

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With King Felipe VI of Spain in Madrid, Spain
July 10, 2016**

[At this point, King Felipe spoke in Spanish and then translated his remarks into English as follows.]

King Felipe. Mr. President, allow me to again wish you the very warmest welcome to Spain. I want to thank you dearly for visiting us and especially for maintaining this visit, given the present particular circumstances.

[King Felipe spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

King Felipe. I'm very happy to be your host in the name of the Spanish people, here at the Royal Palace, a symbol of our history, a history that gives our country a tradition of a strong engagement with the Americas and with the rest of the world. The United States and Spain share principles, values, and interests. The ties between our two nations have been strengthened intensely in every area. We are firmly committed to always maintaining the closest possible cooperation with the United States of America, a country that is our friend and that plays a decisive role around the globe.

And in such a context of closeness and friendship, a crucial contribution is that of the many thousands of Spanish and U.S. citizens whose efforts are contributing every day to further strengthening the ties between two peoples that respect each other and that are able to look together towards the future with confidence and determination.

Mr. President, thank you very much for your stay here with us, which we so deeply appreciate and which is the very best expression of the sincere affection and abiding friendship that unites our two countries.

[King Felipe spoke in English as follows.]

I trust and hope, Mr. President, that in the future you will have further opportunities to visit us together with your family and to enjoy the many wonders that Spain, as you know, has to offer. Welcome.

President Obama. Thank you.

Well, good morning. And *muchas gracias*, Your Majesty. To the people of Spain and the Spanish Government, thank you so much for the extraordinary hospitality that you are offering me and my delegation. I wish I was staying longer. And I am so grateful for the understanding not only of His Majesty, but the people of Spain. We've had a difficult week back in the United States, so my trip is a little abbreviated. But I thought it was very important for me to come here, given the extraordinary friendship and alliance that exists between Spain and the United States.

Although this is my first visit to Spain as the President of the United States, it is not my first visit to Spain or to Madrid. I confess, though, that the first time I came to Madrid was not on Air Force One. *[Laughter]* I was about to enter into law school. I had a backpack. I traveled by foot most of the time and ate very cheaply wherever I went. Never would I have imagined that I would have a reception with His Majesty.

But it is an extraordinary privilege to be able to be here and to receive the hospitality that I hope we were able to extend when His Majesty and Her Majesty Queen Letizia were able to visit the White House last year.

As you noted, Your Majesty, not only do we have tremendous connections through family, through commerce, through people-to-people exchanges, through our outstanding educational and cultural institutions, not only are we allies, but we are also two countries that share values and ideals of freedom, rule of law, the respect for the dignity of all people. And it is for that reason that we find ourselves working together not only in our bilateral relationship, but across a spectrum of global issues. And it is incredibly important for us to have such a strong partnership with the Spanish Government and the Spanish people.

And, Your Majesty, as with your father before you, you represent the strength and the spirit of the Spanish people. Your own connection to the United States has warmed the hearts of the American people and further strengthened the bond between our two countries. And as you showed during your visit to St. Augustine—the 450th anniversary of the connection between Spain and the New World—I am absolutely confident that the ties that bind us together will continue for many years to come.

So thank you for your hospitality. Thank you for the kindness that you and Her Majesty the Queen have extended to my family. And I can tell you that Michelle and my daughters love Spain and the Spanish people. And I very much look forward to continuing to build an extraordinary relationship between our two countries and hope my next visit, even if I'm not President, will be much longer than this one.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:51 a.m. in front of the Grand Staircase in the main entrance of the Palacio Real de Madrid. In his remarks, he referred to former King Juan Carlos I of Spain.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Spain, King Felipe.

Locations: Madrid, Spain.

Names: Felipe VI, King; Juan Carlos I; Letizia, Queen; Obama, Michelle.

Subjects: Spain : King; Spain : President Obama's visit; Spain : Queen; Spain : Relations with U.S.

DCPD Number: DCPD201600457.