Mr. President, Mrs. Sadat, and all of the very distinguished guests attending this magnificent banquet here in Cairo:

Mr. President, it has been a very great honor and a privilege for Mrs. Nixon and me to travel to many countries over the past 27 years. As a matter of fact, this is the 83rd nation that I have had the privilege of visiting. There have been many memorable days over those years in those countries. But I can say tonight that I can think of no day that will stay more in our memory, that will bring back such pleasant memories of those things that occurred than this historic day that we have spent with you here in Cairo. I say this for a number of reasons.

First, because of the heartwarming reception we received—and we know we received it for the American people that we represented—as we drove from the airport into Cairo. We have seen big crowds before, but as has often been said, you can get a crowd out, but you cannot make that crowd smile unless they want to smile. And we felt that we could sense the heart of Egypt on this occasion and on this day. And through their hearts they have responded to the heartwarming welcome of their friends, the American people.

The second reason is that the hearts of the American people, because we in America want to be friends of this nation and its people, and the traditional Egyptian-American friendship which goes back over so many years—which has been disturbed at times over the past generation—that friendship has now been restored.

This day's events signify and symbolize that restoration, and also, this day's events, we trust, will initiate a new era in our relations in which the Egyptian people, the American people will be able to work together, dedicating their energies to solving the problems of peace and thereby developing the progress that both peoples want in both of our countries as well as in other countries in the world.

Another reason we will remember this day is, of course, this magnificent banquet tonight, and we only wish that time would permit more of an opportunity for us to talk to each and every one of the very distinguished guests who are here, those from your country, the distinguished ambassadors from most of the countries of the world, and of course, those guests from the United States you have been so kind to hone.
A third reason that this day will be a memorable one for me has been the opportunity that it has provided to know for the first time through personal discussion—except for a brief telephone conversation a few months ago at Aswan—to know the President of this nation, a man who in a very short space of time has earned the respect not only of his friends and his nation's friends but those who are his adversaries—or were his adversaries—and certainly the respect of all observers in the world.

As we look at this man and what he has done, I would analyze leaders of the world that I have met in two different categories. It is, of course, sometimes rather dangerous to oversimplify, but I think it can be fairly said that sometimes a leader concentrates almost exclusively on the problems of his own country at the expense of concentration that he might well give to problems of the nations around him or of the world that might affect his country.

There are other leaders who have gained their reputations through exactly the opposite tactic; they have failed to pay as much attention as they might to the problems of their own people because of their desire to become involved in adventurous activities and policies with regard to their neighbors and other countries in the world.

But what marks the difference between a leader who is parochial on the one hand or who is too much concerned about the problems of other people than his own on the other, is one who recognizes that the two problems are inseparable, and so it is with this nation.

Egypt, because of its size, because of its location, because of the competence and quality and ability of its people, because of its great historical heritage, is destined to play a great role in this area of the world and in the whole world, as it has played such a role in the centuries past.

And consequently, whoever leads this people and this nation is one who should concentrate his efforts on building a better life for the people of his nation, and President Sadat has done that. He has dedicated his Presidency to accomplishing that goal, but he has also recognized that this country, for the reasons that I have mentioned, must also play a role, an activist role, a positive role on the world scene, and particularly in this area of the world which has caused so much suffering and so much potential danger over these past 30 to 40 years.

And so, the opportunity to meet with President Sadat, to discuss not only the new bilateral initiatives we are going to undertake for better relations between our own countries, initiatives that will help us both, to discuss with him also the problems of this area and to discuss with him international policies generally was, for me, a very valuable and a very constructive experience.

And so, you can see why I would say that of all the many days that it has been my privilege to spend abroad among great people in many fine capitals, this day will be remembered, certainly as much or even more than almost any day I can remember.

The President has spoken of some of the difficult problems and the complex ones that still exist in this area, and I would be less than candid if I were not to say, standing here in his presence, that I do not come, just as Dr. Kissinger did not come earlier in his conversations, with
ready-made solutions for these complex problems, some of which go back over many years, some of which are going to require a great deal of dedicated diplomacy on the part of all parties concerned in order to find a just and equitable solution.

But I do say to you, Mr. President, and I do say to this company, I say to every nation represented here, because every nation in the world has a stake in the peace in the Mideast for the reasons that I mentioned this morning, I say the United States will play a positive role. We have no designs on any nation in this area. We have no desires to dominate any part of this area. Our only interest is, first, peace in the area and, second, the right of every nation and every people to achieve its own goals in its own ways by its own choosing, free of outside domination or outside interference.

To accomplish this goal will take not simply the diplomacy, brilliant though it was, that has brought us as far as we have come, the first two great steps toward reaching a permanent and just peace.

We have started down a long road, but the road stretches on and we have a long way to go. And I can only say that we in the United States, our Government, will dedicate its best efforts to going down that road to achieve the goals of the peoples of this area, the nations of this area, goals of peace and progress and prosperity, we would trust, in the end for all concerned.

On such an evening as this, standing in such a place as this, one cannot help but feel the sense that centuries of civilization look down upon us, and as we feel that sense of history in this place which has perhaps as much or more history the obligation that we have, each one of us here, to future generations.

This has been called, this area, the cradle of civilization, and now we have the challenge, the opportunity, the privilege of seeing that the civilization which we have inherited from the great giants of the past survives and not only survives but is passed on to future generations, stronger, more effective, certainly, we would trust, more helpful to all of the people who live in this part of the world.

I can only say that I am sure I speak for all those here, who are the guests of the President and Mrs. Sadat, that we are privileged to be here on such a memorable day. We trust that this is a day truly of a new beginning for all the nations in this area, a new and a good beginning, and one that will benefit thereby all the nations of the world. And I am sure that all of you would want to join me in the toast that I will propose, not only to the new Egyptian-American relationship, a relationship of friendship that should never have been broken in the past—and we dedicate ourselves to seeing that it will never be broken in the future—and second, to a man who has demonstrated that he is not only a great leader of his own country but that he is one of those rare leaders who also has the vision and wisdom to contribute to peace for all people in all countries as well.

And in proposing a toast to him, I would not forget Mrs. Sadat. She, like my wife, stands by her husband's side, and she is known throughout her country for her dedication to him and for her service to her country, whether it is in war or in peace.

So, ladies and gentlemen, if you would rise and raise your glasses to the President
NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:16 p.m. in the gardens of the Qubba Palace, in response to a toast proposed by President Sadat.

President Sadat spoke in Arabic. His remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows:

President Nixon, Mrs. Nixon, distinguished guests:

It is a pleasure indeed to welcome you in our midst as the first American President to pay an official visit to Egypt. Your visit marks the opening of a new phase which will go down in history as one of your major achievements.

Your choice to visit Egypt on your tour has a manifold political significance. While it indicates your eagerness to turn a new page in the American-Egyptian relations, it, at the same time, manifests the change of emphasis in yours and in the American strategy.

For my part, and on behalf of the Egyptian people, I would like to reciprocate and assure you and the American people that we welcome this change with all its political and psychological significance.

I hope you agree with me, Mr. President, that the Middle East, for the first time in recent history, is facing a turning point, a turning point in the sense that the political climate in our region has never been more opportune and paved for bringing about a durable peace. This, however, could not be achieved unless all our efforts are exerted and mobilized towards this end.

This area was, and still is, of major strategic importance and, as such, should have been and should be an area where stability and normalcy prevail. The political and strategic sensitivity of this region is of such a nature that it could at any time be the spark for a global conflict. But in spite of all this, for one reason or another, wars continued and tension prevailed in this region for more than 35 years.

It is not for me to recapitulate on this occasion the history of this area and the causes of its troubles. Suffice it to mention that the real cause was the aggression committed against a whole nation, the Palestinian nation. Since then, this nation has been deprived, by force of arms, of its homeland, its property, and all the prerequisites of life. This nation is now either living in tents or expelled and living in the diaspora. The appalling conditions under which a whole new generation of Palestinians were born and brought up do not attest to anything but the failure of our modern civilization with its ingenious means of advancement and its established rules of law to tackle the roots of this problem in a manner acceptable to the parties concerned.

Mr. President, let me be candid with you lest in the future there would be a misunderstanding or false reading of the turn of events in our region. The political solution and the respect of the national aspirations of the Palestinians are the crux of the whole problem.

It is an oversimplification, indeed, to profess that it is not a complex problem. However, there is no other solution and no other road for a durable peace without a political solution to the Palestinian problem. This does not mean, as the Israelis claim in order to justify their expansionist designs, that this would lead to the liquidation of Israel. History attests to the fact that Jews have lived under one roof with the Palestinian Christians and Moslems alike. Moreover, history shows beyond doubt that Jews lived for centuries without any discrimination whatsoever under the Arab rule, be that in the Middle East, Africa, or Europe.

I have purposely started with the Palestinian problem because its solution is indispensable for the attainment of a just and durable peace.

The other outstanding problems are not of that magnitude. Egypt has been a sovereign state within its present international boundaries since time immemorial. The Egyptian people have always repulsed all invaders. All kinds of aggressions and attempts to conquer Egyptian territory by force were completely foiled. They were always met by the determination of the Egyptian people to defend the sanctity of their territory. Thus, it is inevitable for a country like Egypt, with a people of such potentialities and capabilities, to regain its territory either by peaceful means or through might.

You may recall, Mr. President, that we have deployed all our efforts within and outside the United Nations since the war of June '67 for achieving a peaceful solution, but to no avail. Although world public opinion was aware of the facts and statements from time to time
admitted the inherent danger in letting the state of "no war, no peace" prevail, Israel continued for one reason or another to refuse to listen to the voice of reason and logic. It, rather, tried to shield itself behind the illusion and fallacy of its supremacy, failing to realize that occupation by force would sooner or later be repulsed, that this area, like any other area of the world, should be subject to the rule of law and that its people should live in peace under the accepted norms of the family of nations.

While history is full of lessons that occupation by force will never hold and is always doomed, the Israeli leaders failed to grasp that vital and simple lesson.

Then came the 6th of October with the Arab armies and people ready to exercise their sacred right and duty to liberate their land. The course of events of that period both during and after the military operations should be the proper signal for all of us to work together to achieve a just and honorable peace.

One of the major changes resulting from the 6th of October has been the change that occurred in the American attitude, together with the various steps taken since that historical day. The American involvement in a positive way is a clearcut political achievement of the 6th of October. The new chapter which we are opening with your country, Mr. President, is the living testimony of the fact that it is in the vital interest of the United States to have good relations with all the countries of this sensitive and strategic area.

For our part, let me say that I am satisfied with the rapid development in our relations, and I hope that it will be bolstered in the future for the sake of peace and tranquility. Let us work to promote friendship between our two peoples, to agree on the essentials of a permanent peace which could provide for everybody the right to live in a dignified, human, and proud way.

We in Egypt are dedicated, together with our Arab brothers, to work for peace and to mobilize our efforts and potentialities for construction rather than destruction, for advancement rather than regression, for progress rather than stagnation.

Let us work, Mr. President, for an era where we can go into history as people with creativity and imagination, and let us suppress together the forces of evil.

With this I propose that we drink a toast in honor of President Nixon and Mrs. Nixon, their health and prosperity, and for the friendly American people, their well-being.

Earlier in the evening, President Sadat had presented Egyptian decorations to President and Mrs. Nixon and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger at Qubba Palace. A fact sheet on the awards was released by the White House in Cairo on the same day.