

Toasts of the President and President de Gaulle at a Dinner at the American Ambassador's Residence.

March 01, 1969

Mr. President and Madame de Gaulle and Your Excellencies:

It is a very great honor for us to have here in the American Embassy residence the President of the French Republic and Madame de Gaulle and the other representatives of the French Government.

On this occasion we would remind the President that we have tried to expose him as much as possible to the products of our country. He will have observed that during the course of the evening we have had several evidences of that type. For example, we have an American Air Force jazz combo which flew in from Wiesbaden for the occasion. And on the menu tonight we had cheese from Wisconsin, asparagus from California, and beef from Kansas City. But there was one very unusual combination: For the first time I have seen on one plate together, plain American baked potato and Russian caviar. There may be some significance in the fact that it took a French chef to bring the two together.

Mr. President, we are deeply grateful for the hospitality that you have extended to all of our party, to the Secretary of State and to me and to the rest of us on this occasion. We are deeply grateful, too, in a broader sense, for the very warm welcome that we have received from the French people.

Before I came to this country I had been reading accounts in our press to the effect that there was an anti-American sentiment among the French people. If ever an answer was needed, we saw it in the faces of thousands of Frenchmen in the last 2 days.

But most of all, we are in your debt for a gift which is the most precious, the gift of your time. The hours that we have spent together in which we have discussed the great problems that we face together in the world have been most helpful to all of us, and we shall always be grateful for the time you have given to that cause.

So, tonight, I feel that this marks, in a sense, the end of one journey and the beginning of another one; the end of a journey that has taken us in a very brief time to the major capitals of Europe, and the beginning of another journey, another journey in which our two peoples will be going forward together toward the same destination, sometimes on different roads, but always in the same direction and motivated by the same ideals and purposes.

I look forward, Mr. President, with great anticipation to working with you and with your country and with your Government for the cause to which you have dedicated your life, the cause of freedom and dignity for nations and for men and for peace and brotherhood for all people.

I ask you to rise and raise your glasses to French-American friendship and to President and Madame de Gaulle.

Note: The President spoke at 10:04 p.m. in Paris at the residence of U.S. Ambassador R. Sargent Shriver, Jr. On the same day the White House Press Office released a list of French citizens who met with President Nixon.

President de Gaulle responded in French. The French Embassy translation follows:

Mr. President, if it is not quite true that one learns at every age, it is true that at every age one can see what one knows be confirmed. In thanking you, on behalf of my wife, myself, and all those who accompany us, for your very gracious hospitality, allow me to tell you what has happened to me personally on the occasion of your visit. Yesterday we were saying publicly that the world is

undergoing far-reaching changes. But I have been able to note once again, as I have already noted on several memorable occasions throughout my life, that there is one thing that never changes---our French-American friendship.

I have always noted that, when will exists, however difficult the problems that arise before you and before us, Americans and French, we can settle them not only in a climate of frankness and cordiality, but also of mutual confidence.

Another thing that I have been able to confirm, thanks to your visit, is the very deep consideration that I have for you. As I am learning to know you better--and by this visit you have given me that opportunity which I consider historic--I appreciate more the statesman and the man that you are.
Richard Nixon, Toasts of the President and President de Gaulle at a Dinner at the American Ambassador's Residence. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/240783>