The original documents are located in Box 37, “8/3/76 - Remarks During a Toast in Honor of President Urho Kekkonen of Finland at a State Dinner” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Mr. President, distinguished guests:

We are honored to have you and your party as our guests.
MR. PRESIDENT, THIS SUMMER, THE UNITED STATES CELEBRATES OUR 200th ANNIVERSARY. BY JOINING WITH US ON THIS HISTORIC OCCASION, YOU DO US GREAT HONOR.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN FINNISH-AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL CEREMONIES AT SUOMI (SOO-WAM-EE) COLLEGE, FOUNDED BY FINNISH IMMIGRANTS IN MICHIGAN, IS A VIVID REMINDER OF FINLAND'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICA.
TO CITE A SINGLE EXAMPLE, AMERICANS FROM COAST TO COAST KNOW OF FINNISH GENIUS IN SAARINEN'S (SAH-REE-NEN'S) DESIGN OF WASHINGTON'S DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL.

WHETHER IN STEEL AND CONCRETE, OR IN MIND AND SPIRIT, THE FINNISH INVOLVEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO AFFIRM THE TRADITIONAL TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES.
DURING THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, AMERICANS ARE GRATIFIED

BY FINLAND'S OBSERVANCE OF OUR ANNIVERSARY.

THE WONDERFUL TAPIOLA (TAP-EE-OH-LA) CHILDREN'S CHOIR HAS ALREADY PERFORMED HERE

AND FINNISH MUSICIANS ARE NOW ENTERTAINING AT THE SMITHSONIAN

FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL.

THE SIBELIUS (SIH-BAY-LEE-US) ACADEMY CHOIR WILL VISIT

THE UNITED STATES THIS FALL THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE FINNISH

GOVERNMENT.

FOR THESE AND ALL OF FINLAND'S CONTRIBUTIONS

TO OUR BICENTENNIAL, MR. PRESIDENT, AMERICANS ARE DEEPLY

APPRECIATIVE.
THIS SUMMER BOTH OUR COUNTRIES PARTICIPATED IN THE
OLYMPIC GAMES. IT IS APPROPRIATE TO NOTE THAT YOU
MR. PRESIDENT, HAD THE HIGH HONOR TO BE AN OLYMPIAN.

YOU MADE YOUR FIRST TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES AS HEAD
OF THE FINNISH TEAM TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN LOS ANGELES IN 1932.
I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT FINLAND LAST WEEK CONTINUED TO WIN
GOLD MEDALS. YOU HAVE MY CONGRATULATIONS.
MR. PRESIDENT, AS A FELLOW SKIER, I CAN ONLY MARVEL
AT THE MORE THAN 600 MILES YOU SKI CROSS COUNTRY EACH SEASON.

YOUR PROWESS AS A JOGGER, FISHERMAN AND HUNTER IS LEGENDARY.

AT ONE TIME YOU WERE THE HIGH JUMP CHAMPION OF FINLAND.

YOU ARE, IN FACT, THE PERSONAL EMBODIMENT OF FINLAND'S WORLD-WIDE
REPUTATION FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS AND ATHLETIC SPIRIT.

MR. PRESIDENT, IT WAS JUST A YEAR AGO LAST WEEK
THAT MRS. FORD AND I VISITED HELSINKI, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE.
AS HOST OF THE CONFERENCE, FINLAND AGAIN SHOWED THE WORLD ITS DEEP INTEREST AND ACTIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND AMITY, IN WORKING FOR PEACE AND STABILITY.

WE VALUE FINLAND'S CREATIVE PARTICIPATION IN WORLD AFFAIRS UNDER YOUR WISE AND SKILLFUL LEADERSHIP. WE WELCOME FINLAND'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS IN CYPRUS AND THE MIDDLE EAST.
OUR STRONG TIES ARE BASED ON MANY SHARED IDEALS AND GENUINE MUTUAL RESPECT. ABOVE ALL, IN THIS COUNTRY,
FINLAND IS RESPECTED AS A NATION THAT MEETS ITS OBLIGATIONS.

JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, FINLAND WROTE A NEW PAGE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BY PAYING OFF, IN FULL, ITS WORLD WAR ONE DEBT TO THE UNITED STATES -- EIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.
I know you share my satisfaction in the knowledge that this last payment will be used to send young people from Finland and the United States on exchange visits for generations to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, I propose a toast to a distinguished world statesman, the president of the republic of Finland, and to the continued close and friendly relations between the governments and peoples of the United States and Finland.

End of text.