

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and an Exchange With Reporters**

*January 30, 2003*

**President Bush.** I will make an opening statement; Silvio will make an opening statement; we'll have one question from the Americans, one question from the Italians. We're running a little late. We'd like to spend hours answering your questions, but the problem is we've got other matters to work on.

First, it's my honor to welcome Silvio Berlusconi back. He is a personal friend. Italy is a great friend of America; America is a great friend of Italy. The Prime Minister and I will of course be talking about a lot of matters, the most significant matter will be how to keep the peace, how to make the world a peaceful place.

I am most grateful that the Prime Minister signed a letter, along with other leaders of European countries, which clarified the issue that we're dealing with, and that is that Saddam Hussein is a clear threat to peace. It was a strong statement. It also was a statement of solidarity with the United States, and I appreciated that very much.

**Prime Minister Berlusconi.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** I appreciate your friendship. I welcome you back to the Oval Office and look forward to having a long and fruitful discussion.

**Prime Minister Berlusconi.** We are here for good work, for a just cause, and for everybody, I think. And I am here with a friend, with a country, that is the best friend of my country.

**President Bush.** Well, thank you. And your English is very good.

**Prime Minister Berlusconi.** No, no. I have never the time. We have so much to do in Italy, I have not the time to—

**President Bush.** Not the time to practice?

**Prime Minister Berlusconi.** —to learn better English.

**President Bush.** Well, thank you for that kind comment. Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

**President Saddam Hussein of Iraq**

**Q.** Sir, are you open to giving Saddam a final deadline, and are you willing to let him slip into exile—this, a man who recently said he wants to break the neck of our country?

**President Bush.** First, let me echo the comments of my National Security Adviser, who the other day in commenting about this process said this is a matter of weeks, not months. In other words, for the sake of peace, this issue must be resolved. Hopefully, it can be done peacefully. Hopefully, the pressure of the free world will convince Mr. Saddam Hussein to relinquish power, and should he choose to leave the country, along with a lot of the other henchmen who have tortured the Iraqi people, we would welcome that, of course.

I will tell my friend Silvio that the use of military troops is my last choice, not my first. The commitment of young men and Americans into battle is a difficult decision, because I understand the cost of war. But I also understand the cost of inaction. There is a high price to be paid for the civilized world by not enforcing the opinion of the world, which was for Saddam Hussein to disarm.

There's a reason why leaders around the world believe he ought to disarm. There's a reason why the Security Council of the United Nations voted 15-0 to say to Saddam, disarm—and that's because he's dangerous.

Would you care to call on somebody from the Italian press?

**Prime Minister Berlusconi.** In Italy, I already said it. I had the opportunity to say that we have always been the faithful ally country of United States; we are close friends of the United States, also in this case.

I believe that the moment has arrived to find out where all the weapons of mass destruction that Saddam Hussein said he had, where they ended up. We really fear that after the series of terrorist attacks, which culminated with the attacks on September 11th, there is the intention of the terrorists is to really come to a terrible disaster. And to do so, they have to avail themselves of the biological, chemical weapons that we know were available as Saddam Hussein.

Therefore, on the basis of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, Saddam Hussein has to reveal and account for

the weapons that we know he has. So the decision on peace rests in his hands. We all want peace.

And I'm here today to help my friend President Bush to convince everybody that this is in the interest of everybody. And if we are all united, the European Union, the United States, the Federation of Russia, everybody, all the other states under the United Nations, then Saddam Hussein will understand that he will have no other option but to reveal the arms and to destroy them.

**President Bush.** Along those lines, let me make one clarification on my statement. I think that no matter how Mr. Saddam is dealt with, the goal of disarming Iraq still stays the same, regardless of who is in charge of the Government. And that's very important for the Iraqi people to know.

And I also want to assure Silvio that should we require military action, shortly after our troops go in will go food and medicine and supplies to the Iraqi people. We will, of course, win militarily, if we have to. But we'll also want to make sure that we win the peace as well.

Would you care to call on somebody in the Italian press?

#### **Italy-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Mr. Prime Minister, I just had a question. You expressed your sentiment to friendship for the United States, and loyalty. Now, will you be ready to commit Italy to go along with the United States should the United States put together a coalition of the willing, as the President has said?

And to you, Mr. President, do you expect Mr. Berlusconi—

**Assistant Press Secretary Reed Dickens.** Only one question.

**President Bush.** I would have answered it, but they said no. [Laughter] But I don't even know the question. Go ahead.

**Prime Minister Berlusconi.** We will never forget that we owe our freedom—our freedom—our wealth to the United States of America—and our democracy. And we also will never forget that there have been many American young lives that were lost and sacrifice themselves for us.

So for us, the United States is not only our friend, but they are the guarantee of our

democracy and our freedom. And I already had the opportunity to say this to President Bush: Every time I see the U.S. flag, I don't see the flag only representative of a country, but I see it as a symbol of democracy and of freedom.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Except for his opening remarks, Prime Minister Berlusconi spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

#### **Statement on Joining the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor Collaboration**

*January 30, 2003*

I am pleased to announce that the United States will join ITER, an ambitious international research project to harness the promise of fusion energy. The results of ITER will advance the effort to produce clean, safe, renewable, and commercially available fusion energy by the middle of this century. Commercialization of fusion has the potential to dramatically improve America's energy security while significantly reducing air pollution and emissions of greenhouse gases.

The United States will be working with the United Kingdom, other European Union nations, Russia, China, Japan, and Canada on the creation of ITER. Today, I am directing the Secretary of Energy to represent the United States at the upcoming ITER meetings in St. Petersburg, Russia. We welcome the opportunity to work with our partners to make fusion energy a reality.

#### **Statement on Senate Confirmation of John Snow as Secretary of the Treasury**

*January 30, 2003*

I am pleased that the Senate acted quickly to confirm John Snow as Secretary of the Treasury. John will work with me to strengthen economic growth and create jobs so that everyone who seeks work can find work. I