

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Rome, Italy)

THE WHITE HOUSE

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

LEONARDO DA VINCI AIRPORT

8:23 P.M. (Rome Time)

President Leone, Mr. Prime Minister, Your Excellencies:

Upon our departure from Italy, Mrs. Ford and I wish to express our profound gratitude to President and Mrs. Leone, to Prime Minister and Mrs. Moro, and to the Italian Government and the Italian people for the wonderful reception accorded us on this occasion and this visit.

The warmth with which we have been received, the cordial and productive discussions that I have had with your highest leaders, and the friendship and good will expressed everywhere for the United States has made this a memorable experience for all of us.

For over a quarter of a century, Italy and the United States have had a remarkable identity of purpose in working as democracies with shared ideals toward the goals of an enduring peace and prosperity for our people.

We have worked together as allies in NATO to preserve peace and to assure stability in Europe and in the Mediterranean. We can take satisfaction in the successes we have achieved.

As a result of my many meetings here in Rome, I am confident that the United States and Italy together, as partners in the Atlantic Alliance, will enjoy similar success in meeting the complex and difficult challenges before us.

In this way, we can contribute to the prospects of a peaceful and prosperous life for the people throughout the world.

On behalf of Mrs. Ford and myself, you have our sincere thanks, our deepest appreciation for the hospitality and the many kindnesses extended to us at all levels during every moment of our stay.

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As we prepare to leave this beautiful country, I am reminded of the saying that fond memories spare departures for final sorrow. Thus, we cannot leave Italy in sorrow, for we carry far too many warm memories of a very special day with gracious friends.

I thank you.

PRESIDENT LEONE: Mr. President, upon your departure, I should like once again to say to you and Mrs. Ford how pleased we are to have had this opportunity of meeting you again.

The intensive and fruitful talks that I, Prime Minister Moro and other members of the Italian Government have had with you and Dr. Kissinger have once again concerned the friendly, constructive and firm spirit with which our two countries are facing, the problems which concern them both on the bilateral and the general plane.

Your trip to Europe, in which you so opportunely included this short visit to Rome, has been of great importance. The Brussels summit in particular has shown the vitality of the Alliance. This is a guarantee of our collective security and also an essential condition for detente and peace.

Our talks today have concerned the existence of a full agreement of views on this essential point and the common wish to seek the solution of problems relating to peace and to political and economic stability in Europe and in the Mediterranean, in particular, and in the Middle East area, as well as those problems of a global dimension, which are characteristic of our ties.

Thank you for the kind words you have just said and the words you have just said and for the lofty things you said about my country. I thank you again for the good will that you have displayed to us. I wish you every success in our ongoing cooperation and in your enlightened work as the head of the American nation.

END (AT 8:29 P.M. Rome Time)