

to L'Aquila, where we'll be joining other world leaders at the G-8 summit. I'll also have an opportunity to take a tour of the damage that was done in L'Aquila.

Obviously, our hearts were broken by the death and destruction that took place after the earthquake. And I'm very pleased that the United States, like many other countries, will be contributing to help the rebuilding process. In fact, we have, along with the National Italian American Foundation, already identified projects to help rebuild facilities at the University of L'Aquila and to provide scholarships and summer programs.

And so that's a nice, concrete affirmation of the extraordinary friendship between the Italian people and the United States. As I was mentioning to the President, that bond is not just between the military, but it's between our peoples. A lot of American citizens trace their roots back to this country, and the traditions of Italy have greatly enriched America.

And so it is a wonderful pleasure to be here. It is particularly a pleasure to be here because the Italian Government, I think, has been such a great friend to the United States on a whole range of issues, and President Napolitano mentioned some of those. We are working hand in hand in places like Afghanistan to ensure that we are isolating extremists and strengthening the forces of moderation around the world.

On the international front, we discussed the importance of Europe and the United States raising standards on financial institutions to ensure that a crisis like the one that's taken place will never happen again.

President Napolitano was keenly interested in the work that we were doing in Russia

around nuclear nonproliferation. And he agreed that even as the United States and Russia find ways to fulfill our responsibilities to reduce our stockpiles, that it's very important for the world community to speak to countries like Iran and North Korea and encourage them to take a path that does not result in a nuclear arms race in places like the Middle East, and that there are other means by which countries can ensure their sovereignty and gain respect around the world.

So the topics that will be discussed at G-8, whether it's climate change, issues of world poverty, the global financial crisis, issues of nuclear nonproliferation, these are all issues in which the Italian Government has already shown extraordinary leadership, and we are grateful that we will, for many years to come, be able to call Italy a friend.

And just a personal note, I had heard of the wonderful reputation of President Napolitano as somebody who has the admiration of the Italian people because of not only his longstanding service but also his integrity and his graciousness. And I just want to confirm that everything about him that I had heard is true. He's an extraordinary gentleman, a great leader of this country, and the fact that he has been such a gracious host is something that we all greatly appreciate.

So thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership. Thanks to the people of Italy for your great friendship to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:03 p.m. in Quirinale Palace. President Napolitano spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Telephone Remarks to the Influenza Preparedness Summit in Bethesda, Maryland *July 9, 2009*

Well, the—first of all, just let me tell you that everybody is asking about Janet, including President Napolitano here. *[Laughter]* And I'm very appreciative that all of you are there, and my remarks are going to be very brief.

I think it's clear that although we were fortunate not to see a more serious situation in the spring when we first got news of this outbreak, that the potential for a significant outbreak in the fall is looming. And Kathleen, Janet, John

Brennan, Arne Duncan, and our entire team have tried to engage in the most rigorous planning exercise to make sure that anything that may occur in the fall, we're prepared for.

And so I won't go through the details of this. I'm sure that Kathleen and Janet and others have laid out what the potential consequences are of a renewed outbreak of H1N1. We want to make sure that we are not promoting panic, but we are promoting vigilance and preparation. And the most important thing for us to do in this process is to make sure that State and local officials prepare now to implement a vaccination program in the fall, but also that they are working on an overall public communications campaign with the White House and the possibilities that we may need to be dealing with schools that are seeing significant outbreaks of H1N1.

And we've looked at past cases of this being properly handled and situations like this being improperly handled, and one of the most important differences is where it's well handled, State and local officials have complete ownership over this issue. They are providing good ideas to the Federal Government; they are critical links to inform us what's working and what's not.

And so I'm just very grateful that all of you are taking this seriously. We may end up averting a crisis. That's our hope. But I think that if we are all working together in a thoughtful, systematic way based on the best science possible, that even if this turns out to be a serious situation, we can mitigate the damage and pro-

tect our neighbors and our friends and co-workers.

So again, my main message to you is to say thank you. You are working with a outstanding team in Kathleen, Janet, Arne, and John. And if there are any issues at all that you think we have not raised, any t's we have not crossed or i's that we have not dotted, that affect either our general approach or your specific community, please let us know. We don't want to find out after the fact that there's some things that we could have done better. We want to find out now and make sure that we're planning ahead.

So, Kathleen, good job as always, and I want you to know that in conversations with world leaders about this issue, what's clear is, is that we are way ahead in terms of our planning. And in fact, we may need to provide some guidance and direction to other public health officials in other countries who may not have done such excellent preparation as you have done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:30 p.m., c.e.s.t., from L'Aquila, Italy, to summit participants at the National Institutes of Health. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano; President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy; Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius; Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John O. Brennan; and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Sebelius.

Remarks on the Declaration by the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change in L'Aquila, Italy

July 9, 2009

Buona sera. Good afternoon. We have just finished a productive meeting of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change, and I'd like to begin by recognizing Prime Minister Berlusconi for cochairing this forum, as well as the extraordinary hospitality that he, his team, and the people of L'Aquila and the people of Italy have shown us during

this stay. We are very grateful to all of you. I also want to thank the 17 other leaders who participated.

We had a candid and open discussion about the growing threat of climate change and what our nations must do, both individually and collectively, to address it. And while we don't expect to solve this problem in one meeting or