

116 Exchange of Remarks on Receiving Diplomatic Credentials From the Egyptian Ambassador.

April 19, 1974

THE PRESIDENT. These are your credentials, Mr. Ambassador?

AMBASSADOR [ASHRAF 'ABD AL-LATIF] GHORBAL. These are my credentials, Mr. President, and it is a great honor for my country to present them to you today.

THE PRESIDENT. Here is my response, Mr. Ambassador, and I want you to know, and I want you to inform President [Anwar el-] Sadat, that this is a day I have looked forward to from the time I entered this office.

I have felt that it was a great tragedy for both our countries that our relations did not exist, due to events that we are all aware of in the sixties. I realize, too, that we are entering a period that is vitally important in terms of building not just a temporary but a permanent peace in the Middle East, which will mean that your people will move forward in peace rather than to have the plague of war, which has plagued so many of the countries there over and over again.

And I want to say personally that one of the reasons I have welcomed the opportunity to receive your credentials is that in 1963, at a time when we did have relations, which was before the June war, my wife and I visited Egypt with our two daughters, and we shall never forget not only the great historical monuments which go back further than any in the world, but we will never forget the friendship. We look forward some day to coming again.

AMBASSADOR GHORBAL. Mr. President, I am overwhelmed. I am deeply honored. I am sure I grace everyone in Egypt when I say this is equally a great

day for each of us, for we are today ending the estrangement and looking ahead to a rapprochement of cooperation and good friendship.

The people of Egypt remembered very well and remember very well the visit of you, Mr. President, and Mrs. Nixon. Sixty-three has been long back. It is high time we welcome you back, Mr. President, and we look forward to your visiting Egypt very soon. I know that President Sadat and Mrs. Sadat are anxious—so are the people of Egypt—to welcome you back.

You have done admirably in bringing about the beginning and, we hope, the continuing process of establishing permanent peace in the Middle East. We salute your efforts. We want this cooperation continuously, not only after peace is achieved but even beyond.

You have done tremendously. We look forward to your doing tremendously, and I want to thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. Mr. Ambassador, in conclusion, you have spoken of what we have done. Let me say that I should put it in the plural, together our two nations have worked out, difficult problems in these past months involving, of course, the disengagement.

And it is together, economic ways and others, that we can move forward for not only progress for your country but for all of your neighbors, which I know President Sadat wants.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange of remarks began at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.