

THE WHITE HOUSE

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Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Visit  
to the L'Aquila Earthquake Zone with Prime Minister  
Berlusconi of Italy

The President and Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi visited the L'Aquila earthquake zone in the Italian Abruzzo region today. The President expressed to the Prime Minister U.S. sympathy and solidarity with the earthquake victims and the people of Italy. The United States is providing support to the Abruzzo region in several ways.

Through a public-private partnership, the U.S. Government and the **National Italian-American Foundation (NIAF)** are helping to address the educational and human resource needs of the University of L'Aquila and its students. **NIAF**, supported by other private American institutions, is providing:

- Scholarships for University of L'Aquila students to attend U.S. universities for one year while the heavily damaged university is rebuilt;
- Modular buildings to house students and University classrooms, laboratories, and offices.

The U.S. State Department is also helping to address the needs of the youth, and to preserve L'Aquila's rich educational resources by:

- Arranging summer sports camps and recreation activities for the children of displaced residents living in the tent camps in the region;
- Sponsoring educational exchange opportunities, including through the Fulbright program;
- Assisting various libraries/archives in L'Aquila with professional exchanges, and donations of reference materials.

Through these projects, the United States and **NIAF** hope to help return the University of L'Aquila quickly to the vital

academic, social, and economic role that it played for the entire region before the earthquake.

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