

**The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/21/76 - Remarks During a Toast in Honor of President William R. Tolbert, Jr., of the Republic of Liberia” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

54

DINNER TOAST FOR PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1976

-1-

IT IS A PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU, PRESIDENT TOLBERT,  
AND MRS. TOLBERT, TO THE UNITED STATES. YOUR VISIT IS  
A PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING OCCASION BECAUSE OF OUR SPECIAL  
RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBERIA AND THE FACT THAT THIS IS THE FIRST  
AFRICAN STATE VISIT IN OUR THIRD CENTURY OF INDEPENDENCE.

PRESIDENT MONROE PRESIDED IN THIS VERY BUILDING  
AT THE TIME WHEN BLACKS FROM THIS COUNTRY CREATED LIBERIA  
AND NAMED THE CAPITAL CITY, MONROVIA, AFTER PRESIDENT  
MONROE.

THE FOUNDING OF LIBERIA IS A TRIBUTE TO THE CONSCIENCE  
OF MANKIND. AS PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA, YOU HAVE SERVED  
NOT ONLY AS YOUR COUNTRY'S LEADER, BUT YOU HAVE ALSO  
INSPIRED MILLIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY YOUR SPIRITUAL  
CALLING.

AS AN ORDAINED BAPTIST MINISTER, YOU WERE THE  
FIRST BLACK ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE.  
WE ARE PROUD THAT ELECTION WAS HELD IN THE UNITED STATES.

WE MEET AT A TIME WHEN BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND  
LIBERIA ARE MINDFUL OF THE GRAVE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.  
WE AGREE ON THE NEED FOR URGENT ACTION FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE  
FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA.

THE FRIENDSHIP LINKING OUR TWO COUNTRIES IS NO  
ACCIDENT, MR. PRESIDENT. OUR RELATIONS REST UPON  
A FOUNDATION OF SHARED VALUES -- EVEN TO THE SHARED RED,  
WHITE AND BLUE OF OUR RESPECTIVE FLAGS.

OUR RELATIONSHIP IS NURTURED BY THE MUTUAL  
RESPECT THAT EVOLVED OVER MANY YEARS TO MEET MANY  
CHALLENGES.

MR. PRESIDENT, WE WILL FACE THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY  
WITH THE INSIGHTS AND DETERMINATION DEVELOPED THROUGH  
OUR PAST COOPERATION. WE SHARE NOT ONLY A SPECIAL  
RELATIONSHIP BUT ALSO A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS.

LIBERIA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE, AFTER ALL,  
DISTINCTIVE, AMONG NATIONS. OURS ARE THE OLDEST EXISTING  
REPUBLICS ON OUR RESPECTIVE CONTINENTS. OUR CONSTITUTIONS,  
BOTH WRITTEN LONG AGO, REMAIN VIABLE AND LIVING DOCUMENTS.

MR. PRESIDENT, I KNOW THAT YOU AGREE WITH ME,  
THAT FREEDOM IS TOO PRECIOUS A GIFT FOR OUR NATIONS TO  
RESERVE ONLY FOR OURSELVES.

WE MUST STAND READY TO ENCOURAGE ALL THOSE  
WHO STRIVE FOR FREEDOM, RECONCILIATION, AND THE RIGHTS  
OF ALL MEN WHETHER ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT OR ANYWHERE  
ELSE.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR LIBERIA'S COURAGE AND WISDOM.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR WISE COUNSEL.

LIBERIA CAN COUNT ON THE UNITED STATES TO ASSIST

AND SUPPORT THE LIBERIAN PEOPLE, JUST AS THE UNITED STATES

HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO RELY UPON YOU.



MR. PRESIDENT, WHEN YOUR GRANDPARENTS EMIGRATED  
FROM THE UNITED STATES TO LIBERIA, WE LOST TWO VALUABLE  
CITIZENS. BUT LIBERIA GAINED A GREAT PRESIDENT.

MAY I ASK ~~FOR~~ ALL TO JOIN ME IN TRIBUTE:  
TO THE PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA AND MRS. TOLBERT,  
A HEART-FELT WELCOME TO WASHINGTON.

TO LIBERIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
MAY THEY EVER BE FIRM AND FAST FRIENDS, INSPIRED BY  
A COMMON VISION OF LIBERTY.

END OF TEXT