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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND

JOHANNES DEN UYL
PRIME MINISTER OF THE NETHERLANDS

STATE DINING ROOM

9:50 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Prime Minister, let me extend on behalf of all of our people a very warm welcome on your first visit as Prime Minister to our country.

And may I point out in that capacity that you and I have some similarities. It is my understanding, from reading recent history, that you had some long experience in politics in your country and I had a few years in mine, and in the process, both of us served as the leaders of our party in the Legislative Branch in the process of moving from where we were to where we are.

So, we do have a common understanding and a rapport which I felt was most helpful in our discussions this morning, as we were very frank in setting forth observations and comments concerning the situation in various parts of the world.

Our country, of course, has a tremendous indebtedness to those from your country. I understand that Amsterdam is dedicating its 700th year in 1976, and that New York City is doing the same for its 200th year.

The Dutch, of course, had a tremendous impact on New York City, for which we are most grateful. But the influence of people from your country goes far broader than the impact of several hundred years ago in New York.

I have had the personal experience, as I indicated to you this morning, of exposure to, and benefiting from, people with a Dutch background and heritage, and I personally am indebted.

But we in America are most thankful that so many of your people came to America in various waves and for various reasons, but they did contribute, and still do, to the kind of America that I, and I think everybody here, believes is the right kind of America.

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So, I thank you for the contribution. It gives to us, as a result, an understanding between the Netherlands and ourselves, as we seek to move ahead in the days before us in meeting the current challenges that are as important to you as they are to us.

I am looking forward to joining you, and others, in a few weeks in Brussels. I believe that this gives us another opportunity to help to solidify the common aims and objectives that are important, not only to the community, but to Europe as a whole.

Let me assure you to the extent that words mean anything, this country and I look around and see good Democrats and good Republicans. We are unified in this country in strength, the solidarity and the vision of Europe and the United States and the allies.

So, when I have the privilege of joining with you and with the others representing the NATO organization, I think I can speak for all of America in saying that we believe what was established in 1951 is as strong and as viable and as effective in the years ahead.

So, if I might, Mr. Prime Minister, may I offer to you and to your health, a toast, and to the health of Her Majesty, Queen Juliana, and to the lasting friendship between our people.

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PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL: Mr. President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs joins me in expressing our sincere thanks for your warm hospitality and for your kind words of welcome this morning.

When you refer to the many ties that are between the Netherlands and the United States, you are right. You, personally, you may testify about historical origins of those ties in the State where you come from and where many Dutch people have found a new homeland.

While the Dutch still have been active in history of the United States, they founded New Amsterdam and while it should still be New Amsterdam, was it not that they sold it at much too low a price to our people, and while there are so many things of Dutch activities in this nation that -- well, you are right in saying that so much in the past and so much in the present to unify us.

Let me say a few more words to what might be of importance in our relations.

You know, Holland is a small country. It is more dependent on international relations than a few other countries. We are densely populated. Our imports and exports together are as big as our Gross National Product.

When anything is wrong in the world, if it is just today that it happens, we cannot live without the working of international institutions and we firmly believe in the value and the importance of those associations.

While the times that a little Dutch boy could solve an environmental crisis by just putting his finger in the dike belongs to the past, (Laughter) these problems can now only be adequately dealt with in major international organizations -- the United Nations, the OECD, the energy action group.

The Netherlands is traditionally a strong supporter of such institutionalized international cooperation. Our support for NATO is increasingly linked to the considerable contribution to detente that this organization has been able to make during the last years, and hopefully will make in the future.

A historic breakthrough has been accomplished from the cold war years to a new era of, as we see it, dialogue and negotiations.

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Let me say this is well known that in my country an intensive discussion is going on on the present and future role of NATO.

For my government it is essential that NATO will contribute to the developing and deepening of democracy and the promotion of detente in East-West relations as we stressed in the Declaration of Ottawa last year.

While, Mr. President, this morning discussing our common problems I referred to the great significance that the problems of the North-South relations have in my country, I told you that perhaps the very strong Calvinist tradition is true to the very important role we attach to North-South relations and to development of cooperation in the world.

Churches in Holland are aware of that; political parties, and we consider it as our plight to come out for it.

Let me say a few more words to the problem.

We do think that the problems of international peace and security are closely linked with social progress and economic well being. You, Mr. President, and your collaborators, have on numerous occasions stressed the basic reality of worldwide interdependence.

In this respect, we cannot ignore the fact that in a world of rising expectations, for too many the prosperity which our nations enjoy is still beyond their reach. In a world of true interdependence, we cannot afford to let our attention be diverted from the fact that many countries are as yet highly dependent on our level of aid and our respective trade policies.

Relations between the Western democracies and the countries of the Third World have, as I see it, been strained in recent years by an apparent lack of confidence in our willingness to share their burdens and to help them solve their immense problems.

While I am humble to say, but it is the experience of my country that a new basis of confidence can be established if we succeed in finding adequate forms of cooperation.

We have experienced and it is our conviction that one of the major aims of the continuing cooperation between Western countries must be the creation of a re-establishment of a basis of confidence in the Third World.

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In this context, the early start of a serious dialogue on raw materials has a special importance as we discussed this morning, and about which Mr. Secretary of State spoke yesterday.

We hope that the coming Special Assembly of the U.N. will provide a new basis for cooperation between developing and industrialized nations.

I believe that in view of its wide responsibilities and its tremendous economic capacity, Mr. President, your country, the United States, can and will make a significant contribution in this respect.

And we believe that a country like ours, the Netherlands, can also make a contribution to world peace and worldwide economic cooperation, albeit a more modest one.

My government is bound to raise development aid and transfer of real financial resources next year to 1-1/2 percent of net national income. It is also in this context that we have welcomed today the opportunity to discuss with you international problems and our respective positions on a wide range of issues.

Meaningful ties between the United States and the Netherlands, the recognition that our responsibilities, Mr. President, are small compared with yours, but against that background, again, expressing our great appreciation for the hospitality and friendship, which are being shown to us in Washington, I should now like to propose to you a toast to the health and the well being of the President of the United States.

END (AT 10:13 P.M. EDT)