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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU
PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

THE STATE FLOOR

9:15 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Prime Minister and gentlemen:

Let me say at the outset, we are delighted to have you as our guests. I must say on behalf of my wife, she made a very special effort. This is the first opportunity she has had to have this room for this purpose, and she said she hoped that you would enjoy the atmosphere and setup. and if you say yes, I will tell her.

Let me, on a more serious note, say that we are delighted to have you here because of our deep respect and affection for you as the leader of one of our great friends and allies.

Let me add, if I might, that we in the United States know no other country where the United States has some 4000 or 5000 miles of border, when you consider that on the north and south, and also Alaska. And so there is a great reason for us to have a rapport and the particular affection, people to people and country to country.

And I might say the first trip that I ever took out of the United States -- I was quite young and quite thrilled -- was the trip that I took from Detroit to Windsor. (Laughter)

They didn't preclude me from going to Windsor, and I had no trouble getting back. (Laughter)

But that was a thrill to me, and it was my first trip out of my country and to a foreign country.

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(OVER)

But my memories of that trip left me with a great remembrance of the relationship that our country has with yours. The truth is, of course, good friends often have many differences, and among friends differences fortunately can be better debated or discussed than they can when a different relationship exists.

I have heard it said many times by my former colleagues in the Congress -- Gale McGee and George Aiken and Bob McEwen -- I hope I haven't missed any of the Members of Congress.

We often say in the Congress that you can disagree without being disagreeable, and that is the way I think our relations between your country and ours has proceeded in the past, and I hope will proceed in the future.

We do have some differences. I felt that our meeting today was one of the most constructive, one of the most friendly -- and with each of us expressing where we had some differences. It was a point of view and an understanding.

If you have an understanding, I think you can come to reasonable and rational conclusions.

I look forward to subsequent meetings with you to broaden our personal friendship and to expand our two national relationships. It has been a pleasure for me to get to know your Ambassador. He did present to me about a week or ten days ago a very thoughtful gift on behalf of your Government commemorating the 1976 Olympics, which are to be held in Montreal.

It brought to my mind the fact that in 1976 we are celebrating our 200th anniversary. I hope that the people that come to your Olympics -- and I hope to come, too, if you will invite me -- and that some of the visitors that come to the United States will go to Montreal and Canada and vice versa.

But speaking of Montreal, I have had the privilege a long time ago of skiing at Mont-Tremblant and Saint-Michel, which I thought was tremendous and I still do. That was another experience that gave me a great affection and admiration for the people of Canada.

So, with my personal affection for you and the Canadian people and the United States' strong conviction about our relationship, to you and your country, if I might, I would like to offer a toast to you, Prime Minister of Canada, and to the Canadian people and to the Queen of Canada.

MORE

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Mr. President, gentlemen and friends:

When Canadians travel abroad, Mr. President, they are all the time explaining to other people how they are different from the Americans. There is a great belief in other lands that Canadians and Americans are practically the same.

I am deeply distressed to find this when we are dealing with the Common Market, so one must suppose we are different and we have different problems and different economic requirements.

But it does happen that we have to show how similar we are and how close our two peoples are and the best example I can find -- I have to explain that kind of thing -- to talk about in summer in the baseball stadium in Montreal where tens of thousands of Canadians get together to cheer for the Canadian teams against the American team when every one of the players on both sides is an American.

When I have stayed in some of your American cities, it is another story. In winter at your hockey forums, they cheer for the local team and probably 95 percent of the players on both sides are Canadians, and the best ones.

And this, I think, shows really how close the people are in their goals, in their ways of living, in their love of sports, in their values, even in standards of their own lives.

And that makes your job and mine, Mr. President, so much easier when we meet, we find that most of the subjects which have to be discussed between heads of governments or heads of states when they meet. In our case, it has been settled by the people themselves, the figure I was giving you this afternoon of 66 percent of our trade between our two countries being free trade, tariff free, with 81 percent of that trade formula being a formula passed on to the Senate committee.

So much of this is done by the people themselves in the trade area, in the cultural area, and the knowledge of each other by the constant visits across the border, that when we meet it is always a pleasant occasion.

As you said, and I realized this afternoon, we can talk to each other very candidly. We know how the electorates and the press and the House of Representatives and the Senate react on various situations, and it is sometimes thought so much easier to deal with problems in this context.

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You, as President, have been exposed to the electorates much more frequently than I have. I dare say that I have walked in the valley of the shadow, and feel a little more closer than you have. But I think we would both agree that our peoples, Canadian and the American peoples, will cease to support us overnight if they thought that we were embarking on courses which were not friendly, which were not based on cooperation and understanding; on the desire to solve any differences that arise in that spirit of friendship rather than the spirit of hostility.

We, as your neighbors, realize the importance of the leadership that the United States is giving to today's world. Your great success in Vladivostok was something that was received in Canada with immense satisfaction. We know that in matters of Atlantic security, detente, disarmament--we know that we can follow your lead because the principles on which your policies are based are the same as ours.

I think you know that you can trust us to support those principles in areas we consider essential.

For these reasons, I must say our tasks are easier, and I think we should renew the resolves that we mentioned to each other earlier that we will continue this type of meeting on an informal, nonprotocol, or the minimum protocol.

It has been a great advantage for us to gather around a table such as this, a very beautiful one. Mrs. Ford must be told that we were struck by the beauty and warmth of this room and the repast. Did she do the cooking? (Laughter)

As far as the Olympics are concerned, we very much hope you will come. We hope you will come before that, and perhaps, per chance, we will find some way of being the forerunner of some ski race, prepared to test for the winter Olympics. (Laughter)

Mr. President, we hope you will come before that, that you will find it convenient, as your predecessor did, to talk on a very informal basis even by phone or by quick visits which do away with all formalities, permitting us to come to the point right quickly and to solve whatever small problems we may have.

With this in mind and in the hopes that our friendship of which we talked, and the candor with which we talked, will be brought out in the spirit of cooperation and understanding and the fairness with which all our meetings together are inspired, I ask those here to raise their glasses in a toast to the President of the United States.

END (AT 9:30 P.M. EST)