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the richness of Mexico's cultural contributions to U.S. society and the long-standing ties of friendship between our two peoples. The reverence for freedom that we share has been the firm foundation of our relationship in the past and will continue to strengthen us as we look forward to the promise of the future.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a memorable celebration.

Bill Clinton

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy

May 6, 1998

Prime Minister, Mrs. Prodi, members of the Italian delegation, welcome to the White House and welcome to the United States. Hillary and I are delighted to see you again, and I look forward to our talks today which will deepen our relationship. But first, let me say I was terribly saddened to hear of the torrential rains and mudslides in southern Italy which have resulted in the loss of Italian lives. United States forces from Aviano are now transporting Italian civilians to the scene to assist in rescue efforts.

The history of our partnership is long and special. Every schoolchild knows that Columbus crossed the Atlantic in 1492, soon to be followed by other great Italian explorers, Amerigo Vespucci, John Cabot, Giovanni da Verrazano. That was only the beginning of a relationship that has now flourished for centuries, bringing us together in new ways generation after generation.

Today, Italians once again are expanding the world's horizons. Italy stands at the forefront of a new Europe, leading efforts to promote peace and unity throughout the continent, from economic and monetary union to military cooperation.

In recent months, Italy has led efforts to restore civil order in Albania and is seeking to avert a deepening conflict in Kosovo. Italian and American troops patrol alongside one another in Bosnia. And we will continue to work together to build stability throughout southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean. And finally let me say, we are deeply grateful for Italy's hospitality toward United States forces working to preserve peace in Europe.

Mr. Prime Minister, under your leadership Italy is building a better future, enterprise is thriving, the rule of law prevails. Today's dreams are being shaped into tomorrow's reality.

Together we are exploring outer space, fighting crime and terrorism, restricting the spread of dangerous weapons, and creating a climate where goods and ideas can be freely exchanged between our countries and around the world. Truly, Italy is setting an example for the new Europe.

This week in Washington and next week at summits in Europe, we will forge even stronger bonds of cooperation to equip our people to succeed in the global economy, to combat international crime and other threats to the security of our citizens, to nurture the health of our planet. The year from now, we look forward to meeting here again when the NATO alliance celebrates its 50th anniversary and asks to make the alliance stronger for the next 50 years.

The great seal of the United States contains the words, *novus ordo seclorum*, a new order of the ages. Those words were written by Vergil in Italy more than 2,000 years ago. But they have fresh meaning today, as a new generation builds a new order of peace and freedom, prosperity and security for the 21st century. Vergil's words apply to your deeds, Mr. Prime Minister, and we are very glad to welcome you to the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Flavia Prodi, wife of Prime Minister Prodi. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Prodi.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Prodi

May 6, 1998

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I have very much enjoyed having this opportunity to welcome the Prime Minister to Washington again. For more than 50 years Italy has been among our