

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019*

## **Remarks at a Reception for President Sergio Mattarella of Italy**

*October 16, 2019*

*President Trump.* Well, thank you very much, everyone. It's an honor to have you all at the White House. You hear that beautiful music in the background? Normally, we wait until it ends, but you're Italian; we move fast, right? *[Laughter]* You definitely move fast.

Tonight we celebrate the extraordinary friendship between Italy and the United States. And we honor the faith, courage, and countless achievements of our incredible Italian American community. Those people in that community have done so much for our country.

We are grateful to be joined by a very special man—a highly respected man in Italy and far beyond—President Sergio Mattarella of Italy. And his beautiful daughter Laura. Laura, would you like to come up? Please, come up. Please. Come on up, Laura. Thank you. Great.

And thank you both for coming today to reaffirm the powerful bonds between our people.

I want to thank the many amazing members of my Cabinet, hard-working Members of Congress, members of both Italian and American diplomatic missions, and many other distinguished guests with us tonight. We have so many. Senator John Barrasso is here someplace. John? We have Senator Joe Manchin. Where is Joe? Joe? You're not Italian, are you, Joe? *[Laughter]* Oh, do you have Italian? What percentage Italian, Joe? Huh?

*Senator Joseph A. Manchin III.* Fifty percent. Half.

*President Trump.* Well, that's half. Well, I knew I liked him for a reason, huh? *[Laughter]*

Kellyanne Conway—she's also half, right? Kellyanne, you're half, right?

*Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway.* My mom.

*President Trump.* And she's great. Your mom.

House GOP Whip, Steve Scalise. Steve? Where is my Steve? The bravest guy in the room, Steve Scalise. Representative Mark Amodei. Mark? Where's Mark? Thank you, Mark. Representative Jeff Fortenberry. Representative Virginia Foxx. Representative Greg Gianforte. Hi, Greg. I hear you're doing well out there, huh? I hear—I hear, he's good. Great man. Representative Doug LaMalfa.

*Representative Douglas L. LaMalfa.* Yes, sir!

*President Trump.* Doug?

*Representative Lamalfa.* Back here.

*President Trump.* He's all Italian. He's all Italian. *[Laughter]*

Those last two guys we have—now, Carol Miller, I'm not so sure. *[Laughter]* Where's Carol? Carol Miller? Yes, she's got a little piece of Italian in there someplace. *[Laughter]* Representative Brad Wenstrup. Brad, thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much, Brad.

Secretary Alex Azar is here someplace. Alex? Thank you, Alex. How we doing? Cures for everything, right? He's finding more cures for problems. You're doing a great job, and you're getting drug prices down.

Secretary David Bernhardt. David. Thank you. Thank you, David. He's the biggest landlord in the world right now. *[Laughter]* He controls, actually, half of the United States, right? From the Mississippi, right over to the rest. Great job you're doing.

Secretary Ben Carson. My friend, Ben. Thank you, Ben. He's my friend. *[Applause]* Whoa. Listen to that. They're all jealous now, Ben. *[Laughter]* Ben's doing a fantastic job. I said, "What do you know about housing?" "Not too much." "Would you like to head HUD?" And you know what? He did a great job. Better than the people that knew a lot. Right, Ben? *[Laughter]* He's—now he knows more than anybody.

Secretary Betsy DeVos. Betsy, thank you Betsy. Good job. Good job. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer. He's got more things that he's negotiating. Robert, thank you. Just did a deal with China; will be one of the biggest deals. That's good. It's really incredible. Now we're getting it papered out, but they're starting to buy all of that farm product anyway. Great job.

Secretary Steve Mnuchin, Treasury. Hi, Steve. Thanks. Now, you I know don't have too much Italian in you, Steve. I'm pretty sure about that. *[Laughter]* But he loves the Italians. *[Laughter]* Administrator Andrew Wheeler, EPA. He's done a fantastic job. Thank you, Andrew. Great job. Thanks to have you.

A brandnew Secretary, somebody that's so respected and—in Labor—but one of the most successful lawyers in the country. And he gave it all up to be Secretary of Labor. Just got confirmed with a very good margin—*[laughter]*—meaning he won by about five or six votes—which, today, is considered a landslide, okay? *[Laughter]* You know, it used to be you get a hundred to nothing. Today, those—those days are gone. But if you win by as many votes as you did that's a great testament to you. Eugene Scalia, thank you. Thank you. Great. Congratulations.

Secretary Elaine Chao, one of my favorite people. Where is Elaine? Hi, Elaine. Beautiful woman and a great woman. And Secretary Wilbur Ross. Why, Wilbur—and I owe you a call, Wilbur.

But I want to thank you all for being here very much. And our Nation and our civilization have been profoundly enriched by Italian faith, courage, creativity, brilliance, and spirit. The timeless legacy of the Roman Republic—what two beautiful words, "Roman Republic"—influenced nations around the globe to pursue the ideals of citizenship, representative government, and the rule of law. Sounds so familiar, doesn't it?

The Italian Renaissance opened new horizons of human endeavor and uplifted the world with immortal works of genius. And when I go to Italy and I look and I see, and I see the greatest artists in history. Michelangelo carved life into marble, and da Vinci inspired wonder with feats of divine beauty. You just don't see it anywhere else, to that extent.

Through the centuries, Italy gave us everything from Galileo's telescope, to Verdi's opera, to Versace's fashion, to the voice of my friend—he was a great friend of mine—Pavarotti. He was a diva. He was the greatest of all divas. He was a male—he was a male diva, but we loved him. And the young man that just sang, it reminded me so much—his voice reminded me so much of Luciano. And the cars of Lamborghini and Ferrari. Think of what you've done. Think of it—how brilliant it is, artistically.

From the hallowed dome of Saint Peter's, to the beautiful frescos of our own Capitol building, the Italian heritage has wonderfully shaped all of our country. Indeed, our name, "America," is derived from the great Italian navigator and mapmaker, Amerigo Vespucci. That's right.

On Monday, our Nation commemorated the legendary achievements of an intrepid Italian explorer: Christopher Columbus. And today, from Columbus Circle—and you know all about

Columbus Circle. We love Columbus Circle in New York. [Laughter] And Columbus, Ohio—what a great place that is. To our Nation's Capital, the District of Columbia, his memory stands as an enduring testament to the daring spirit that built our great civilization. And as long as I have anything to say about this—and I hope that's going to be a long time—it will always be Columbus Day.

Since the earliest days of our Republic, the United States has also been uplifted by the contributions, sacrifices, and accomplishments of a vibrant, thriving, and proud Italian American community. You come from a great, great community. Great achievers. Great people.

Italian Americans have invigorated every aspect of our society, culture, and history, from Frank Sinatra—a friend of mine; to Frank Capra; from Joe DiMaggio—he was a great player, great player; to Vince Lombardi—what a coach; and from Mother Cabrini, to the late, great Justice Antonin Scalia, the father of Gene. Soon he'll be known as "the father of Gene." Right, Gene? [Laughter] He was a great man and a great guy.

Countless Italian Americans have answered the call to defend our Nation in uniform, serving in every war and every branch of our Armed Forces. Among those we're honored to have with us tonight, the first marine to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a proud Italian American: General Peter Pace. Peter? Where are you, Peter? Peter? Wow. Great. That's fantastic. The Chairman—that's a big position, Peter, right? That's a great position. We have a great new Chairman, now, as you know. I want to thank you, Peter, for being here and heroism on the battlefield, your lifetime of service to our Nation. Thank you very much.

This evening we're also thrilled to be joined by another very special guest, an Italian American legend who truly knows about winning, and he knows about speed. I had the privilege of being driven by him one day along—we were doing a show along Central Park West. He took off in a car—four blocks. We covered the blocks in about 1 second. And I said, "Get me out of here." [Laughter] And you'll see what I'm talking about. But it was a seriously fast—and I'm very happy to be with you tonight.

His family immigrated to the United States in 1955 with just \$125 dollars to their name. As a boy, he dreamed to be like his heroes in Formula One racing. And sure enough, he grew up to be one of the fastest men alive, one of the greatest racers of all time. He is the only driver in world history to win the Indy 500, the Daytona 500, and the Formula One World Championship. Not bad. I guess he likes speed. He has 111 career wins in races all across the globe, which has to be a record of some kind. That's a lot of wins. That's a lot of nonchoking. There's no choke when you win that much. [Laughter] A lot of people choke. He doesn't choke.

He is a legendary racecar driver and somebody that's very special in the annals of sport, Mario Andretti. Mario, wherever you are, come on up. Come up, Mario. Come up, Mario. There he is. Boy, you look good, Mario.

You remember you took me on that ride? I said, "Get me out of here." He said—we were together. I said, "Mario, get me out of here. I want to get out of this car." He—we went so fast. We literally—we covered four blocks in like a second. [Laughter] And he said, "Sir, that's actually going very slow." He wanted to go faster. I said, "We did it enough." That was for "The Apprentice." We had fun. [Laughter]

Say a few words to your friends, please. Thank you, Mario.

*Former automobile racer Mario Andretti.* I'm also not very tall, as you can see. [Laughter] Well, thank you so much. And as you said, I'm an Italian immigrant, very, very—as you can imagine—proud of my heritage. But I also found we, as a family—we found our home here in America. And I'm the true, true, I think, example of what the American Dream is about.

And I always said, because of that, with pride and gratitude, I salute the Stars and Stripes.

*President Trump.* That's great, Mario.

*Mr. Andretti.* Yes, indeed. And, again, I can only thank you and thank you for having me up here. And I know that you made the show, right?

*President Trump.* That's right.

*Mr. Andretti.* And we made it so——

*President Trump.* Absolutely.

*Mr. Andretti.* ——so that was mission accomplished. And I appreciate that fact. So thank you very much, Mr. President.

*President Trump.* Do you remember that day?

*Mr. Andretti.* Yes, I remember. Yes, I—actually it's on YouTube. I showed it to some of our friends back here. [*Laughter*] Yes.

*President Trump.* I'm not sure I want to watch.

*Mr. Andretti.* I didn't mess up your hair either. [*Laughter*]

*President Trump.* No, he didn't. Thank you, Mario.

*Mr. Andretti.* Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you.

*President Trump.* One hundred and eleven wins—think about that—for speed. And that has to be in your blood, Mario, right?

Let him say hello to the President. [*Laughter*] I think they like each other.

Hey, Mario, so when you have 111 wins, that's in your blood, right? It's got to be in the blood. Can you do that if you don't like going fast, huh? Yes, you get a driver, that's the way you do it, right? [*Laughter*] Anyway, thank you very much. Stay up here if you'd like, Mario. Thank you very much.

To all Italian Americans in the room and across our country: Again, thank you for uplifting our communities, thank you for uplifting our communities, thank you for strengthening our Nation, and thank you for everything you've done to unleash American greatness. You're an amazing group of people. I know so many people in the room tonight. We have so many successful people, great people.

As many of you know, our guest of honor tonight, President Sergio Mattarella, entered politics to combat the mafia—that means he's tough; that's a tough deal—and spent much of his career rooting out corruption. He is a crime-fighter and a patriot—two things we love in America. He's also the first Sicilian President of the Italian Republic.

Mr. President, we are delighted to have you both with us at the White House. And I really have a lot of respect for you. We spent the day together. It was a wild day. [*Laughter*] He said, "You know, your news conferences are tougher than most." [*Laughter*] It's—every question is a kill. They go in for the kill, the fake news back there. Every question is a kill. But he got it. He's pro. He's really amazing. He's an amazing guy.

And I'd like to invite you up, Mr. President, to say a few words. Please.

*President Mattarella.* Thank you. Mr. President, I am very grateful for your words of friendship, words that I wish to reciprocate. Also, on behalf of my daughter and of my accompanying delegation, thank you also very much for your very, very warm welcome here in

Washington, DC. And I also listened with a great deal of pleasure to the words you have spoke a few minutes ago, mentioning all of the bonds we share and all the great people that are of Italian heritage.

And I am happy to be able to greet representatives of the U.S. institutions and civil society, along with representatives of the American community of Italian descent, all of whom are citizens who, through their labor, their dignity, and their sacrifice, have contributed to the progress of this great nation and to its identity, thereby honoring the motto, "E Pluribus Unum," which has been accompanying the country for over two centuries.

More and more people, including many youngsters, now consider the United States and Italy as a home which they can live in and move back and forth in and therefore supporting our countries with passion and determination as they head towards the future.

And by doing so, our deep friendship is strengthened. It is a friendship fostered by the transatlantic alliance, and it was fostered very much after World War II. The United States contribution to the liberation of Europe from Nazi fascism is priceless, and Italy and Europe's gratitude towards your American people is everlasting. We are part of a community of values and principles.

And the United States of America's responsible leadership in the free world, also thanks to the impulse it gave to the creation of the United Nations, has had Italy's full support in striving towards peace and international security, as recently happened in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel, within the framework of the Coalition To Defeat Daesh and transnational terrorism. And together, as loyal allies, Washington and Rome have faced the challenges of an ever-changing global context.

Mr. President, peace and development in Europe have been guaranteed by the integration of countries which used to be opponents. The United States were a key player in calling for intense cooperation between European countries after World War II, and we still acknowledge the importance of that choice in striking a global balance in which freedom and the rights of mankind are respected.

To us, the European Union—besides being a driver for growth and prosperity, much like the Atlantic Alliance—is a community we were destined for, one founded on the values and rights we share with the United States. To our countries, Mr. President, the transatlantic bond resonates in our common foreign and defense policies and in our close social relations, our cultural cooperation, our traditional economic cooperation, and trade, which we hope will develop with the broadest and fairest freedom of trade and growth and investments.

Our bond embraces research and involves scholars, universities, businesses, and professionals from both our countries. It's something we're witnessing in the fascinating quest to increase our knowledge regarding space, a journey which was started when the U.S., and mankind with it, allowed the first human being to step onto the Moon's soil.

And I wish to celebrate that feat by sending my thoughts to the astronauts, including Nick Hague, Andrew Morgan, Christina Koch, and our own Luca Parmitano, who are currently working on the International Space Station. Mr. President, these women and men orbiting the Earth speak to us of hope, and they speak to us of the future of mankind. They represent the progress shared by the U.S., Europe, and Italy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

Thank you very much. And, Mrs. Scalia, thank you very much. A special woman. I just spotted you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:54 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, USA; Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway and her mother Diane Fitzpatrick; and Patricia Scalia, wife of Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia. President Mattarella referred to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization, also known as Daesh. President Mattarella spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

*Categories:* Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Italy, President Mattarella.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Amodei, Mark E.; Andretti, Mario; Azar, Alex M., II; Barrasso, John A.; Bernhardt, David L.; Carson, Benjamin S., Sr.; Chao, Elaine L.; Conway, Kellyanne; DeVos, Elisabeth Prince; Fitzpatrick, Diane; Fortenberry, Jeffrey L.; Foxx, Virginia A.; Gianforte, Gregory R.; LaMalfa, Douglas L.; Lighthizer, Robert E.; Manchin, Joseph A., III; Manchin, Joseph, III; Mattarella, Laura; Mattarella, Sergio; Miller, Carol D.; Milley, Mark A.; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Pace, Peter; Ross, Wilbur L., Jr.; Scalia, Eugene; Scalia, Patricia; Scalise, Stephen J.; Wenstrup, Brad R.; Wheeler, Andrew R.

*Subjects:* Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; China : Trade with U.S.; Commerce, Department of : Secretary; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Defense, Department of : Joint Chiefs of Staff; Education, Department of : Secretary; Environmental Protection Agency; Health and Human Services, Department of : Secretary; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Research and development; Holidays and special observances : Columbus Day; Housing and Urban Development, Department of : Secretary; Interior, Department of the : Secretary; Italy : President; Italy : Relations with U.S.; Labor, Department of : Secretary; Trade Representative, Office of the U.S.; Transportation, Department of : Secretary; Treasury, Department of the : Secretary.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201900730.