf of all of us here and on behalf of all of us in America, wish you a very, very warm welcome on this occasion.

And may I say on a very personal note that it is a great honor and privilege for me to have you as the first Chief of State to visit our country during the new Administration.

During the fine tenure of your being head of your country, we have had, as I recollect, some five national Administrations in the United States, some Democrat and some Republican, but during this period of time there have been some changes. Those changes I will make a comment or two about subsequently, but we, regardless of the Administration in the United States, have never changed our view concerning yourself and your country, and we are proud of our long friendship and association.

Those changes that have taken place -- and there are some changes in recent months -- have been encouraging because they seem to have opened the door to progress for peace. They seem to have given us all hope that there will be greater improvement as we move ahead. Those changes, I think, in many respects can be attributed to you because of your courage, the great risks that you have taken during your lifetime and your superb understanding of the problems of the Middle East and your desire to work for peace for all peoples.

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There has been progress in this process of change. More recently we can see it in the two disengagements that have taken place in the last few months, in the continuing consultation in the diplomatic area; and speaking of the diplomatic, may I say that for myself and our country, I pledge on behalf of the American people, full support for the continuing diplomatic initiatives which are so essential for the goals that we seek.

Those goals, those hopes, of course, are the peace on a just, on a permanent basis that have for so many years, many centuries, eluded all of those in that area and the world at large, but it seems to me that as we look ahead, with the foundation that has been built, that with your continuing leadership, your continuing effort, with your continuing courage and with the cooperation of ourselves and many others, we **can** achieve what has been the hope and aspirations of people throughout the world, as well as in the Middle East.

And if I might, in closing, may I congratulate you on your leadership, your dedication, your wisdom and your cooperation. You have set an example for all of us to follow and to use as a guidepost for people not only in the Middle East but elsewhere.

So, may I ask that all join with me in a tribute to His Majesty and to the Kingdom of Jordan.

To you and to your country.

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KING HUSSEIN: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, my good friends:

It is a source of pride to me, sir, that over the years, the many years that have passed, I have been a firm believer in the great mutual benefits of relations that have happily developed, not only between my country and the United States, but recently in the period of change that you so kindly refer to between many countries in our part of the world and the United States of America.

To me, it has been an honor to have visited this great Nation's capital many times, to have found friendship, understanding, sympathy, not only for myself, but for my country and for a common cause to which I am proud to say we have always been dedicated, the cause of an honorable, just peace.

On this visit, sir, I am most proud to convey to you and to Mrs. Ford the feelings of not only my wife and those who have accompanied me from Jordan, but my government and the people of Jordan, the wishes to you, sir, for every future success. I am sure these are the feelings of all in the United States and the very many throughout the world.

I am proud indeed, sir, to have had the privilege of knowing you before this visit and most proud, sir, that you consider me a friend. I am so touched by the kind words, but more so the sincerity that I know you possess, sir, which endears you to all your people, all the people of the United States, and so many who have had the privilege of knowing you and who will have this privilege.

It is really a source of pride to us to have had this very close cooperation between our nations, to have seen in the recent past some basic steps taken for the establishment of a just and durable peace in our part of the world, largely through the efforts of our friends in the United States, the patience, the patient effort, the perseverance, the determination that has resulted in the first few steps materializing.

We know, sir, that you are dedicated to the cause of peace with justice. We are not only comforted, but confident, that the United States will contribute her full share for the achievement of this worthy objective under your wise leadership.

We will be ever proud to play our role, if enabled, to the fullest possible extent that we some day feel that will present the generations after us with a better life, with a better future, with a better world than possibly that in which we have had to live.

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I would like to thank you and Mrs. Ford once again for your very, very great kindness and wish you every success. May God be with you, and I am sure, sir, that the hopes of so many in the United States and in the world as a whole under your great leadership will be fully justified.

Ladies and gentlemen, my good friends, I would very much indeed like you to join me in drinking a toast to the President of the United States and Mrs. Ford for every continued success.

To the President.

END (10:05 P.M. EDT)