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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS BETWEEN
THE PRESIDENT AND
HIS EXCELLENCY GIULIO ANDREOTTI
PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

THE SOUTH LAWN

10:45 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Prime Minister Andreotti, I am delighted to welcome you and your party to Washington, D. C., our national Capital.

I have long looked forward to this meeting since July, when you took office as President of the Council of Ministers.

Since that time you have worked intensely and with great courage and determination on the difficult issues facing your nation and your government.

I am extremely pleased that you have found time for this visit and for consultations on the broad range of interests shared by our two governments.

During the last two years the United States and Italy have consulted at the highest levels with greater frequency than ever before. President Leone's State visit to the United States in 1974 was the first State visit of this Administration.

Our leaders have met at NATO summits and economic summits and at the European Security Conference.

I remember with great warmth my own trip to your country a year and a half ago and the friendship extended to me on behalf of the American people by the Italian people and your government.

We are friends. We are allies. We have worked together and solved problems together. We will do so in the future.

Few countries have so special a place in the hearts of the American people. The United States and Italy are committed to freedom and share a firm dedication to democracy. We are both committed to the strength of the North Atlantic Alliance and to the reduction of tension which threatens international peace and stability.

America values the constructive role of Italy in the world today and in the past. We deeply appreciate Italy's contribution to NATO; your contribution to a stronger Europe; working together with the United States; your contribution to the dialogue with the developing nations; and your dedication to peace and international understanding.

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Mr. Prime Minister, our two governments have made it a priority task to strengthen the North Atlantic Alliance. The Alliance has made progress in strengthening its defenses, standardizing equipment and coordination of strategies and planning. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done.

All of us know that the defenses, strength and the cohesion of our Alliance are crucial to the balance of power in Europe that is so critical to European freedom and international security.

Our Alliance, of course, has a purpose beyond military defense. The United States and Italy both recognize that Western Europe unity is a pillar of world peace. We must reduce tensions and reduce the possibility of confrontation in Central Europe where almost 2 million armed men face one another. We must improve mutually beneficial cooperation between Western and Eastern Europe.

The industrial democracy, if we are to be the masters of our destiny, must work together, for we share basic, common interests on global issues -- from defense to energy, the environment, trade and relations -- with the developing countries of the world.

Mr. Prime Minister, our discussions on these many issues will be of great value to the United States not only in practical terms but to reaffirm our profound friendship.

Few nations are linked as strongly as the United States of America and the Republic of Italy by history, culture, economics and the immigration of people. Our friendship has deep roots that insure its preservation.

Italy's contribution was one of the highlights of America's Bicentennial celebration. We especially welcomed, Mr. Prime Minister, the visit of Mrs. Vittoria Leone, the First Lady of Italy, when the La Scala Opera came here for its spectacular performance. The American people thank you for this wonderful presentation.

I look forward with great anticipation, Mr. Prime Minister, to our discussions today and tonight. As two democratic allies, we have a large area of common ground and many common concerns.

I bid you and your party, on behalf of the American people, a hearty welcome to the United States of America.

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THE PRIME MINISTER: Mr. President, I am deeply grateful for the invitation you are kind enough to extend to me at the particularly challenging time for my country.

Two years after the visit of President Leone, whom you kindly mentioned, your invitation confirms the frequency of our meetings and the spirit of closeness and sincere friendship between the United States and Italy. And I equally thank you for the warm words you just expressed about my country and myself.

The United States and Italy are bonded by ties of alliance and cooperation, by harmonious ideals of democracy and by choices of peace, freedom and development. The Atlantic Alliance, which binds our two nations in the common objective of defense, represents a guarantee of the security for the Western world to which we belong, for historical vocation, and on account of the political choice, which proves to be an essential element of the international strategic balance, basic conditions for the detente policy which will create the basis of a long-lasting peace.

With the same objectives of peace and progress, Italy is engaged together with its partners of the European community in a policy of unity which will permit Europe to contribute to the creation of a more just and stable world.

Many elements unite us -- the interests in social and cultural progress, in the advancement of science and respect of men, in the choice of a style of life which guarantees and protects to the greatest extent the development of capabilities and potential for initiative of the individual. The awareness, both political and moral, of the necessary interrelationship and solidarity among all nations, the search for international order, which emphasizes at the same time the rights of men and those of nations,

A vision of international relations which aim, to quote the unforgettable words of George Washington's farewell speech, "as good faith and justice towards nations and cultivating peace and harmony with everybody", but beyond these common ideals our two countries are joined by the presence in this hospitable country of America of a large community of Italian Americans who through their work and human qualities honor the land of origin and contribute to the increased prosperity and greatness of their new country.

The Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence of the United States reminds us of the ideals of the founding fathers who are both yours and ours; the founders of the United States and those of major instruments of an era of Western history which brought men and his freedom to the center of our civilization.

The American Revolution is an element of the continuity of Western history and also renews it. It allows the Western World to accept the challenges of science, technology, industry and to carry out a social transformation which is of paramount importance within the framework of the humanistic society, inspired in the values we discovered in the renaissance men. This era of the Western World's history cannot be considered complete. Its motivations and

hopes are still alive. The ideal thrust must renew itself through a constant critical search for the most adequate objectives in order to accept present and future challenges.

To this purpose we are stimulated by the commitment and the concerns of the new generation.

Mr. President, during the scheduled meetings we will deal with many issues because the present circumstances present many problems and they require an effort, imagination and understanding, but the guarantee of their success is given by the spirit of openness and sincerity which always characterized the Italian-American relationships during the past 30 years.

Mr. President, on behalf of the President of the Italian Republic, of the Italian Government and conveying the feelings of the Italian people, I bring you warm and friendly greetings which I extend to Mrs. Ford and to your entire family.

END

(AT 11:00 A.M. EDT)