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Interdependence of Culture and Lawfulness

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It is a great pleasure for me to be in this magnificent city and it is a great honour for me to be able to address the people gathered here today, in such a prominent historical and cultural Institution.

Today is September 12th, the day after, so to speak. Today, I would like to repeat my claim of two years' ago: the claim that I too am American. Today, just like yesterday, and, indeed, tomorrow, I wish to claim once more that I am not only European, I am African, I am Arab, I am Asiatic.

What I am and what I wish to be is a citizen of the world.

The history of the world is the history of human beings. It is the history of men and women either accepting to live or submitting to living as members of a community, or members of a tribe, members of a village, of a city, or of a State....

The history of the world is also the history of power. It is the history of a power that becomes transformed into legality. It is the history of building up and imposing a body of rules, whether this be within the tribe, the village, the city or the State...

The history of human beings and the history of power have found a meeting point. This came about when both parties recognized and accepted the need for citizenship....the need to belong.

A citizen is a member of a community and as such has both entitlements and duties: he belongs to the community and is the most important element therein.

As the outcome of revolution and the formulation of different constitutions, over the course of the last decades of the 18th century, the people were to become citizens and power was to become legality.

For two hundred years revolutions and the different constitutions have established the State as the fundamental community and the citizen as its fundamental member.

The people become citizens..

Power becomes legality.

Both elements contribute to the emergence of the State.

Over these last two hundred years, a number of communities, in line with a functioning model of statehood, have attempted not only to promote legality and respect for the law, but also a



body of laws that have been chosen democratically by its citizens, who adhere to a culture of lawfulness.

A culture of lawfulness is frequently the expression used in countries tormented, as is Sicily, by organized crime. It is the expression used in many countries to express a value that is in contrast to the violation of human rights. It is the expression used when the basic values of a society have been subverted in the name of criminality, such as, in the case of Sicily, those of the family, of friendship and of religion.

What we are looking at is a Sicilian culture, of which the enemy number one is the Sicilian Mafia boss, just as Osama Bin Laden is enemy number one of an Islamic culture, and Adolph Hitler filled this same role in German society.

A culture of lawfulness is the expression used by the United Nations to recommend this strategic choice and to promote good government and prevent crime in the world.

A culture of lawfulness is expressed through respect for the law, not merely in terms of law enforcement, but as a way of life that brings joy and the well-being of the community in its wake.

Legalidad es alegre y conveniente: lawfulness as a source of joy and community well-being.

This is the notion I have attempted, and I am not alone in this, to convey to the Latin American countries, where the notion of legality was perceived as a source of gloom and hardship.

In the light of the Sicilian experiences, as well as that of other countries, in which a form of illegality that draws on the cultural identity of the people prevails, it is safe to say that law enforcement is necessary, but not sufficient.

We do need law enforcement, but this needs to go hand in hand with a culture of lawfulness: law enforcement and a culture of lawfulness need to travel at the same speed, like the two wheels of a cart. If the two wheels do not spin simultaneously, the cart will not go forward, it will spin around in a futile manner.

What we are referring to is law enforcement and a culture of lawfulness within the individual states, those same states that have emerged since their boundaries were defined by the revolutions and constitutions of the last decades of the eighteenth century.

I believe I share a commonly-held belief when I claim that the boundaries within which each state has established the instruments of law and order are no longer adequate to ensure the well-being of the different communities.

If we are here today, in this magnificent city, it is because we strongly believe that what happened two hundred years ago in Philadelphia, or in Paris, as in several other American and European cities, is of fundamental importance.

If we are all joined together here today, I believe it is because we feel it is time to move forward.



I believe that citizenship of one state or another is not longer sufficient to guarantee our needs. The building process from which the European Union emerged, for instance, was born of this insufficiency.

What we are looking at is a Union of 500 million human beings with a shared citizenship...no longer a group of individual states, each providing exclusively for its own citizens.

What is required is a new style of citizenship, without any prejudice to the State, but with the firm awareness that it is no longer entirely adequate in the face of future challenges.

This is a controversial issue, when you consider the number of people who live in so-called 'States', which have virtually nothing in common with the democratic model to which we are accustomed.

But even in cases like this, a model of legality that will lead to the well-being of the community is to be aspired to. It is the duty of all of us to reach out to a shared vision of this better future. Meanwhile, we need to better understand those who are humiliated when their rights are not fully respected by 'democratic States'?

What is needed is a new style of legality, or a new culture of lawfulness, no longer the traditional model connected to the independence of the individual State, but linked to the interdependence of humankind.

Our ancestors built up the original States and fought to achieve democratic rule.

We do not have to fight to achieve interdependence. Humankind already enjoys this interdependence at a social, political, economical, cultural and religious level. We simply need to increase our awareness of this condition and, furthermore, to promote it to underpin a new culture of legality. This new culture will not be limited to a respect for a body of rules within a democratic State, but will be an expression of respect for human rights.

To the extent that democratic States accept this challenge, they will be the co-protagonists of the future. To the extent that they do not accept this challenge, they will be denying human rights and our entitlement as human beings to a better future.

No State, however powerful it may be, is justified in undermining our basic entitlement to respect as human beings, or as members of a community. This basic expression of respect should embrace the freedom and fulfilment of the individual.

This is my perception of how things stand, and it is a perception that allows me to have faith in a better life for all .

My personal contribution to Interdependence Day is to continue promoting a worldwide network of culture and economy of human rights.