



For Immediate Release
Office of the Vice President
September 9, 2008

Vice President Cheney's Remarks with Prime Minister Berlusconi of the Italian Republic After Meeting

Palazzo Chigi
Rome, Italy

2:56 P.M. (Local)



VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister. And let me say that it's a great pleasure to be with you, as always. I want to thank you for the warm welcome you've given me and my delegation. And I'm delighted, once again, to have the opportunity to visit the Eternal City, and to be among so many good friends. I've enjoyed visiting with senior officials of your government, and it was an honor yesterday to meet with the President of the Republic.

This great nation is a fine ally of the United States, and millions of Americans are proud to claim Italian heritage. When we think of Italy, we think of your wonderful people, your rich history and culture of the beautiful land you call home.

The strong partnership between Italy and the United States is now in its seventh decade. From the time of your liberation, to the Marshall Plan, to the formation of NATO and the original Group of Seven, all the way to the present day, we've stood together as prospering democracies. Relations between Italy and the United States are as strong as they've ever been. The Alliance provides a sterling example of cooperation, principled action, and the courage to take on global challenges.



Together, we are helping other nations to fight terrorism, to maintain stability, and to build the institutions of freedom and democracy. Italy is one of the largest contributors to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. It is also the largest contributor to the NATO training mission in Iraq. In Lebanon, Italian forces play an important role in the UN mission. Italy is also helping to maintain stability in Kosovo and Bosnia. Your country takes seriously the responsibilities of global leadership.

In our meetings today the Prime Minister and I covered all of these subjects. We discussed, as well, the recent developments in Georgia, where I visited last Thursday. The international community is united in deploring Russia's military action and condemning its unilateral efforts to alter by force of arms Georgia's internationally-recognized boundaries. And the international community supports the independence and territorial integrity of Georgia, and calls for the peaceful resolution of this dispute, based on good faith discussions among the parties, and objective international mediation.

At Bucharest, NATO allies agreed, as well, that Georgia and Ukraine have every right to strengthen their ties to the West, and eventually join the ranks of NATO. I spoke of the Georgian border, which has been violated. Russia's western border, on the other hand, has never been safer than it is today. And that safety is the result of success across Europe in building prosperous democracies. Those nations are part of a trans-Atlantic partnership -- a community of values that is committed to peace, and threatens no one.

The Prime Minister and I also spoke about Iran. We agreed that Iran must not be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon. We discussed international efforts to convince the regime to comply with its obligations under multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, requiring



it to stop enriching uranium and to reveal the full scope of its nuclear activities.

In addition to our excellent cooperation on key global security issues, our governments are working closely with Italians to enhance the economic relationship between our two countries. Programs such as the Partnership for Growth, whose objective is to increase our bilateral trade and investments, form the basis for ever closer ties between Italy and the United States.

We have much on our common agenda. There is a great deal more we can and will do to add to the prosperity of our nations, to strengthen our common security, and to bring greater peace to the world.

On a final note, since this is likely to be my last visit to Italy as Vice President, I want to express my regard for the Prime Minister. He's a man of strength who accepts the duties of leadership. He has become a good friend to President Bush and to me. We appreciate the wisdom and the good counsel of Silvio Berlusconi, and it's a privilege to be in the man's company once again. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much.

PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI: (As translated) Thank you, Mr. Vice President, thank you very much. The Vice President has already explained the content of our long talk. And I can only add that I've tried to explain and inform him about what I've been doing, all of my efforts. And I suppose that in some cases I also succeeded in achieving good results; all of the efforts I've been making in order to make what happened in Ossetia and Georgia to be just an isolated incident, preventing it from becoming a detonator which could bring history back to a few years ago -- to some years ago.

I thank you very much for the appreciation that he has expressed for the efforts we've made, and we will continue to make, so that this situation will continue to go along the path which was started in 2002 when we signed the agreement between NATO and the Russian Federation here in Italy precisely at Pratica di Mare.

And I think we have to go on in this direction. We have to continue working along this path. So we have to continue cooperating all together as West -- as two West -- not only two -- not two parts of the West, but one single part. And we had achieved a good result when we succeeded in including -- attracting -- and including the Russian Federation in the West; and in the work that we have to continue to carry out together in order to fight the crisis, in order to fight the terrorism, in order to fight the proliferation of nuclear weapons, in order to fight poverty and diseases, so that we can bring the world to peace and well being, which is still far away ahead of us.

And as far -- on a personal note, as far as I'm concerned, I had -- also had the chance to thank Vice President Cheney and through him, President Bush, for the very close friendship, and the consideration that they had and we had in our relations over the last few years.

And I also had the chance of mentioning once again the gratitude that I feel on a personal behalf -- and also as the Italian people, the gratitude that we feel for the great American people, whose victims have paid this high price to give us back life and freedom, and to help us to get back to welfare and well-being after the Second World War. This is a gratitude which will never fail.

And the Vice President Cheney also renewed the invitation by President Bush to attend a dinner in my honor in the United States. I told them that considering the present situation, they could do without it, but he renewed the invitation, so this time I have to say, yes, I will accept. And I accept the invitation with deep gratitude. I'll be attending this dinner on Columbus Day in the United States, and on that occasion, I will renew my friendship and my gratitude toward the friendship that they have for me.

Thank you so much.

END 3:13 P.M. (Local)

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/09/20080909-2.html>

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)