

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL);

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DOYLE);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN); and

The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS);

The Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM);

The Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

The Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON); and

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Roble Olhaye, Ambassador from the Republic of Djibouti.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The Members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 11 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m., the Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, it is my great privilege and I deem it a high honor and a personal pleasure to present to you the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE SILVIO BERLUSCONI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY

[Spoken in English:]

Prime Minister BERLUSCONI. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, distinguished Members of Congress, it is an extraordinary honor to be invited to speak before you in the Capitol building, one of the great temples of democracy. I speak in representation and in the name of a country that has a deep friendship with the United States and is bound to your country by ties which go back many centuries.

Many American citizens have Italian roots. For them, the United States was a land of opportunity that welcomed them generously, and they contributed their intelligence and their labor to help make America great. And I am proud to see that so many Italian-Americans are today Members of the Congress of the greatest democracy in the world.

For my generation of Italians, the United States is the beacon of liberty, of civil and economic progress.

I will always be grateful to the United States for having saved my country from fascism and Nazism at the cost of so many young American lives. I will always be grateful to the United States for defending Europe from the Soviet threat in the long decades of the Cold War. By devoting so much to this victorious struggle against communism, the United States enabled us Europeans to employ our precious resources in the recovery and development of our economies.

I will always be grateful to the United States for having helped my country to climb out of poverty and achieve growth and prosperity after the Second World War thanks to the generosity of the Marshall Plan.

And today I am still grateful to the United States for the high price in lives you continue to pay in the fight against terrorism to assure our common security and defend human rights around the world.

As I will never tire of repeating, when I see your flag, I do not merely see the flag of a great country. Above all, I see a symbol, a universal symbol of freedom and democracy.

[Spoken in Italian:]

Mr. Speaker, these sentiments have inspired all of my political activity and the action of the governments that I have had the honor of leading.

The United States has always been able to count on a steadfast, loyal ally of the United States, ready to stand by you in defending liberty. We have demonstrated this wherever Italy's tangible help has been required, and we are deeply proud of this contribution.

Some 40,000 of our troops are assigned exclusively to peacekeeping operations.

In Afghanistan, we are now commanding NATO's ISAF mission.

In Iraq, we are involved in bringing peace and building democracy.

In the Balkans, Italy is now commanding the missions in Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina.

We are also present in the Middle East, in Sudan and other parts of the world, and in every other place where gaping wounds must be healed.

Mr. Speaker, before the barbaric attacks of September 11, Western countries basked in the certainty of their security. They basked in the certainty that, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, nothing could interfere with their civil and democratic life.

In 2001, in the early days of my second government, I was called to chair the G8 summit in Genoa. After the conclusion of the summit's official program, the final dinner became a dinner among friends. At one point that evening, I sat back slightly from the table, almost an external observer, in order to enjoy the cordial discussion among the leaders of the largest industrial countries of the world.

President Bush was chatting amiably with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima were but a distant memory. Prime Minister Blair was joking with Chancellor Schroeder. And the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, was also talking with President Bush. The tragedy of the Second World War and the Cold War, which had lasted for so many years, was forgotten. I felt great pleasure inside. I thought that the world had in fact changed, and how different and peaceful it was the world we were handing to our children. An age of lasting peace beckoned.

But just a few short months afterwards, the unthinkable occurred.

September 11 marked the beginning of an entirely different type of war from those that spilled the blood of humankind in centuries past. It is not a conflict between states, nor a clash of civilizations, because it is not an attack by Islam on the West. The moderate Islam that is allied with Western democracies is itself a target of terrorists. Rather, this is an attack by radical fundamentalism, which uses terrorism against the advance of democracy in the world and dialogue among civilizations.

Western democracies find themselves facing an assault by extremist organizations that strike at the innocent and threaten the basic values on which our civilization is founded.

Democratic governments have a daunting task. They must ensure the security of their citizens and guarantee that they can live free from fear.

This is the new frontier of liberty.

Mr. Speaker, I am firmly convinced that in addition to the generous effort by your great country, a grand alliance of all democracies is needed to defend this frontier. It is only by joining the efforts of all the democracies on all continents that we will be able to free the world from the threat of international terrorism, from the fear of aggression by the forces of evil.

The battle to free ourselves from fear is by no means a battle to the exclusive benefit of the citizens who live in a democratic system. It is a battle that benefits above all those who today languish under authoritarian, repressive regimes.

History has shown that the aspiration to democracy is universal and that liberty and democracy are contagious. When people are exposed to the winds of democracy, they inevitably demand respect for their right to freedom from their governments. You are well aware of that because your country is the leading force behind this wind of freedom.

But there is another, equally important reason to forge a common strategy among all democracies.

The United Nations forecasts that over the next 25 years the world's population will increase by another 2 billion people, but a large part of those 2 billion people will be born and will live in countries that today are on the fringes of affluence.

So on the one hand, we will have 6 billion human beings living in destitution; and on the other, fewer than 2 billion living in wealth. Migratory pressures will inevitably soar.

In order to prevent this from happening, and even more, to prevent hunger and desperation from generating hatred and being exploited by fundamentalists, we must raise those countries out of poverty and start them down the road to well-being. It is our moral duty, but it is also in our vital interest. This will only be possible if democracy is allowed to spread and strengthen. All of our efforts must therefore be directed at fostering the development of institutions that ensure good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and free market economies in those countries.

Only democracy can provide liberty, and only liberty can guarantee that individuals will be able to develop their talents, channel their energies, achieve their dreams, and conquer prosperity. The only possible road is to work together to spread democracy.

My government has relentlessly sought to forge a grand alliance of all of the world's democracies. It is for this reason that I lent my vigorous support to President Bush's initiative to establish a U.N. Democracy Fund.

It is for these reasons that I am convinced that the task that lies ahead of us is to promote a culture of respect for human rights and its fundamental freedoms in all countries.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to complete this mission successfully, it is essential that the bonds linking the United States and the European Union remain strong and sound.

It is this belief that prompted me to start a decisive, continuing diplomatic and political initiative with my European colleagues to ensure that the European Union did not weaken its ties to the United States in reaction to the events in Iraq.

For the same reason, we cannot ignore the danger that a united Europe might seek to define its identity in contrast to America. The necessary political and institutional integration of Europe must not mean the creation of a "Fortress Europe," closed to the rest of the world in the belief that in doing so it can preserve its prosperity and liberty.

A conception of European unity founded on a fanciful wish for self-sufficiency would be morally suspect and politically dangerous. Disagreement or, worse, opposition between the United States and Europe would be entirely unjustified and would jeopardize the security and prosperity of the entire world.

The West is and shall remain one. We cannot have two Wests. Europe needs America and America needs Europe. This holds equally true on the political, economic, and military planes.

It is therefore absolutely necessary, indeed fundamental, to sustain and reinvigorate the Atlantic Alliance, the alliance that for more than half a century has guaranteed peace in liberty.

From defense alliance, NATO is gradually becoming a security organization. While defensive alliances are exclusive, created to protect against the threat of other blocs, organizations that protect security must be inclusive, because they become even more effective as the number of member countries increases.

This is why I strongly supported the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council, bringing the Russian Federation into the security architecture of the free world.

I am proud to have worked together with President Bush and President Putin to ensure that this came to pass, and that this momentous decision, which confirmed the Russian Federation's decision to join the West and embrace its values, would be consecrated in Italy, at the historic summit at Pratica di Mare, near Rome.

That day in 2002 marked the end of the nightmare of mutual annihilation by two blocs in arms against each other that had lasted for more than half a century.

NATO must remain the fundamental instrument to guarantee our security. The new European defense capability must therefore be complementary to NATO's. Together, NATO and the European Union shall be democracy's instruments for guaranteeing security in a globalizing world. I have always worked to achieve this objective, which I consider strategic, and will continue to do so.

In this context, the United Nations through a process of reform will have to recover their central role to become more efficient and to be able to tackle the challenges of the new millennium.

Mr. Speaker, our values of democracy and liberty allowed the West to ensure that their peoples enjoy a degree of prosperity unparalleled in the history of humankind. History has shown that

only democracy permits a sound market economy to flourish, because political freedom and economic freedom are but two sides of the same coin.

Nonetheless, we are aware that there are countries that are opening to the market economy, but where authentic democracy does yet not reign and human rights are not adequately respected. The more developed and democratic countries must therefore work with determination to ensure that everywhere the opening to the free market is accompanied by the strengthening of democratic institutions and respect for human rights.

The market economy has always been a powerful drive for countries to transform from autocratic or authoritarian regimes into genuine democracies.

Action to expand the market economy in the world is therefore a key part of our efforts to affirm our values, to affirm liberty for a safer, more prosperous and secure world.

[Spoken in English.]

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, distinguished Members of Congress, the bonds between Americans and Italians are strong and enduring. I am convinced that they will continue to strengthen and that the United States will always find in Italy a partner nation with which it can share the same vision of the world.

Allow me to conclude by sharing with you a brief story. It is the story of a young man, one who had just graduated from high school. His father took him to a cemetery that was the final resting place for brave young soldiers, young people who had crossed an ocean to restore dignity and liberty to an oppressed people. In showing him those crosses, that father made his son vow never to forget the ultimate sacrifice those young American soldiers had made for his freedom. That father made his son vow eternal gratitude to that country.

That father was my father, and that young man was me.

I have never forgotten that sacrifice and that vow, and I never will.

Thank you.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

At 11 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m., the Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The Members of the President's Cabinet;

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 11 o'clock and 38 minutes a.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.