

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 14, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Martinique, F.W.I)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
VALERY GISCARD d'ESTAING  
PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC  
UPON ARRIVAL AT LAMENTIN AIRPORT

4:53 P.M. (Martinique Time)

PRESIDENT d'ESTAING: Dear Mr. President:

It is a great honor for this French land of the West Indies to welcome the President of the United States of America.

It is a real pleasure for me to extend to you, and to all those accompanying you, a most cordial welcome. As soon as you came into office, we both felt that we should establish a direct and personal contact. Such contact is in keeping with the traditional relations between France and the United States and under the present circumstances, we thought this would be especially useful.

Faced with enormous changes taking place throughout the world, our two countries have, in different capacities and to various degrees, responsibilities to bear.

Belonging to the communities of liberal democracies, their personality and their situation leave them sometimes -- quite naturally, I would say -- to assume different stands in the face of such changes. However, too old are their ties of friendship for them not to wish to harmonize such stands whenever necessary, and they are too deeply attached to the same ideals of freedom, progress and peace not to be determined to succeed.

All this points to the importance of our meeting, as stressed by our partners in the European community, and sincerity -- the frankness and cordiality with which I trust our talks will start and be concluded.

Mr. President, France of the Martinique offers to you, and all those accompanying you, its charm and its beauty. From the bottom of our heart, I wish you an excellent stay.

Welcome, Mr. President.

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(OVER)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, Madame Giscard d'Estaing, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for your most gracious welcome to this beautiful, gorgeous island. I am delighted to be here.

Mr. President, this is an opportunity for us to become personally acquainted and to discuss the serious issues which confront our two countries. Our meeting vividly demonstrates the importance we attach to working together.

General Lafayette stopped here on his way to assist America to achieve its independence. The friendship of our two countries spans the oceans as well as the centuries. It is fitting that you and I, both given responsibilities for leadership in our respective countries this year, are taking this early opportunity to address problems of common interests and common concern.

We must combine our efforts with those of our friends and our allies if we are to meet the challenges of the last quarter of the twentieth century. The list of the challenges is long, including such vital issues as food, energy, finance, and of course the fundamental security of our people and the quest for further reductions in international tensions.

Just as our talks mark the beginning of a personal relationship, I am confident that our nations will reaffirm the tradition of Franco-American cooperation in great endeavors.

I look forward to our meetings for the exchanges they will permit and our resulting understandings. In meeting here we of course will be mindful, not only of American and French interests, but the contributions our efforts can make toward a more peaceful, stable and prosperous world.

END (AT 5:03 P.M. Martinique Time)