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THE WHITE HOUSE

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

THE SPANISH EMBASSY

9:50 P.M. EDT

KING JUAN CARLOS: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, both the Queen and I wish to express to you our deep gratitude for all the kindness we have received during our short stay in your capital. The hours we have lived in this city where one feels the throb of the world's pulse have been fascinating indeed.

When yesterday morning I addressed Congress in a memorable Joint Session and I saw in front of me the distinguished members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, I thought about the vast historical treasure of our common heritage.

Mr. President, I can't help if I am breaking what protocol means, I would like to go on with my speech in English. For, in effect, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, California, Oregon and Texas -- that is to say 16 of the 50 States of the Union were lands discovered, traveled over, occupied or civilized to a greater or lesser extent by Spain. (Laughter) And belonged at one time to the Spanish crown. (Laughter) But not any more.

Forgive me, Mr. President, for listing these States one by one. I only do so out of genuine pride. The places and names of thousands of cities, mountains, valleys and rivers of this beautiful America still reflect the traces of our forefathers, conquerers, missionaries who have left their words, their names, their churches and their missions and almost always the ashes to be merged into the future destiny of your great country before it was born.

How can I not be moved as King of Spain, moved in such pride to have visited you on my first official trip abroad.

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Mr. President, this visit of mine is necessarily short against my will. Once again, thank you.

We hope to see you one day in the not too distant future in our country that you already know. The hundreds of thousands of Americans that go to Spain every year are welcomed as sincere and openminded friends who as soon as they set foot there with their fresh spontaneity, give us a breath of independent thought and a token of truly heartfelt friendship.

Mr. President, I would like to raise, ladies and gentlemen, my cup to the health of President Ford and Mrs. Ford and for the friendship between Spain and the United States of America and the people of both countries.

Mr. President.

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

We thank you very much, Your Majesty, for your very kind words and your thoughtfulness on behalf of Mrs. Ford and myself and the American people.

Mrs. Ford and I are deeply honored and are pleased to join you here in your embassy this evening and to enjoy your gracious hospitality and the unique gifts of the Spanish culinary art.

Spain contributed much, as we all know, to the building of our country and our cultural heritage. The 16 States that you mentioned are deeply indebted to their Spanish background. Those of us who were not fortunate enough to come from those 16 States feel somewhat neglected by your (Laughter) explorers from your country, Your Majesty, sailing under the Spanish flag discovered this continent.

Among the people of Europe who risked their lives to come to the aid of our newborn Republic were gallant Spanish soldiers as well as Spanish sailors. The early Spanish explorers left a very deep and permanent cultural imprint on America. They brought printing presses and universities to the New World.

We see the Spanish heritage in St. Augustine, the oldest permanent European settlement in America, in countless missions in the Southwestern part of our country, in regional festivals and, yes, even in rodeos.

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Spanish influence is reflected in our cultural and even the common law of some of our Southwestern American States.

Throughout America millions of citizens speak the Spanish language. Many of our television and radio stations transmit the language as well as the heritage of Spain.

In this century, for nearly 25 years Spain and the United States have stood together to meet the challenges confronting the western world. We have built a strong and very harmonious relationship. The importance of our relationship, I think, is reflected in the recently concluded Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. This treaty recognizes the important contributions of Spain to the defense of the west. It opens the way to the improved defenses and our cooperation between ourselves.

This treaty also marks the increasing cooperation between the Spanish and the American peoples in a growing number of fields ranging from urban development to energy to the arts to agriculture as well as to education.

As we pay tribute to the past and to the present, we look to the future. In man's exploration of the unknown we have moved from the age of the sail and horseback to the age of space.

Your Majesty's interest in America's space program is well known by all of us in our country. It is indicative not only of the common interests that we share but of the forward looking qualities you have brought to the leadership of Spain. These qualities will serve both of our countries very well.

And let us build on our bilateral relationships and work together to increase the ties of friendship as well as cooperation between the United States and Spain.

I have no doubt of the increasingly important role Spain will play in the world and particularly in the west. Spain is a part, geographically as well as historically, of Europe and the trans-Atlantic community.

Your Majesty, in your remarks upon arrival at the White House yesterday you expressed the wish that your visit would contribute to reinforcing the bonds of friendship between us for the good of our two countries and all those who aspired to obtain the ideals of faith, freedom and justice.

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Speaking for all here, I would assure you beyond any doubt that your wish has been realized. Our discussions at the White House, your address to the United States Congress and your participation, together with your gracious Queen, in our Bicentennial celebration has marked improvement, has significantly improved and helped immeasurably and is a milestone in the relations between our two countries. We wish you well as you continue your visit tomorrow to New York City and we look forward to your next visit to Washington, which we hope and trust will be very soon.

Your Majesties, I propose a toast to you and to all of the Spanish people and to our continuing friendship and good relations.

END

(AT 10:08 P.M. EDT)