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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Madrid, Spain)

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
CARLOS ARIAS
PRIME MINISTER
AND PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT

MONCLOA PALACE

3:35 P.M. (Madrid Time)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, Mr. Minister,
Your Excellencies:

For a quarter of a century Spain and the United States have enjoyed the most cordial and the most productive ties, characterized by our common efforts to meet the danger of aggression against the Western community of nations, and supported by mutual respect for the aspirations of our respective people to secure for themselves a better life.

Mindful as we have been of each other's concerns and needs, we have forged, fortunately, a harmonious and a very fine relationship.

We have met today to reaffirm our commitment to build this cooperation in a mutually beneficial manner.

The world has changed, as we well know, from when the first U.S.-Spanish friendship agreement was signed in 1953. But the need for strong defenses has not lessened in any way whatsoever. Spain and the United States have, in the past, contributed together to the maintenance of a strong Western security. The present and future calls for no less effort. The United States remains totally dedicated to this task.

It would be my observation that the cooperation being carried out in so many fields between our countries demonstrates the breadth of our interest, the depth of friendship and the commitment of the United States and Spain to a better life for our citizens. Spain, of course, is an important part of our Atlantic conception.

Mr. President, I raise my glass and propose a toast to this spirit of friendship. May our cooperation be preserved and strengthened. May it assure peace for Spaniards and Americans alike.

Mr. President.

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PRIME MINISTER ARIAS: Mr. President, it constitutes for me a great honor to attend this working lunch, which you have so kindly invited me to.

During the short schedule of your visit to our country, we will have the opportunities to a broad exchange of views, which will constitute the basis of an understanding with which to cement an official and positive cooperation of the one that fortunately so far has guided the relations between our two countries.

Spanish-American relationships have blended throughout history. For Spain, it is a motive of deep pride in her glorious past to have so substantially contributed to the origins of the great American Nation, both during its discovery and its independence.

In the past, European inhabitants of territories which then became the United States were of Spanish origin. Also, Spanish was the initial impulse and backing received by the forefathers of America in the heroic days of her access to the concert of free nations.

The last 25 years of understanding and cooperation between Spain and the United States has become particularly intense. This cooperation has been, I am sure, one of the fundamental supports for the existence of the free world.

Spain believes that the hour has come for this direct, loyal and disinterested contribution on her part to be acknowledged in specific and practical terms by the nations that formed the Western world, to which our country belongs, as well as for its geographical position, its history and its culture and for its past and present contributions.

Mr. President, this is not the first time Spain has had the honor to receive you. You have come to Spain before, when you represented your country in the events of the tragic death of my predecessor, Almirante Carrero Blanco, a sorrowful occasion for all Spaniards, especially for those of us who had the privilege of sharing the responsibilities of Government under his command.

Your visit then today, we believe, is in that long traditional cooperation I have already mentioned; that is, why the Spanish people, my colleagues in the Government and myself, think that nobody better than you can understand the depth and importance of existing cooperation between our countries, as well as the need for preserving such understanding for the future sake of values that belong to our common civilization that have been so efficiently defended so far.

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We congratulate ourselves, Mr. President, and we thank you for your visit to Spain. We are certain that you share with us the desire to continue our friendship, already a tradition. You can be sure that Spain trusts your leadership in the Western world, and knows that our common objectives can be reached.

Now, Mr. President, I raise my glass for the preservation of that spirit of friendship and understanding existing between Spain and the United States, for the friendship of the American people, as well as for yourself.

END (AT 3:47 P.M. Madrid Time)