



DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

63-S-72

REMARKS BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE TO THE SONS OF ITALY, GRAND LODGE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, HOLIDAY INN, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1972, 9:00 p.m.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to be with you -- and it is a great honor for me to become a Meritorius Brother in the New York Grand Lodge.

One reason I am delighted to be in Rochester is because just last evening you installed a new Lodge here -- the Vincent Lombardi Lodge. Vince Lombardi was given only one year in Washington as coach of the Redskins, but during that time the whole Nation gained a special feeling for this dedicated man. And the President of the United States was quick to recognize the coach's tremendous devotion to family, duty and country. It was the President, you will remember, who drew the parallel between Lombardi's book "Run to Daylight" with the whole story of Italian immigrants to America. The parallel is a good one -- of working together, of hitting cleanly and hard, of finding an opening, and aiming for a goal. You could not have chosen a better name for the new Lodge.

And having mentioned Vince Lombardi, let me draw another example from the world of sports. Last weekend I was in Boston, and I picked up a copy of the Sunday paper there. One of the feature writers had done an interview with Joe Garagiola -- and Joe was talking about his upbringing. His parents never learned to speak English, and never were really sure exactly what being a big league ball player in America really meant. But Joe pointed out in that interview, that what he remembers most about his Dad was the integrity, loyalty and sense of family dedication that his Father displayed through thick and thin years. "He often deprived himself of even tiny luxuries so we could have certain things," Joe said, "and he always told me that life would be meaningless unless I found something I loved to do and gave it my all."

Then Joe went on to say -- about his son who has just graduated from Notre Dame -- "I keep telling the boy to find something he wants to do and then do it the very best he can ... I suppose I sound like my Father."



Yes, this is the kind of tradition we inherit -- that we pass down to our sons.

I value highly my many years of membership in the Sons of Italy. I first joined when I was 21 years old. But over the years I have come to know an inner strength from that membership -- a reinforcement of my beliefs in the bedrock qualities of hard work, family devotion, religious faith, and moral obligation.

And I bring you greetings this evening from another man who believes in those qualities -- President Richard Nixon. He asked me to give you his best wishes for a fruitful convention. I can tell you from knowing this man for over 20 years, from serving in his Cabinet, that Richard Nixon shares the convictions and beliefs that we hold.

When we went to the White House to present the President with the Marconi Award, he stood among that delegation of Sons of Italy as one of our own. He understands our heritage and our faith -- and he shares the background that most of us experienced: that of a relatively poor family struggling to improve its lot in this land of opportunity. I am proud to serve him. And I am proud to have his friendship recognized by my brothers in the Order.

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I am proud of my career as a public official -- and a great deal of my feeling for public service was instilled by my early service experiences in the Sons of Italy.

I will forever be in debt to the traditions of generations that have been passed down from father to son, from mother to daughter. I'm sure we all ponder that heritage often.

I believe the Sons of Italy have a duty to promote the hopes and aspirations of our Italian heritage throughout America. The last several years have been turbulent ones -- filled with uncertainty about the war, the economy, the course of this Nation. And although those years are falling away, although President Nixon has brought a new level of peace and stability into this country, we still could use an extra infusion of the Italian tradition in our national life.

Most of us have talked to Vietnam veterans. We have seen the concern in their eyes and heard the intensity in their voices. And we know that these are human beings -- our sons -- who have fought proudly for America and would fight again if asked.

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But most of us have also read about another group of Americans -- those who flee responsibility and take refuge in other countries, or even jail. And we ask ourselves, what can their motives be? Are their actions simply those of misguided concern -- or are they inspired by forces more threatening?

And there is another group -- undoubtedly the largest of all -- of young men and women who conduct their lives without the turmoil of protests and marches and four-letter slogans. They study hard and work hard and they too are disciples of a better America.

We have watched all of these elements in our society. And just as we have tried to categorize them, so have we categorized our minds and our spirits. One neighbor's son joins the peace movement. Another neighbor's son joins the Marines. And we can recall when both of them played in the outfield or wanted to borrow the car on Saturday night.

It is little wonder that many Americans -- in the process of sorting out right from wrong, good motives from bad -- have seemingly lost their sense of purpose. Too many Americans have let the winds of vast impersonal forces dissect their sense of devotion, their sense of patriotism and loyalty.

But seldom has that happened to our families, our friends, of Italian heritage. We know the glories of America. And through our faith in God we have applied faith and understanding in dealing with national problems.

And I submit that today is the time when we must reaffirm that faith in working to unite the American people. We have spent too much time on those elements that divide us.

The lawless will be dealt with by the law.

The deserters will suffer the agony of the deserted.

And the unconscionable will forever wrestle with their consciences.

Let us set about to reaffirm our belief in those elements of society that demonstrate greatness, and conviction, and loyalty. Let's underscore America's strengths! Let's raise our voices for liberty and freedom and justice! Let's make old-fashioned patriotism fashionable again! There is a new measure of hope in America today and we are a part of it. Let's not let the occasion pass us by!

President Nixon dwelled on this point in his State of the Union Message only a few months ago. He said then "The story of America is not its wealth, its power, but its spirit and purpose; this is a land that enshrines liberty and opportunity, and that has held out the hand of welcome to millions in search of a better and fuller and above all a freer life."



And this is the hope that President Nixon has carried to China and to Moscow in search of lasting peace. He knows the great stake that all of us have in this Country -- the personal and material investments that all of us have made in improving our lives. He knows our struggles against discrimination, joblessness, the language, and the hundreds of other unseen obstacles that immigrants must overcome. And he is determined not to let those sacrifices go down the drain in bitterness or war, or other forms of national jealousy.

The President has negotiated an Arms Limitation Treaty with Moscow designed for this very purpose -- to achieve a lasting peace. As the President told the Russian leaders during his trip, "With great power goes great responsibility. It is precisely when power is not accompanied by responsibility that the peace is threatened. Let our power always be used to keep the peace, never to break it."

And so it is with our heritage. With a great nationality goes great responsibility. Think of our heritage in the arts, in music, in science and in religion. Think of names like Boticelli, Michaelangelo, Verdi, Fermi, Marconi, Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI.

Let our beliefs and our convictions go forth as an example for all people of all nationalities. Let the Sons of Italy stand for goodness, and honesty, and achievement, and faith in God. And may that light always shine unto the world.

Thank you.

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