

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TOAST BY THE PRESIDENT
TO GIOVANNI LEONE
PRESIDENT OF ITALY

SALONE DELLE FESTE

3:00 P.M. (Rome Time)

Mr. President, Mrs. Leone, Mr. Prime Minister
and Excellencies:

I am delighted to be in the Eternal City of
Rome, the justly celebrated capital of Italy.

It is a pleasure and an honor to be with you
today in this hospitable and historic palace. I am
mindful of the symbolism of this visit underlining
as it does the traditional friendship and ties between
our two countries.

We in America have just begun the celebration
of the 200th anniversary of the United States' struggle
for independence. The very name "America" derives from an
Italian navigator. Among Italian contributors to the
early history of the American Republic are William
Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence,
and Fillipo Mazzei, a close friend and collaborator
of Thomas Jefferson.

Since the very beginning of our country, the
human ties between Italy and the United States have
enriched America's life, America's culture and have
served to establish the basis for the deep and very
warm friendship that exists today.

For a quarter of a century, as a Member of the
United States Congress, I served in our national Capitol
building. As a result, I was mindful of the contri-
butions of artists and skilled workers from Italy to
design, construct and decorate our national Capitol.

The paintings, the carvings and the statues
of Italian conception and artistry have become
enshrined at the very heart of our Government as a
part of America's history and America's heritage.
This symbolizes only one aspect of our great debt
to Italy.

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Our hearts are lifted when we hear America's many bands playing stirring airs, and we do recall that President Thomas Jefferson, who loved the music of Italy, invited Italian musicians to create our first military band.

In considering those who have made distinguished contributions to the relations between our two countries, I would like to take this occasion to express my appreciation for the outstanding service of your Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Ortona.

He has gained the respect and the appreciation of not only American Presidents and Secretaries of State, but also of the American people.

Americans in Italy never feel that they are among strangers. We always have the feeling that we are with close friends. In this relationship, our two countries share much in common:

Our culture, economic, fraternal, commercial, and social ties affirm our continued cooperation and close association.

Our Governments are committed to a world of freedom and peace and to overcoming tensions which threaten the peace.

We are committed to the strength of an Alliance that has kept more than a quarter century, a quarter of century of peace on the Continent, and which is indispensable to our concerted efforts to reduce tensions and to increase cooperation.

Of first importance, we share a firm dedication to democratic Government and the principles of freedom and liberty.

We in America value the role of Italy in the world, your contributions to the Atlantic Alliance and your efforts toward a stronger and more cohesive Europe working with the United States.

These bonds and shared goals, Mr. President, were set forth in the joint statement issued on the occasion of your visit to the United States last year. They have been reaffirmed in our discussions today.

At the NATO summit conference in Brussels last week, the member nations of the Atlantic Alliance renewed their commitment to the Atlantic Alliance and to the principles of friendship and cooperation and the common defenses which are its foundation.

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I must emphasize how much the United States values Italy's partnership and Italy's contributions to the Alliance. We greatly admire the leaders and the people of Italy in carrying through difficult economic measures which are crucial in fighting today's economic difficulties.

We are keenly aware of Italy's strengths. We are proud of our Alliance with you, and take confidence in the knowledge that this relationship is welcomed by you.

Mr. President, the warmth of the welcome given me today by you, by your gracious and charming wife, and by the people of Rome on behalf of all of the Italian people has been in the highest tradition of Italian hospitality.

For me, this delightful luncheon with so many friends symbolizes the depth of friendship between our two countries.

In this spirit, I lift my glass in toast to the United States and to Italy, to our continuing, growing friendship in the years ahead, to President Leone, to Prime Minister Moro and to the great Italian people.

END (AT 3:09 P.M. Rome Time)