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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
HIS MAJESTY HUSSEIN I  
KING OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

STATE DINING ROOM

9:16 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Your Highness, I want again to extend to you my personal feeling, my strong conviction, that you and your country represent in this situation the finest in what we have to do in the area of peace in the Middle East.

You have been here many, many times over the years, and on each and every occasion, your contribution to a solution has been all to the good from the point of view of all parties concerned. We are deeply grateful now, as well as in the past, for this contribution.

We had a very, I think, constructive meeting this morning and I know you are going to be meeting with the Secretary of State tomorrow. Your personal contribution to this very difficult problem that the world faces in the Middle East is a very significant one.

We have had some disappointments with the efforts that the Secretary of State, and that I made, in the Middle East. But I for one do not believe that we can tolerate stagnation or stalemate, and we do not intend to do so.

The precise key, the precise answer, is still being analyzed here in our country, and I am sure in other parts of the world. But momentum for progress has to be continued. And one of the benefits of my meeting with you this morning was that we discussed the need and necessity not to look back and condemn one party or another, or to have any adverse comments about one party or another.

The important point is that we have to look forward. We have to be optimistic about what is good in the Middle East, but what, more importantly, is good for the world as a whole.

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The situation in the Middle East is totally related to the improvement of world conditions on a global basis. We are thankful and very appreciative of your continuous statesmanship.

It has been evident to everybody over a long period of time, but I have personally had the opportunity to observe it, and I thank you.

We are most grateful, and in the months ahead we will be very mindful of your observations, your recommendations as we try to find an answer to the problems, not only in the Middle East, but elsewhere.

So, it is my great honor and privilege, Your Majesty, to offer a toast to you for all that you have done, and all that you will do for the benefit of all of the people in the Middle East and the people in the world.

Your Majesty.

KING HUSSEIN: This is indeed an honor and a very great pleasure for me, sir, to have had this opportunity to meet with you again, sir, and to be among friends.

We have indeed over the years been ever proud of the fact that those years that passed brought us closer together in many fields, and in many areas. We are proud of the friendship that has always existed between our two countries, the friendship that now we feel exists between the Arab nation and the United States, its government and its people.

We have a commonality of interests. On the one hand, we share the same principles, uphold the same ideals, have the same hopes, and aspirations, for a better world, for a world where people can live in peace and in dignity and divert their energies and resources to further build for the generations to come.

Our area is a troubled area, and trouble in our area is dangerous, not only to all those who live in it, but to the future of mankind.

I am proud of the fact that I don't speak only for myself, but for many of the area's leaders, many of our present Arab world, and to say that we wish for nothing more than a just and durable peace.

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We are proud of the fact that we have contributed our utmost toward that end, and we have determined to do our utmost for that end.

We know very well that the United States will continue to look at our problems with interest and with determination to play the major role which only the United States can play, for the attainment of the goal of peace.

We have watched with admiration and respect the many efforts made under your wise auspices and leadership; the efforts and initiatives of our great friend, Dr. Kissinger; the patience, the perseverance and the dedication.

Regardless of the outcome to date, we admire the spirit and we appreciate the tremendous efforts, and we will always do so.

We look into the future with hope at the chance that is ahead of us --which may be the final chance--and a tragic history of lost opportunities may be taken by all concerned for the establishment of a just and durable peace.

We saw difficulties. We feel they are both in our area and in the world as a whole.

I thank you for the time and the patience, and I look forward to my days in Washington and the opportunity to meet and talk very frankly with all our friends on all issues of mutual interest.

I thank you for giving me this time, and I can assure you that we will continue to do our utmost to work together for a better future in our area and in the world, ever proud of the friendship that exists between us, ever determined to see that we strengthen the ties that happily exist and have existed for so long between our nations and our peoples.

Gentlemen, I would wish you to join me in drinking a toast to the President of the United States, his continued good health, success, and to the United States and to the friendship that we hope will always grow between the Arab people and the people of the United States.

END (AT 9:25 P.M. EDT)