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JUNE 2, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
KING JUAN CARLOS I OF SPAIN

THE STATE DINING ROOM

10:11 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Your Majesties, Your Excellency, distinguished guests and friends of the United States and Spain:

We are deeply honored this evening by the presence of your Majesties, the King and Queen of Spain. And I say that on behalf of all of the American people. As representatives of the people of Spain, you are always welcome in our country and you are especially welcome in this our Bicentennial year.

The contributions, we all know in America, of the people of Spain to the new world are to be found throughout our entire country. The Spanish explorers ventured into the unchartered wildernesses of our continent long before independence of the United States. Many, many American towns and cities, Your Majesty, bear Spanish names. Much of our architecture reflects the distinctive quality of Spanish artistry. Many thousands of American families proudly bear names reflecting their Spanish ancestry.

Your Majesty, we recognize the hand, the heart and the spirit of Spain in the United States. Our Bicentennial prompts us to pay full tribute to the important role that Spain has played in our development in this country. But our celebrations focus our attention really toward the future as well as to the present. As we enter our third century in the United States with the highest expectations for America's future we have the same very high expectations as far as Spain is concerned, particularly under your leadership.

This is of great importance bilaterally. It is even of greater importance to have the shared objectives of the nations to the west. All Americans wish you the very, very best in the course on which you are embarked.

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In 1953 the United States and Spain embarked on a relationship designed to further the cooperation and the security of our two peoples. Over the past quarter of a century, our nations have benefitted very measurably by this relationship.

Our joint determination to build and to strengthen this cooperation today is clearly stated in our new Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. On the occasion of your most welcome visit, our nations enjoy a growing and a better relationship. Our relationship has broad support among the American people and as you found today when you appeared before the Congress among the Members of the House as well as the Senate. Through closer ties and greater cooperation there is much that our two nations can do to safeguard the peace and to surmount the new challenges of an increasingly interdependent world such common problems as economic progress, energy and the environment.

We must provide for our people the benefits of peace, prosperity and freedom. I know of your own personal conviction of Spain's future role in our Trans-Atlantic community.

In 1492, Your Majesty, Columbus claimed America for a Spanish King and Queen. Today, nearly 500 years later, a King and Queen of Spain have come themselves to America not to claim it but to join with us in affirming the common ideals which make all of us citizens of the western world.

The American people are very proud to have you visit with us on this occasion. Your Majesties, I lift my glass to you, to the Spanish people and to the friendship of the United States and Spain.

KING CARLOS: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you most sincerely for your words, Mr. President. I, too, bring you a message from my people who love and respect you, who for 200 years have been living an independent existence. In the American nation you represent we admire a series of qualities that are especially characteristic of it.

For example, the respect for individuality of man and the right each one has to live and act freely according to the dictate of his own conscience and the deep sense of equality that appears in the documents on which your country was founded.

MORE

In the United States you have achieved an open society where opportunities are offered to the initiative, talent and ingenuity of each individual, a fact that has resulted in the ever-increasing growth and prosperity of your country's economy and wealth.

In 200 years you have converted your Nation into the leading political and military power of the world and this has led you to assume a prominent share of the responsibility for international order. But you have never forgotten the spirit of '76, the aims of the founding fathers at Philadelphia.

Your Constitution, wisely balancing the difference sources of power, allows the people to elect their rulers democratically, so that they may exercise their power with the consensus of the governed and under the rule of law. This is a philosophy of public life which you have not only maintained throughout 200 years without hardly ever having had to amend the Constitution, that work called the masterpiece of the human mind, but also you have made it work adjusting it to the demands of modern life, of the industrial democracy of the masses and of the numerous contradictory and sometimes violent currents which flow together today in a free society, one which finds itself, as yours does, at the head of technological progress.

When we contemplate this abiding historical phenomenon of your Constitution, drawn up at the end of the 18th century, many people wonder with interest what can be the fundamental motive for such a long vitality in a political document. Personally I believe that the strength of your constitutional text lies in the profoundly religious principals that inspire them.

Without a reference to a divine power, there would be no sense in the moral importance you attach to the liberty of the individual and his responsibility in the exercise of a democracy. Without that appeal, human political society would lose the cohesion that keeps it together and it is often because those principals were not respected that so many political regimes in the old world, which took their inspiration from your model, did not survive for any length of time.

In God We Trust is your Nation's motto. Spain, the Spanish people and the monarchy I represent also trust in God. May He make of our close cooperation and friendship in every theme a pact of peace and a pact for peace among the peoples of the world. May our friendship be sincere and founded on just and equitable reciprocity.

Mr. President, I lift my glass for your personal health and for the friendship between Spain and the United States of America.

END (AT 10:20 P.M. EDT)