

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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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

REMARKS AT STATE DINNER FOR PRESIDENT KEKKONEN

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1976

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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.

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