

TOAST PROPOSED BY
PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON
Thursday, February 24, 1972
Great Hall of the People
Peking

Mr. Prime Minister and all of your distinguished guests
tonight.

It is very difficult for me to express in words our appreciation for the hospitality reflected by this banquet and also to express our appreciation for the welcome that we have received in the days that we have been here in Peking. As we look back on these days, it seems that our only regret is that we could not be here longer. The difficulty is that if we were to stay longer none of us could wear our clothes after that. I have already had to raise Dr. Kissinger's salary so he could buy new clothes for this trip.

I want to say today we had a great experience when we did reach the Great Wall. And as I rode in the car with the Vice Premier, I realized that we had come a long way to reach the Great Wall. But we did not come as far to reach the Great Wall as the Chairman and his colleagues did. It took us just a few days, and took them almost a year. What is important is for us to realize the great significance of that wall, for China and for the world.

A wall can protect us, or a wall can divide us, and we believe that this new relationship that we have begun with this meeting will help

to protect us, but will not divide us. Because the division in the world is what creates the great problems in the world, and we hope that in the years ahead people all over the world will have the opportunity we had today: to see that Wall, to see what it means and what the Chinese people have had in terms of a great history, but also to see what it means in terms of the future. That future is one toward which we are working, each in his own way, on his own road, but with the same goal -- a world in which no walls will divide people and divide nations, and in which they exist only for our protection and never for our division.

I would say finally that I was very moved by the poem the Prime Minister quoted, and I would only suggest that the poem had one omission. It said that all those that reach the Wall would be true men. As I recall, on that Great March there were men and women, and in our party and in the Prime Minister's party there are men and women. And last night we saw women dance in the ballet, and the night before we saw women athletes that were the equal of any man in the world. And there are those who communicate for the Prime Minister and me. We realize that true women should be honored as well as men.

So I raise my glass to the Prime Minister and all of our friends, but mainly to the true women.