

# DEPARTMENT OF STATE



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TOAST BY  
THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
AT A LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF  
THE LAW OF THE SEA LEADERSHIP  
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I have learned a great deal in my brief visit here today. I have had a sense of the range of the issues that are before us and I appreciate the frankness with which the heads of the committees and Acting President have spoken to me, and also the members of the various delegations that I had an opportunity to consult this morning and shall consult with this afternoon. The United States believes that you are all engaged in one of the historic conferences of many decades. It is not often that diplomats can accept something which they know will last for an indefinite period. It is not often that man has an opportunity to establish a legal regime for vast areas of the world. It is not often that great riches have been apportioned on the basis of negotiations and at least an attempt of a just settlement rather than on the basis of power. From all of these points of view you are engaged in a historic enterprise and it proves that history can be made in an undramatic, complicated, serious way. There is often discussion in this country on why things are moving so relatively slowly. But if one looks at the vastness of the challenges of the time when territorial seas were three miles, when the concept of the economic zone was not even thought of, when the exploration of the deep sea beds was a dream for science fiction, when one considers all of these problems that had to be addressed, and had to be addressed by 150 nations, then one must congratulate you on the progress that has been made. In our discussions at lunch, the discussions this morning, it is clear that the issues that remain to be solved can probably be enumerated on the fingers of two hands, that vast areas of general agreement have already been reached. Disagreements that remain very often concern the implementation of principles that have already been established. The concept of a common heritage of mankind, the concept that humanity has a responsibility to the world community in the deep

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sea beds is, I think, a historic break-through of enormous proportion. Compared to this, how you finance the international portion of this exploration is a technically, enormously difficult problem, but I have no doubt that we will find a way of solving it. If we don't find it, the distinguished Chairman of the First Committee will write a document which he represents as the consensus of all of us, and which will no doubt eventually find the common assent. So I think, again, when we speak of the issues in Committee Two of what the characteristics are of the 200-mile economic zone, there are important technical problems that remain. But when we start discussing in concrete detail what essential interests of each country are and we get away from philosophical and confrontational skews, again, I am confident we will find a solution and the same is true in many things. We have not, in fact, had a great deal of discussion about the settlement of disputes, simply because, it seems to me, if we successfully complete the substantive part of it, none of us can afford to let this conference fail over how we are going to settle disputes on such a major achievement. I must therefore say I am basically optimistic. The United States will study the differences that remain with the attitude of where we can take into account concerns of the other nations. Obviously, we have concerns which we cannot give up and there are limits beyond which we cannot go. This is true of almost all of the other participants in the conference. Having come this far, however, it is my conviction that we can settle the differences. The United States will make a major effort to work closely with you. We hope the attitude will be one, not of confrontation but of a recognition of this great historic opportunity. If we succeed, as I am persuaded we will, then future generations can look back on this period and say that mankind put three quarters of the earth's surface under a regimen that reflected justice and equity and human concerns in a peaceful manner and has banished from that part of the world the contest for power and the rivalry that has been the bane of mankind on land, and there would not be the least irony of history in having sought to establish peace for so long on land that it should be a conference of the Law of the Sea which gives the impetus for universal peace.

So I would like to propose a toast to the success of the Conference and pay tribute to all of you who are working so closely together.