REMARKS AT COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVANCE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1976

• THANK YOU, BONNIE
• REVEREND CLERGY
• MR. AMBASSADOR
• MR. MINISTER
• SENATOR DOMENICI
• MR. MAYOR
• DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
• LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
Almost 500 years ago, a bold Italian mariner dared to challenge the unknown. Each October, we set aside a day to honor his memory. But Columbus Day in our bicentennial year reminds us that the courage of 1776 was preceded by the courage of 1492.

Much has changed in the five centuries since Columbus ventured out into the Atlantic Ocean in command of three small ships (flying the flag of Spain) in an age of computers, laser beams and space probes to Mars. It is hard for us to appreciate the awesome dangers Columbus faced—a wide and treacherous ocean, fickle winds, unreliable equipment.
COLUMBUS KNEW FULL WELL THAT HIS DARING ADVENTURE COULD EASILY END IN DISASTER.

YET IN SPITE OF THOSE ENORMOUS RISKS, HE WENT FORWARD, NOT JUST ONCE, BUT FOUR TIMES.

IN DOING SO, HE NOT ONLY DISCOVERED A NEW WORLD, BUT BLAZED A NAUTICAL TRAIL FOR GENERATIONS OF EUROPEANS TO FOLLOW.

TODAY, THE THREADS OF MANY CULTURES AND MANY NATIONS ARE WOVEN INTO THE AMERICAN FABRIC.
I SALUTE THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION AND
THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA FOR
CO-SPONSORING THIS COLUMBUS DAY EVENT. COLUMBUS DAY IS
NOT JUST A CELEBRATION FOR AMERICANS OF ITALIAN OR
HISPANIC HERITAGE BUT A TRULY NATIONAL TRIBUTE BY ALL
AMERICANS.

OVER THE YEARS, MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANTS HAVE COME
to America from every corner of the globe. MANY MILLIONS
OF THEM HAVE BEEN SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ITALY FOLLOWING
THE COURSE OF COLUMBUS.
LIKE COLUMBUS, THEY CROSSED AN OCEAN TO PURSUE A DREAM. LIKE COLUMBUS, THEY TOOK GREAT RISKS.

THEIR GREATEST REWARD WAS THE FINE CAREERS OF THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WHO HAVE RISEN TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND RESPECT IN THIS COUNTRY.

TODAY, YOU AND I DO NOT HAVE TO CROSS AN OCEAN TO BECOME AMERICANS. TODAY, THE PROBLEMS WE FACE IN BUILDING A BETTER WORLD, CAN BE JUST AS DIFFICULT AS THE ONES COLUMBUS OVERCAME IN FINDING A NEW ONE.
THE PEOPLES OF THE OLD WORLD STILL LOOK TO THE NEW WORLD AS THE CHAMPION OF FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

AMERICA HAS BEEN THEIR HOPE AND THEIR HELP AND WE WILL NEVER LET THEM DOWN.

OUR GOAL OF PEACE WITH FREEDOM REQUIRES EVERY BIT AS MUCH COURAGE, AS MUCH FAITH, AS MUCH ENDURANCE, AS MUCH TOIL FROM AMERICANS TODAY AS COLUMBUS DEMANDED OF HIS CREW.
WE CAN BUILD A BETTER WORLD. WE CAN DO IT BY WORKING TO PRESERVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY ON AMERICAN LIFE. WE CAN DO IT BY ENSURING A DECENT EDUCATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY AMERICAN. WE CAN DO IT BY WORKING TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE VERY BEST LEGACY OF ALL: CONTINUED PEACE WITH FREEDOM IN THE WORLD.

TODAY WE HONOR THE BRAVERY, THE IMAGINATION AND THE INITIATIVE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS BY LAYING THIS WREATH. WE CAN HONOR HIM EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR BY BEING JUST AS BRAVE, JUST AS IMAGINATIVE, AND SHOWING JUST AS MUCH INITIATIVE IN FACING THE CHALLENGES STILL BEFORE US.
WE SEEK NOT A NEW TRADE ROUTE OR A NEW CONTINENT,

BUT A NEW WORLD OF FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND LASTING PEACE AMONG NATIONS. OVER THE YEARS AMERICA HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES TOWARD THAT GOAL.

AS COLUMBUS HIMSELF MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT, WE HAVE COME TOO FAR TO TURN BACK NOW. THE COURSE HAS BEEN SET. OUR MISSION TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM WILL BE ACHIEVED. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.