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Office of the White House Press Secretary  
(Martinique, F.W.I.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF THE TOAST TO BE DELIVERED  
BY PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD  
AT A DINNER HOSTED BY PRESIDENT  
GISCARD D'ESTAING

THE PREFECT'S RESIDENCE

Mr. President:

The hospitality extended to me has reflected the warmth of the climate of this remarkable island and the spirit of your kind words of welcome.

I am proud to be the first American President in office to visit this part of France in the Caribbean, and I would like again to express my appreciation to you for suggesting Martinique as the location of our first meeting.

The United States and France have been close friends for two centuries. From our American revolution through the darkest days of World War II, our countries have stood together in moments of crisis. And, today, of fundamental importance to our countries and to the West, a strong Atlantic Alliance safeguards our security.

As old friends and allies we have much to talk about. On many points we shall agree; on others we may differ. But it is of the greatest importance that we will talk with full candor since we share the same ideals. A relationship of confidence is essential. It is only through such a relationship that our common objectives can best be served and any differing views reconciled.

As in times past, we jointly face major challenges. This time the immediate danger is not war but the problems of peace: inflation, balance of payments deficits, energy shortages, and -- for many -- shortages of food itself. These problems accentuate the interdependence of nations and the need for communication and cooperation. At stake is the stability of every economy, the welfare of every nation. Unilateral measures can no longer suffice in solving problems of such universal dimension.

Mr. President, you recently described this situation very vividly when you said the world is unhappy. Indeed, the world is troubled. But if we are to transcend our difficulties and successfully meet our challenges, we must cooperate.

We face a major problem in the field of energy. In dealing with it on the basis of consumer solidarity, we seek constructive dialogue -- not confrontation. The United States is convinced that cooperation and solidarity among the consumer nations mark the surest way to reach understanding with the producer nations which we all desire.

I am also looking forward, Mr. President, to exchanging impressions on East-West relations and on our recent meetings with General Secretary Brezhnev. I am sure we will agree that all of us in the West will benefit from close consultations as the policy of detente continues to develop.

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Our interdependence requires that we -- together with our friends and partners -- join in concerted responses to the dangers which confront us all. Let us continue our historic relationship with renewed spirit and redoubled effort, as good and responsible friends.

Our common heritage gives me confidence that we will continue joint endeavors for peace and stability in the world. Mr. President, it is with this objective that I look forward to our discussions tomorrow. I have every hope that our talks will strengthen the friendship between us both in the bilateral sense and also as members of an alliance which Americans regard as the cornerstone of our foreign policy.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the spirit of further strengthening our historic ties, I ask all of you to stand and raise your glasses in honor of the President of the French Republic and his lovely wife.

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