

The U.S.-Italy “Special Relationship”

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Donald Trump met Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte last week and both emphasised their common values, standing firmly side-by-side at a White House joint press conference.

Trump stated that he and Italy's Giuseppe Conte were “both outsiders to politics”.

When I read the newspapers of all the major US media outlets, including the New York Times, that ran with the headline Italian Premier: US, Italy Are ‘Almost Twin Countries’, it was a clear signal for me of a rapidly budding special relationship between the two countries, not seen since the WW11 cooperation with Sicilian partisans.

It finally puts to bed the jostling for who is America’s best friend in Europe; and it ain’t the EU, Britain, France or Germany.

Italy, I would argue, has now become the go to, point of contact for America for European, Middle Eastern and African matters, of that there is now no question, and also it is from Italy that the US will pressurise Brussels on a number of subjects especially immigration.

One could argue that no more evidence is required than Trump’s acknowledgement of Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte’s description that the U.S. and Italy as “almost twin countries.”

Italy: A U.S. Proxy?

Let’s look back. Italy has a long history with America. Particularly Her present status as a NATO ally fighting with U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq but also potentially Italy could become more directly involved, on America’s behalf, in Libya.

One might anticipate a Russian-French-German “relationship” to counter balance America’s new special relationship with Italy that, by the way, leaves Britain out in the cold militarily and diplomatically.

A respected Italian political commentator, Riccardo Puglisi, from the University of Pavia, last week gave a rather more nuanced view on Conte’s visit to Washington.

“Italy’s close relationship with the United States is a two-edged sword. The best-case scenario for Italy is that it can use this relationship to take a seat alongside France and Germany as one of the European Union’s decision-makers.” adding “Prestige from having close ties to Washington might give the government more power in domestic areas, like passing the 2019 budget in

September and October and it is also possible that Italy could act as the main liaison [as a political proxy] between the EU and the United States, or hopefully as the country that represents Europe's priorities in the United States."

I mention all this in the hope to dispel the notion that Italy is an unimportant insignificant country. [But at the same time, this suggests that Italy's national sovereignty is affected by this so-called special relationship, M. Ch, GR Editor]

The other side of the sword is I guess, that it could leave Italy isolated from the rest of the EU.

But if, as I believe, the EU and the crooked Brussels bureaucracy are going through their final death throes, then what does it matter?

This also triggers the question of the future of NATO, also based in Brussels, but that is a whole other subject, of huge importance.

To conclude we should all watch closely over the coming months these evolving relationships between the US and UK and European countries.

Central to this is the hope of an end to the almost intolerable Russia baiting by the US and UK.

Also the sooner the UK has a clean break with the EU, the sooner one can assess the UK's future role with America (and for that matter, Russia) and Her future influence or otherwise in world affairs.

For now what is clear is that it is Italy that has a 'Special Relationship' with America not Britain. That said, given Trump's unpredictability, who knows how long that will last.

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