

August 3, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President and President Kekkonen met for 60 minutes this morning following the South Grounds arrival ceremony. Finnish Foreign Minister Sorsa, Finnish Ambassador to the United States Tuominen, Finnish Foreign Ministry Deputy Director for Political Affairs Tornudd, Secretary of State Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Brent Scowcroft and U.S. Ambassador to Finland Mark Evans Austad participated in this morning's meeting.

Today's meeting provided the two leaders with the welcome opportunity to review a number of international issues of current interest to both countries. At the outset of their meeting, it was noted that U.S. -Finnish relations are excellent and that there are no difficult bilateral issues requiring resolution.

The two Presidents devoted attention this morning to East-West relations. Implementation of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was a topic of discussion, as was the status of ongoing arms control negotiations. The President expressed his appreciation to President Kekkonen for Finland's role as host to numerous East-West conferences and its constructive role in world affairs and in the interests of peace.

President Ford and President Kekkonen discussed the situation in the Middle East. The President noted the significant contributions Finland has made to peace and greater stability in the Middle East, particularly through its participation in UN peacekeeping efforts in that area. The two leaders also spent some time reviewing international economic and energy issues.

President Kekkonen extended to the President the best wishes of the people and Government of Finland on the occasion of the American Bicentennial. The President expressed the gratitude of the American people for the many generous gifts and contributions of Finland in commemoration of the Bicentennial.

The President will host a State Dinner for President Kekkonen this evening in the White House.

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