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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT THE 25TH ANNUAL COLUMBUS DAY BANQUET AND DANCE, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1969, 6:00 P.M., EASTWIND, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

I am very happy to meet with you tonight. Your gathering here climaxes two wonderful weeks.

I returned yesterday from two weeks in Europe -- most of which I spent in our beloved Italy. I made the trip at the request of President Nixon -- to serve as his representative to our Holy Father. And His Holiness was gracious enough to grant me a private audience that lasted nearly an hour.

I was impressed again by Pope Paul's wisdom, his justice, his knowledge -- but above all by his deep and ever present faith in the goodness of man and the omnipotence and benevolence of our Lord.

For His Holiness -- as for all leaders spiritual and temporary -- this is a time of trouble and sorrow; but the Pope's every word testified to his unshakeable belief in the ultimate victory of virtue and righteousness. This was one of the most inspiring meetings I ever had.

From Rome, I traveled across to Abruzzi -- and to the little village of Pescosansonesco -- my mother and father's home. There I stopped in their house and walked through the fields they knew so well. It is said: "You can't go home again." That may well be, but I learned in those rocky hills

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of Abruzzi that you can recapture a dream. As I walked through those twisting mountain roads of my family's native village, I thought of our nation -- our America -- as they must have thought of it. The New World -- a new land bright with the promises of freedom and opportunity. And I was excited as they must have been excited. I realized, too, with the advantage of hindsight that for them the promise had been fulfilled. But I realized something else -- something of far more value. I became aware, looking at our country -- the wonderful United States of America -- from over there in the Old World, that the promise of freedom and opportunity here is even greater today. Ours is still the new world and it will continue to be for long in the future. I know this as a citizen. And I know this as a government official. I know and see everyday that freedom is a living belief -- that it is never taken for granted -- that it is constantly being exercised, defended and enlarged. Sometimes we don't appreciate that freedom. I recall an essay by Eric Sevareid in which he wrote: "If, by some magic, all barriers to emigration and immigration around the world were lifted tomorrow, by far the single biggest human caravan would start moving in one direction -- our way." It's true, you know. Despite everything, ours is still the greatest nation in the world.

I see, too, the growth of opportunity. There are many ways of looking at the future. We know it will be demanding but we also know it will be a time of opportunity. When I meet with my staff in Washington and we study projections of our future growth, I see the need for every kind of talent and craft there is. We shall need more engineers and builders and manufacturers and businessmen to distribute our products. We shall need more teachers and government officials and doctors. Everywhere we look in the future are needs that translate into more opportunity for our young people.

Yes, I thought of these things as I returned to the land of my parents.

I was even more impressed with this bright future as I worked on some notes for a talk I gave a few days later in Genoa. My friends, the decades ahead will be a time of vast international exchanges of goods and of people -- of knowledge and ideas. And this exchange will serve as a tremendous stimulus to our economy.

This world of the '70's will be spectacular in the scientific breakthroughs that will be achieved. In transportation, we anticipate tremendous advances. I look to the introduction in our country of the tracked air cushion vehicle. I foresee tube transit systems being introduced with underground cars traveling at speeds of 250 miles per hour -- not just between cities but across the entire continent. There will be guided track systems for the automobiles on our highways and our rapid transit systems will be operated almost entirely by automated control.

In air transport we shall be seeing supersonic airliners shortening the time between New York and Rome to a matter of about three hours. This new American supersonic transport -- I might add -- will be an exciting plane. Everything about it is unusual. It will be as long as a football field. It will fly at an altitude of nearly fifteen miles up and it will be traveling -- in its cruise range -- at a speed of 1800 miles per hour.

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Some people say that this is too fast. I don't think so. The fact is, right at this very moment, every person and everything in this room is traveling eastward at about 700 miles per hour.

Also, at this very moment, every person and everything in this room is roaring around the sun through space at a speed of 66,000 miles per hour.

And my words -- they're coming to you at 760 miles per hour and the light is traveling at 186,000 miles per second. We live in a fast moving world and we think this world -- particularly in the future -- will need commercial supersonic transport aircraft.

But let me get back, if I may, to my visit in Genoa.

The Genoa meeting was for me another exciting day. This Annual International Conference of Transportation and Communications was held as part of the observances of Columbus' great voyage of discovery. You can appreciate what an honor it was for me -- the son of Italian immigrants -- to address that conference held as it was in Columbus' city of birth.

I compared, in that talk, the voyage of the great navigator with a trip over the same route in our American supersonic transport now being developed. My purpose was to dramatize the spectacular technological progress we have achieved. But I might well make the same comparison tonight to dramatize the incredible heroism of the great Genovese navigator whom we honor here this evening.

We sometimes forget that when Columbus set sail, he was leaving the known world and entering an area of mystery. Our Atlantic Ocean was, in fact, called the Sea of Darkness. But Christopher Columbus had a theory -- and he had faith -- and tremendous courage. Armed only with these, he set sail to the westward.

We well know the story of his voyage -- of the terror that gripped the crew -- of the distrust -- the very fear of coming to the end of the world. And we well know of Columbus' fortitude and determination.

And because of his courage and faith, a new world came into being.

My friends, all of us in America -- whatever our origin -- are ever in his debt.

I submit we would do well to ponder on the lesson of Columbus and draw from it new strength. For the future we are pointing to is not without danger. There is fear. There is distrust.

The years ahead will be, as I have noted, an era of greater freedom and more opportunity. But it will be this only if we maintain our own present courage and determination -- our own beliefs -- our own faith and trust. I do not have to tell you that we have among us today some of little faith. They cry out in fear. They find fault. They lack trust in

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the time-honored beliefs which have made this new nation great. They try, consequently, to foster dissension and disagreement among us.

I have little patience with these people. I know of the strength of this nation. I know of its power. I know we can move forward and meet any challenge that confronts us. I was reminded again during my visit to Abruzzi of the true meaning of the triumph of the human spirit. The stone walls of my father's house have been standing strong for many years. They have -- through many generations -- seen difficulty and trouble, ill health and sorrow, hard times and hunger. But they have also seen laughter and song, goodness and happiness. They have seen victory in the end. And this lesson of confidence and hope was instinctive with my parents. This is what they brought to the New World. This is what they gave me.

In my father's house -- and I am sure this is true with many of you -- the age-old virtues of hard work, honesty and abiding faith in God were always held in great esteem.

My parents demanded that my brothers and I -- and my sister too -- learn the value of a disciplined life with respect for our elders.

And they insisted that we contribute to the economic well-being of the family.

And while they taught us the dignity of hard work, they also inspired us to aim for greater heights.

And now our view is to the future.

We can look to that future with confidence. As I remarked earlier, when Columbus set forth his route was through the Sea of Darkness. This year -- the 477th anniversary of his great voyage -- will be remembered for another great human exploit -- man has walked the face of the moon. And rather than the Sea of Darkness the destination of Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Mike Collins was the Sea of Tranquility. From darkness to tranquility. Let this be the new theme for man. Let it be the marching order for us all. For in human affairs we are all explorers. We are seeking new vistas ... we are seeking new horizons and a new world -- a new world in which man can learn to live in harmony and friendship. We are, my friends, all passengers on a long voyage from darkness to tranquility.

Let us pledge to ourselves this year -- the year of the mission named Apollo 11 and the spaceship named Columbia -- that we are worthy of the great men who came before us -- that we shall pursue the affairs of man with renewed confidence and energy -- that each of us -- as best we can -- will try in our own way to take that giant leap forward for all mankind.

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