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THE WHITE HOUSE

A TOAST BY THE PRESIDENT
AT A LUNCHEON WITH GENERAL
SECRETARY LEONID I. BREZHNEV

5:20 P.M. (U.S.S.R. Time)

Let me say a few words if I might about the very special significance of this, our first official meeting.

The world has been accustomed in recent years to regular meetings between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the American people.

Cooperation between our two countries has intensified, both in tempo and more important, in substance, during the past few years. As a result, all people, Mr. General Secretary, have a better chance to live in peace and security today.

The fact that these meetings have become more regular testifies to the significance attached to them by both countries. In these meetings, we are able to conduct our discussions in a business-like and a constructive way. We are able to make important progress on the issues that concern our countries.

Mr. General Secretary, I look forward to continuing the close working relationship developed between the leaders of our two countries. In my first address to the Congress of the United States I pledged to the Soviet Union to continue America's commitment to the course followed in the last three years.

Mr. General Secretary, I personally reaffirm that pledge to you now. As nations with great power, we share a common responsibility not only to our own people, but to mankind as a whole.

We must avoid, of course, war and the destruction that it would mean. Let us get on with the business of controlling arms, as I think we have in the last 24 hours. Let us contribute, through our cooperation, to the resolution of the very great problems facing mankind as a whole.

Mr. General Secretary, the problems of food, population and energy are not confined to any one country or to countries at an early stage of economic development. They affect people everywhere. If this age is to be remembered favorably in the history books, it will be because we met our responsibilities -- your country and my country -- and our friends and allies throughout the world.

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May I propose a toast to our joint search for solutions to the problems facing mankind and a toast to you, Mr. General Secretary, and to those associated with you in your Government and to the people of the Soviet Union and to the people of the world who will benefit from your efforts, and hopefully, mine.

To the General Secretary.

END (AT 5:46 P.M. U.S.S.R. Time)