

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 5, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO  
PRIME MINISTER OF THE  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

THE STATE FLOOR

9:56 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Prime Minister, Begum Bhutto, and our distinguished guests from Pakistan as well as the United States:

We are deeply grateful that all of you are here and we are especially thankful that the distinguished guests have come to our great country.

We think this is a very special evening. We, as Americans, have the honor of welcoming a true friend of America, the Head of State of Pakistan, to our Nation's capital, Washington, D. C.

I am delighted to have had the opportunity this morning to meet with the Prime Minister. We had a fruitful, beneficial and enjoyable meeting this morning and we are delighted, Mr. Prime Minister, to have you and Begum Bhutto with us this evening.

We are also especially pleased and honored to have your two children -- two of your four children -- with us on this occasion. I think it is interesting, but also somewhat unique, that your children are going to school in our great country and we are delighted to have them and we hope that they have enjoyed themselves, and are enjoying themselves. We are not only pleased but honored that they are with us in the United States for this experience.

It is, I think, particularly noteworthy, Mr. Prime Minister, that you and Begum Bhutto are here and that she has particularly joined you in this visit, and she has joined you on previous occasions working for the best interests of your people in your country and I compliment her as well as yourself for these efforts.

The world knows, Mr. Prime Minister, that the burdens of leadership fell on you at a time in the history of Pakistan which was one of the most critical and the most serious in the history of your country.

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But with confidence and great determination, you have guided your nation through a period -- an era -- of peace and reconciliation. Your accomplishments, as well as your courage, I think, have received the highest praise, both within your country and without.

Our first official meeting represents another link in the chain of a much longer association between the leaders and the peoples of Pakistan and the United States. And we want to maintain and to strengthen that relationship and that friendship that has been most important between your country and ours.

The talks that we had this morning, I think, helped to strengthen and to broaden that relationship.

As we know, peace in the world depends upon peace in its various parts. Your leadership, Mr. Prime Minister, has enabled Pakistan to move forward with India toward achieving peace in that very important area of the world.

I am tremendously impressed by the efforts that you are promoting in economic and agricultural developments for Pakistan despite the serious problems posed, as we all know, by the rapid rise of price levels for essential goods in your country.

And as you persevere, Mr. Prime Minister, persevere in your task, you may be sure that this Government regards the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of a strong, secure and prosperous Pakistan as a fundamental element in maintaining regional and world peace.

So, if I might, Mr. Prime Minister, let me propose a toast to you, Prime Minister and Begum Bhutto, to the ideals and to the hopes they personify so very well, and to further strengthening of our relations between our two countries.

To Prime Minister and Begum Bhutto.

PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, distinguished friends:

At the outset, I would like to say that my companions -- those who have come with me from Pakistan -- on their behalf and on behalf of the people of my country and on my own behalf, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your Government for the very warm and generous hospitality which you have extended to us.

I have been here on a number of occasions and each occasion has been a memorable one because it has been a journey to the capital of a great power, a superpower, a power to reckon with, a power which has a role to play in the tranquilization of the world situation and has exercised a formidable influence on men and matters for a very long period of time.

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Here at this table we had the honor of having a very congenial conversation with Mrs. Ford and the very dangerous man sitting on my right. (Laughter)

He told us that this evening he came to the White House in a taxi, so that reminded me of one occasion during my many visits to your great capital, and it was in 1965. President Ayub was then in charge of the destiny of our country and we had prolonged discussions with President Johnson.

The discussions went well, but at the same time we left the room in a little distress, so I and my companions went to all the night clubs in Washington. (Laughter)

And when we left the last place, we told the taxi driver to take us to Blair House. He said, "Are you kidding?" (Laughter)

Be that as it may, we warmly cherish our friendship and our association with the great American people.

As I told you this morning, Mr. President, the vitality and the energy of the American people have impressed us very much and has impressed the world at large.

I have often thought of your great values. I might be wrong, but I feel that it lies in your institutions and it lies in the leadership that the American Government has given to its own people and to the world at large at critical times.

These are critical times, and you have been summoned by destiny to take charge of the affairs of your country at a time when the world stands at the watershed. And many of your decisions might make, or mar the course of events.

We feel that with your vision and with the very able leftenants that you have, especially in the field of foreign affairs, that you will overcome one challenge after another and promote the cause of peace and good will.

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There are problems which confront you internally, there are problems which confront you in the world outside, the Middle East, Europe, your efforts to promote a detente, your dialogue with China, all the world watches. Every step you take is observed and so we hope, with the passage of time, we will turn the corner, all of us put together -- the whole world.

You will make a very major contribution but whatever little contribution, small, insignificant, under-developed countries like ours can make, we will all be happier to see a happier world.

And I can assure you that on our part we will try to promote peace and consolidate the tissues of peace. We would not like to add tension to tension. We would not like to aggravate the situation in our own region, and the world at large can move forward to a situation where our children, at least, will feel more secure and happier and they will admire the role that this present generation made to achieve that noble end.

This is a beautiful world and we must preserve its beauty. Future generations should not say that, like Shelley, the superpowers found an osymandius. They should say that the superpowers, with bravery, and with vision, and with courage reckoned with the problems and overcame them.

We know that you have the capacity and the material and the ability to do so and we leave your shores feeling more reassured with the measures that you have taken to promote those Olympian ends.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate our gratitude to you, to your Secretary of State, to your colleagues here, to the Senators we met today, for the understanding of the problems that we face and for their objective appreciation of our difficulties. This has been a fruitful and a constructive visit.

I better not say more than that because the Secretary of State has told me that you must be very careful of what you say. (Laughter)

So, I would like everyone to join me in a toast to the President of the United States, to Mrs. Ford, to the great American people and to the role of the United States in the consolidation of world peace.

Mr. President.

END (AT 10:11 P.M. EST)