

The Italy You Missed

Giovanni Castellaneta* (March 12, 2009)



Italy's Ambassador to the US replies to a Washington Post article.



i-Italy received permission to re-publish for its readers Ambassador Castellaneta's "[Letter to the Editor](#) [2]" originally published in the Washington Post on March 9, 2009.

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I read Mary Jordan's March 1 front-page article, "[As Italy's Banks Tighten Lending, Desperate Firms Call on the Mafia](#) [3]," several times -- several times because I was expecting to find, somewhere, mention of the fact that Italy's banking system is among the most solid in the world.

I was hoping for perhaps a simple word about Italy's not falling victim in recent times to any subprime crisis, any bankruptcies, any artificial real estate boom, any Ponzi schemes or even any Bernard Madoff types (we put the one we had in jail several years ago and introduced new laws that have protected our financial system in these months).

Or maybe I would find mention of the successes Italian authorities are scoring against the Mafia and organized crime (the recent arrest of alleged mobster Giuseppe Setola) or that our homeland security activated a toll-free anti-racketeering and anti-loan-sharking number that operates 24-7, a measure that has proven quite useful.

But nowhere did I read about any of this. I have no comments about the article's one-sided content, the description of a despicable and tragic phenomenon. I wonder, however, if your readers would not have also benefited from just a word about Italy's commitment or success in fighting it? What idea would my countrymen have of America if they read an article on the Bush administration that interviewed only activist Noam Chomsky or a piece on climate change that cited only Rush Limbaugh?

I doubt that Walter Cronkite would have concluded Mary Jordan's article with "And that's the way it is."

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