

# Toasts of the President and King Baudouin of Belgium at the Royal Palace in Brussels.

February 24, 1969

Your Majesty, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Foreign Minister, Mr. Secretary General, Mr. Secretary, Your Excellencies:

In responding to the very gracious toast by His Majesty, I would like to be permitted just a little more length than that, if he will permit me, because I did not want here to be received so graciously and so generously by Your Majesty and Your Majesty the Queen, without indicating what is in the hearts of all of us who come here from the United States on this occasion.

I spoke to that point last night at the airport. I would like to speak, if I might, in more personal terms at this time.

When I met His Majesty 10 years ago, I had a very good chance to talk to him, to know him, and to appreciate him for not only the fact that he was a king, but that he was a man who had a deep sensitivity about the great forces that move the world and a deep concern for his fellow man in the true tradition of the great kings.

As I meet him again on this occasion, I have had the opportunity again to know him, to talk to him, and to hear not only his understanding of those peoples in the world who will never sit at a table like this and his feeling for them which is in his heart, but also his understanding of a great tide in the affairs of nations which affects us all, the search of our young people for a new idealism, a new principle.

It is this kind of thinking, this depth of concern that, clearly apart from the very substantive talks that I have had today with our friends from NATO and that I will be having in the balance of this trip, it is this kind of thinking coming from the head of this state for whom the people of the United States have such a strong feeling, that makes this trip worth while, apart from anything else.

And, having said that, Your Majesty, I am so delighted that while 10 years ago we met only you, that today we meet also Her Majesty the Queen.

We look forward to the time when the two of you will visit us in Washington.

I understand that you will be coming not primarily for that visit, but perhaps to see an Apollo shot. But as you come to see men who may go to the moon, we will look forward to talking to you again in depth about those problems which you can discuss so eloquently of those of us who live on earth.

Finally, I would say that as I stand here in this country, a country that we feel so close to in the United States because of what we have shared together in war and in peace, that I am deeply grateful for your hospitality, for your generous remarks last night, and as I raise my glass in this magnificent hall which reminds us of the past, I am reminded of the fact that a king--an office that often has been considered to be no longer relevant to the great issues of today--that a king in the person of Your Majesty thinks as deeply, with more vision, and with more concern than most of the leaders of the world with whom I have talked.

It is in that spirit, in the spirit of our common affection for the people of your country, of our respect for those people and for all of those at this table, and of our personal respect for you and your gracious Queen that I raise my glass to His Majesty the King.

*Note: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. at the Royal Palace in Brussels. In his opening words he referred to King Baudouin, Prime Minister Gaston Eyskens and Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel of*

*Belgium, Manlio Brosio, Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, and U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers who accompanied the President to Europe.*

*Prior to the President's remarks King Baudouin proposed a toast, as follows:*

*I ask you to join me in raising my glass and raising your glass to the health of the President of the United States and also to Mrs. Nixon and to the old and lasting friendship between our two countries.*

Richard Nixon, Toasts of the President and King Baudouin of Belgium at the Royal Palace in Brussels. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project  
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