

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT,
ANWAR EL-SADAT,
PRESIDENT OF EGYPT,
AND
RUBIN ASKEW,
GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA

SAN JOSE COUNTRY CLUB

9:25 P.M. EST

GOVERNOR ASKEW: We would like to welcome you here this evening. We hope that you have enjoyed yourself. It has been a distinct honor and a pleasure to have you with us.

President Sadat, President Ford, the State of Florida is deeply honored to be the host for two great leaders and to offer its hospitality for the important meetings which have taken place here today.

It is not often that this State, bestowed as it is with the beauty of land and sky, is a location of discussions whose consequences touch upon the peace of the world. On this occasion Florida is justly proud of its role.

President Sadat, we are especially happy that you have had the opportunity to experience the warmth and good feeling of the people of Florida. We are very pleased to welcome an individual whose courageous efforts at pursuing the path to a negotiated peace in the Middle East are a matter of admiration to the American people as a whole. We hope that you will carry to the Egyptian people our warmest wishes and our hope for a peaceful conclusion to the conflict that has plagued the Middle East for almost thirty years.

In your search for peace, sir, we wish you success.

To President Ford, it is a particular pleasure to welcome you to Florida again, sir. The purpose of your visit here is to pursue discussions which all of us hope will lead to a brighter future for the nations of the Middle East and for this country. Be assured of the respect and admiration the people of this State hold for your efforts to obtain a truly final and just settlement in the Middle East.

MORE

And now may I ask our guests to rise and join me in a toast.

To a great leader and the new friend of the State of Florida, President Anwar Sadat, and to the President of the United States.

THE PRESIDENT: Governor Askew, President Sadat, let me express how deeply Mrs. Ford and I appreciate the opportunity of being here in your great State, Governor.

And may I say that the warm welcome that the people of Florida, particularly this area, have given to President and Mrs. Sadat is a true reflection of the character and the depth and the feelings of the people of Florida for one of our most distinguished guests.

I am grateful for your part in making this evening possible because it is highly significant that our distinguished guest has come to your State at the conclusion of a very great trip to our country and to many parts of it.

Last Monday night it was my pleasure to host the distinguished President of Egypt and to indicate to him on that occasion how strongly the American people felt that his statesmanship and leadership had produced a tremendous result, a milestone in the necessary steps toward a broad and permanent and just peace in the Middle East.

President Sadat and Mrs. Sadat have been warmly welcomed throughout our country in the four or five days that they have visited many parts of the United States. I indicated to President Sadat on Monday when he was in Washington that the American people were deeply grateful, most appreciative of his courage, his wisdom, his broad view and his dedication to what was needed and necessary in the Middle East.

And I think, as you have traveled, President Sadat, in many parts of our country -- New York, Chicago, Houston and now in this great State of Florida -- you have found in the American people a great diversity, but a great strength and I am convinced that your visit here has been in the best interests of not only the Middle East but the world itself.

It has been a great and wonderful personal experience for me to know the President and to work with him over the past many months with the results that have been achieved. And I commend him for his continuing courage to move ahead in a momentum that is necessary and essential if we are to achieve the final peace, just and equitable to all, for the benefit of that area but primarily for the benefit of the world.

And so may I ask that all of the guests of Governor Askew join with me in a toast to the President of Egypt and Mrs. Sadat.

MORE

PRESIDENT EL-SADAT: President Ford, Mrs. Ford, Governor Askew, Mrs. Askew:

As my visit approaches its happy conclusion, I am pleased to say that we have been enjoying every minute of it. We find the American people warm, hospitable and open-hearted. The beauty of nature here is matched and perhaps surpassed by the warm nature of the people.

One is reminded in many ways of the fact that Florida and Egypt fall on the same latitude. St. Johns River together with the Nile are the only rivers in the world that run north. Looking toward the horizon, I feel that the ocean and land ahead should be links of interaction and cooperation rather than elements of separation.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, it is our intention to strengthen the relations and intensify contacts with the American people in all fields. We believe that we both have much to gain from furthering our cooperation and deepening our friendship. There is a vast area of common interest. I believe that we both have much to gain from furthering and diversifying our relations in all fields. We will spare no effort to achieve that end.

President Ford, who is a great man with a genuine commitment to peace and friendship among nations, has contributed greatly to the promotion of peace in the Middle East and the stimulation of ever growing ties of friendship between our two countries. I want him to know that the Egyptian people are very appreciate of his endeavors and determination to see that normalcy will reign in our area on the basis of a just and lasting peace so that the efforts, creative abilities and talents would be directed toward the construction and well-being of its peoples.

I am sure that Mrs. Sadat shares with me that Egyptian people would warmly welcome President Ford and Mrs. Ford in their visit to our country in the near future so that we can in our modest way reciprocate a part of your generosity and the friendly atmosphere which hovered over our visit since we have put foot on your land.

Mr. President, I want you to be sure that I enormously enjoyed our talks. They have been profound as they have been friendly and warm. I hope you agree with me that our contacts will go into history as a turning point in Arab-American relations.

Distinguished friends, I invite you to join me in a toast in honor of President and Mrs. Ford, to Governor and Mrs. Askew, and the prosperity and happiness of all the American people.

END (AT 9:40 P.M. EST)