

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
GIOVANNI LEONE
PRESIDENT OF ITALY

THE SOUTH LAWN

11:09 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen:

Mr. President, I warmly welcome you to the United States of America. I warmly welcome you on behalf of all Americans who are deeply grateful for the gifts of genius and beauty your country has given to all mankind. On behalf of the millions and millions of Americans who are proud to claim Italy as their ancestral homeland, I welcome you with a very special family affection.

You, Mr. President, are an honored leader of one of America's truest allies. In the past three decades, America has been very, very proud to have been associated with Italy in your successful efforts to build a democratic industrial society. I assure you, Mr. President of America's continued commitments to a stable, free and democratic Italy.

I also wish to restate most emphatically our intention to work closely with your country in strengthening Atlantic cooperation and Atlantic security. I think we must all admit that the road will not be easy. The problems of inflation and of assuring equitable access to fairly priced resources, for example, threaten the stability of every economy and the welfare of people in developed as well as in developing countries alike. The very, very nature of these problems defies solution by unilateral measures.

Mr. President, I look forward to our discussions over the next two days. I am confident that our talks will contribute to our mutual efforts to secure peace for all nations of the world. There is no doubt that they will serve to reinforce the ties that have bound our friendship over the many years.

Mr. President, you are most welcome to America.

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PRESIDENT LEONE: Mr. President, I thank you for the invitation that you extended to me immediately after taking over your high office as President of the United States of America thus concerning an invitation I had received last year. Thank you for the warm welcome you have given me and for the kind words of welcome that you have just spoken.

It is a great honor for me to represent Italy on this official visit to this great country, which is striking in its vitality and creative capacity, which is in the vanguard of progress, which is strong in its institutions which date back to the birth of a free nation.

And it is precisely to celebrate with just pride the birth of a free nation that you are about to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence, which also carries the signature of an Italian, Guglielmo Paca.

It is an historic and solemn document, which prepared the Constitution of the United States of America among whose inspirers, may I recall with pride, the name of a great Neapolitan lawyer, Gaetano Filangieri.

The relations between our two nations have deep and longstanding roots embodied by those millions of Italians who at all times in every capacity, with their work and their intelligence and their thought, have made substantial contribution to the well being and progress of this country.

Those relations are sustained by our common dedication to the principles of democracy and freedom and to the cause for peace.

Our common efforts, within the purview of our respective possibilities, are aimed at a constant quest for peace. The Atlantic Alliance is conceived and experienced by the United States, by Italy and by all its members as an instrument for security and peace.

Her commitment that Italy is pursuing with constancy, energy and firmness is to achieve a unity that is not only economic but also political so as to convey and channel the considerable resources of the old continent in the light of its great traditions to the service of the well being of nations and the consolidation of peace.

The work of detente that Italy, like the United States and other countries, has been pursuing for years with constancy and firmness in close cooperation with its allies, knowing that we have the will of the peoples of the world behind us.

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It is in the same spirit that we think we must study and tackle the great economic problems which beset the world and the even greater problems posed by modern civilization, problems which affect very closely our social and private lives.

The vastness and urgency of the task and the importance of the resources that it requires are such as to call for a global answer resulting from the joint efforts of all.

I feel certain, Mr. President, that our talks will consolidate the friendship between the people of America and of Italy, and that they will develop our already excellent relations.

And I should like to extend to you, also in behalf of the Italian government represented here by our Foreign Minister Senor Moro, my warmest greetings and my good wishes to you for your Presidency, and I should also like to extend those greetings on behalf of my wife to Mrs. Ford and to your children.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is with great pride that I bring the fraternal greetings of the people of Italy to the great and generous people of the United States of America.

END (AT 11:22 A.M. EDT)