“... the Tricolored Flag, a pledge of our determination to reaffirm, to defend, to strengthen national unity, the cause to which many Italians pledged their commitment and their lives”.

Giorgio Napolitano

From the address by the President of the Republic on the occasion of the Italian Flag Day. Reggio Emilia, January 7, 2011.
Inauguration of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Italy. Turin, February 18, 1861.

Rome, March 31, 1911.
The King and the Queen visit the Exhibition at the Palazzo delle Belle Arti, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy. Photo courtesy of the Secretariat General of the Presidency of the Republic.

50th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy. His Majesty reads from the text of his address in Campidoglio.

President of the Republic, Giovanni Gronchi, as he addresses Parliament on the occasion of the celebrations of the 100th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy. Photos courtesy of the Library of the Chamber of Deputies. Rome.
IL PALAZZO SUL POTOMAC

THE EMBASSY OF ITALY IN WASHINGTON

SPECIAL EDITION DEDICATED TO 2013 – YEAR OF ITALIAN CULTURE IN THE U.S.

EU Embassies’ Open House 2013. Photo courtesy of the Embassy of Italy in Washington.

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THE EMBASSY OF ITALY
APPRECIATES THE GENEROUS SUPPORT
OF THE NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION (NIAF)

Sofia Coppola’s Maria Antoinette on display during the exhibit Star Wigs (April 30 – May 6, 2013) by Dress in Dream Movie and Costume on the occasion of 2013 – Year of Italian Culture in the U.S. Photo courtesy of the Embassy of Italy in Washington.
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Giovanni Paolo Panini, Quirinale Square (detail), oil on canvas, 1733. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
The Room of the factories of Paulus V – Cesare Rossetti and Ranuccio Semprevivo. Quirinale Palace seen from the gardens, detail of the frieze, fresco, 1609-1610. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
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Detail of decoration of the wall with the frescos by Agostino Tassi. Below is the frieze with the initials of Gaetano Lodi. Quirinale Palace, Salone dei Corazzieri. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
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Italian Fantasy, oil on canvas by Dutch painter Pierre Henri Theodore Tetar van Elven (1828-1908). Son and pupil of Jan Baptiste, he studied Fine Arts at the University of Amsterdam in 1846 and later in The Hague. Photo courtesy of Galleria d’Arte Moderna, Genova, Photographic archives, Comune di Genova.
I wish to express my profound gratitude to the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, for unveiling this volume on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy and of the diplomatic relations between Italy and the United States of America.

I wish to extend special appreciation to the current Ambassador of Italy to the United States of America, Claudio Bisogniero, and the Ambassador of the United States to Italy, John Phillips, for their contributions.

I also wish to thank architect Piero Sartogo for having been a part of our initiative from the beginning and for contributing to the section that describes our celebrated diplomatic chancery in Washington.

Gaetano Cortese
Rome, Quirinale Palace. The Study of the President of the Republic. Photo by Mario Quattrone courtesy of the Secretariat General of the Presidency of the Republic.
I wish to extend my warmest greetings to the readers of this inspired book dedicated to the Palace on the Potomac, seat of the magnificent Chancery of the Embassy of Italy in Washington.

With the talented design of Architect Piero Sartogo, Italy gained a headquarters that not only represents Italian tradition and style but also acknowledges the responsibilities and dedication of our diplomatic representatives making use of the new spaces. In particular, I wish to recall His Excellency Boris Biancheri, who recently passed away: formerly Italy’s Ambassador to the United States, he had laid the groundwork for the new building and while in Washington oversaw the final bidding process. The Chancery was inaugurated in 2000 during the mission of Ambassador Ferdinando Salleo.

The volume is rich in images and provides enlightening historical and cultural background as it follows the long history of political and diplomatic relations between Italy and the United States. In this year, as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the completion of Italy’s national unification, we should remember the now indissoluble bonds forged by common roots and aspirations that joined the beginning of our history as a Nation with the first cry of the then-fledging American democracy.

In this spirit, I extend my appreciation to Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant’Agata for having proposed this initiative and for the care and attention of Ambassador Gaetano Cortese in carrying it through.

Happy reading!

Quirinale Palace, September 5, 2011

GIORGIO NAPOLITANO

(Courtesy translation)
The President
of
the United States of America
Barack Obama
President Barack Obama. Photo http://www.whitehouse.gov/copyright.
The Embassy of Italy in Washington

Oval Office. Photo by Bruce White for the White House Historical Association.
Presidential Proclamation
150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy

A PROCLAMATION

On March 17, Italy celebrates the 150th anniversary of its unification as a single state. On this day, we join with Italians everywhere to honor the courage, sacrifice, and vision of the patriots who gave birth to the Italian nation. At a time when the United States was fighting for the preservation of our own Union, Giuseppe Garibaldi’s campaign for the unification of Italy inspired many around the world in their own struggles, including the 39th New York Infantry, also known as “The Garibaldi Guard.” Today, the legacy of Garibaldi and all those who unified Italy lives on in the millions of American women and men of Italian descent who strengthen and enrich our Nation.

Italy and the United States are bound by friendship and common dedication to civil liberties, democratic principles, and the universal human rights our countries both respect and uphold. As we mark this important milestone in Italian history, we also honor the joint efforts of Americans and Italians to foster freedom, democracy, and our shared values throughout the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 17, 2011, as a day to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy. I encourage all Americans to learn more about the history of Italian unification and to honor the enduring friendship between the people of Italy and the people of the United States.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

The proclamation of President Barack Obama has a famous precedent: a speech by then President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in Washington exactly fifty years earlier, on March 16th, 1961, on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy. According to Giulio Terzi, then Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Ambassador of Italy to the United States, the Proclamation “is an extraordinary sign of friendship from President Obama who wanted to give testimony of the closeness of his country on the occasion of an anniversary which is very important for all Italians, including those living in the United States.”
Presidential Proclamation
Columbus Day, 2012

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

As dawn broke over the Atlantic on October 12, 1492, a perilous 10-week journey across an ocean gave way to encounters and events that would dramatically shape the course of history. Today, we recall the courage and the innovative spirit that carried Christopher Columbus and his crew from a Spanish port to North America, and we celebrate our heritage as a people born of many histories and traditions.

When the explorers laid anchor in the Bahamas, they met indigenous peoples who had inhabited the Western hemisphere for millennia. As we reflect on the tragic burdens tribal communities bore in the years that followed, let us commemorate the many contributions they have made to the American experience, and let us continue to strengthen the ties that bind us today.

In the centuries since that fateful October day in 1492, countless pioneering Americans have summoned the same spirit of discovery that drove Christopher Columbus when he cast off from Palos, Spain, to pursue the unknown. Engineers and entrepreneurs, sailors and scientists, explorers of the physical world and chroniclers of the human spirit – all have worked to broaden our understanding of the time and space we live in and who we are as a people. On this 520th anniversary of Columbus’s expedition to the West, let us press forward with renewed determination toward tomorrow’s new frontiers.

As a native of Genoa, Italy, Christopher Columbus also inspired generations of Italian immigrants to follow in his footsteps. Today, we take time to celebrate the innumerable contributions that generations of Italian Americans have made to our country. Throughout 2013, Italy will also commemorate this rich heritage and the enduring bonds between our countries with the Year of Italian Culture in the United States, which Americans will join in celebrating.
In commemoration of Christopher Columbus’s historic voyage 520 years ago, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934, and modified in 1968 (36 U.S.C. 107), as amended, has requested the President proclaim the second Monday of October of each year as "Columbus Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 8, 2012, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of our diverse history and all who have contributed to shaping this Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA
Remarks by President Barack Obama
at the National Italian American Foundation Gala

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, hello, hello! (Applause.) Thank you so much. (Applause.) Viva Italia! (Applause.) Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. (Applause.) Thank you, Nancy, for that generous introduction. I am biased, but I think Nancy was one of the best Speakers of the House this country ever had. (Applause.) She was no doubt the best Italian American Speaker of the House we ever had. (Applause.) And I believe that she will be the best Speaker of the House again in 2013. (Applause.)

Now, I was just out passing out Halloween candy – (laughter) – for the kids who were coming to the White House, but now that Malia and Sasha are with their friends, they do not notice that I’m gone. (Laughter.) They’re now getting to that age where they don’t care. (Laughter.) They’re pleased that I didn’t embarrass them too much during the brief time I was with them.

So I am honored to be here to celebrate National Italian American Heritage Month and to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Italian unification. (Applause.) And I want to congratulate the President, the Chairman, all of you who are doing so much work to keep that heritage alive for the next generation. And I’m grateful for your generous welcome. (Applause.)

Now, I want to make a confession right off the bat. I do not, in fact, have any Italian ancestry. (Laughter.) Not all of us are that lucky. (Laughter.) I can’t sing like Frankie Avalon. (Laughter.) Where’s Frankie? I can’t – he looks the same! Unbelievable. (Laughter and applause.) I can’t cook as well as any of your grandmothers. (Laughter.) Michelle won’t let me have seconds or thirds anymore. (Laughter.) So all I’ve got to offer is a last name that ends in a vowel. (Laughter and applause.) That’s all I’ve got. (Applause.)

Nevertheless, it is good to see so many amici. (Laughter.) I see many proud sons and daughters of the old country. I see a couple dozen proud Italian American members of Congress here tonight. Let me offer a special welcome to the guests who join us from Italy this evening, including Italy’s ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Terzi. Thank you so much for your outstanding work. (Applause.) His counterpart – here, as well, and he is doing an outstanding job representing us, our ambassador to Italy, David Thorne. (Applause.) Italy is one of our strongest allies, a fellow founding member of NATO. We look forward to our work together with them, and we’re going to be joining them next week at the G20 to make a series of decisions that are going to be very important for the world economy.

I’ve also made sure to keep close the advice of Italian Americans by asking some of them to serve in my Cabinet. And as Nancy mentioned, we could not be
Rome, Villa Madama, March 27, 2014. Meeting between Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and President Barack Obama. Photo courtesy of ANSA.
prouder of Janet Napolitano, who is keeping us safe every single day. (APPLAUSE.) And my outstanding Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta. (APPLAUSE.) And, as was mentioned, even though she’s not here these evening, Jill Biden is proud to come from a long line of Giacoppas. And so she sends her regards. (APPLAUSE.)

Tonight, I think it’s also important for us to honor the proud service of the countless Italian Americans who have fought for this country since our founding, and who wear the uniform today – (applause) – from the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Ray Odierno, – (applause) – to a hero whom I was proud to bestow our nation’s highest military decoration, and was the first one in a very long time to personally receive the Medal of Honor, staff sergeant Salvatore Giunta. (APPLAUSE.)

So in a sense, every American joins us in celebrating this anniversary of Italian unification. What would America be without the contributions of Italy and Italian Americans? (APPLAUSE.) What would we be without the daring voyages of Columbus, and Verrazano, and Vespucci? What would our science and technology be without not just DaVinci and Galileo, but Fermi? What would movies and music be without the magic of Capra, or Sinatra, or Sophia Loren, my favorite. (Laughter.) I’m just saying. (Laughter.)

What would sports be without the guts and the grit of Di Maggio and Lombardi – and La Russa? (APPLAUSE.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Piazza!

THE PRESIDENT: Piazza! (Laughter and applause.) The White Sox could still use you. (Laughter.) What would this city be without the influence of Roman thought and architecture, the Piccirilli Brothers who – their work on the Lincoln Memorial; Brumidi’s magnificent touch on the Capitol?

Although, I must say, it might be nice to know what our politics would – like without the contribution of Machiavelli. (Laughter.) That’s been internalized a little too much here in Washington. (Laughter.)

America would not be what it is today without the unique contributions and the uncommon pride of Italian Americans. (APPLAUSE.) And like so many other groups – as Nancy said, like so many other groups, the Italians came to America in search of opportunity. They came with little. Very few were wealthy. But they came with an unwavering faith in God, an unfailing commitment to family, and an unlikely hope in the possibilities of America – the belief that in this country, you could be prosperous, you could be free, you could think and talk and worship as you pleased. It was a place where you could make it if you try.

And it wasn’t always easy. Italians weren’t always welcome. And when we think about today’s immigrants, we have to remind ourselves that those of us who now feel comfortable in our American identity, that that wasn’t always the case in the past. (APPLAUSE.) The opportunities our forbears hoped for wasn’t always within

reach right away. But they did not wait for anybody to hand it to them. They built new lives for themselves, and at the same time they ended up building an entire nation. They enriched our heritage and our culture with their own. They helped forge the very promise of this country – that success is possible if you’re willing to work for it. And those efforts built a better America for all of us.

Everybody in this room just about, everybody, has an ancestor or lots of ancestors who fit that story of transplanted roots that somehow grew in American soil; of families that struggled and sacrificed so that our families might know something better. Of parents who said, maybe I can’t speak English, but I’ll make sure my child can speak English; they might teach English someday. (Applause.) I might not have an education, but I’m going to make sure my child has an education. (Applause.) I might perform backbreaking labor today, but someday my child can be a Senator, or a Supreme Court Justice, or Speaker of the House, or a Secretary in the Cabinet, or President of the United States. (Applause.)

So that’s what binds us together. That is what has always made our country unique. We’ve always been and we will always be a nation of immigrants from all over the world. And out of many, somehow we’re able to forge ourselves into one people; and this is the place where the highest hopes can be reached, and the deepest and most sincere dreams can be made real.

And that’s the legacy our forebears left for us, and that’s what we now have to leave to our children. These are tough times right now, and millions of Americans are hurting. Millions are without work, and those who have work are still all too often struggling to get by. And for many, the dream that brought so many Italian Americans to these shores feels like it’s slipping away.

So we’ve got work to do. But while these times are hard, we have to remind ourselves they’re not as hard as those that earlier generations faced. And the legacy of their courage and their commitment and their determination and their generosity and their willingness to think about the next generation – we have to be just as passionate and just as selfless as they were to keep that dream alive, and make sure our children inherit futures that are big and bright, and that this country is as generous as it’s always been.

And that’s what we have to commit to ourselves tonight. So on behalf of all Americans, I want to thank you for everything that the Italian American community has done; everything that you’ve done to contribute to the chronicles and the character of the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, so much. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause.)
The President
of
the Italian Republic
Giorgio Napolitano
President Giorgio Napolitano during the meeting with representatives of the Italian community, on the occasion of the celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy in New York. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
Rome, Quirinale Palace. View of Sala d’Ercole. Photo by Mario Quattrone courtesy of the Secretariat General of the Presidency of the Republic.
ADDRESS BY

THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

GIORGIO NAPOLITANO

AT THE MEETING WITH A DELEGATION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY

New York, March 27, 2011

150 New Yorkers celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy

Let me first of all thank you for having organized this magnificent event to celebrate together the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy.

It is particularly touching for me, as President of the Italian Republic, to share with you such a historical moment.

President Obama, in his impressive proclamation on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Italian unification, celebrated “the courage, sacrifice and vision of the patriots who gave birth” to the Italian State. He added that “at a time when the United States was fighting for the preservation of our own Union, Giuseppe Garibaldi’s campaign for the unification of Italy inspired many around the world in their own struggles, including the 39th New York Infantry, also known as the Garibaldi Guard.”

I am deeply grateful to President Obama for such a Proclamation and to the Congress for the Congressional Record.

Pride and trust: these are two words I have insisted upon in my address before the Italian Parliament on the 17th of March. Italian unification has represented an extraordinary historical accomplishment, despite severe difficulties and gloomy forecasts; the centuries – long path of the idea of Italy, fostered by paramount messages of language, literature and culture – had eventually come to an end.

Next Tuesday I will pay tribute to Ellis Island and the 4 million Italian immigrants that arrived there. Italy will never forget its sons and daughters who were obliged to leave their country in search of a better future.

The historical record is crystal clear: before unification, the living conditions in 1861 Italy were mostly painful and unsatisfactory, with high rates of disease, illiteracy, and poverty. The newly born State created the premises for the modernization of the country and for gradual social progress but could not, for quite a long time, afford to provide an acceptable future for all Italians. Emigration sadly became a necessity.
Songs, poems, novels and films have masterly depicted the sorrow of the departure, the difficulties of the arrival, the opportunities opened by the new life. You know it all too well: the pain, the struggle, the success.

Italy is grateful to the United States for the opportunities given to our citizens. Far from the rigidity of the European social structure in those days, America was ready to reward hard work and commitment, to promote social advancements, to celebrate the self-made man. America was able to create in the individual an intense feeling of belonging and allegiance while recognizing his right to pursue happiness.

Today I have the pleasure of being before you and, from your positions and contributions to American society, I can immediately grasp the immense results attained by the community of Italian origin. I am profoundly touched by the genuine affection that you feel toward our Country. You have a major and successful role in promoting values and qualities associated with Italy.

No one better than Geraldine Ferraro embodied the Italian contribution to the American dream. Today we mourn her loss. She has left a legacy in U.S. political life and in American society which will last forever. All Italian Americans can be proud of her.

Taking into account our special relationship, I gave my patronage to the program of events Italy@150. I am grateful to Ambassador Terzi and to the Embassy of Italy for the organization of such celebrations and I am impressed by the many events spontaneously carried out everywhere in the States to celebrate our anniversary, thanks to the exceptional dynamism of the Italian community.

I would also like to thank the Conference of the Presidents of the most important Italian–American organizations for their invaluable help in attaining an essential result, the inclusion of the Italian language in the Advanced Placement program and thus in the secondary education system here in the States.

The promotion of Italian is an absolute priority because language is the first tool to spread an updated knowledge of Italy, far from platitudes and clichés. Furthermore, the Italian language is one of the most ancient and noble cultural forces that have united our Country and kept our citizens together and cohesive abroad.

It would be impossible to pay tribute to all the prominent Italians who lived in the States, specifically in New York. On this special occasion I wish to celebrate two outstanding personalities: Antonio Meucci, who was at the same time many things, emigrant, New Yorker, patriot of the Risorgimento, inventor of the telephone, and Giuseppe Garibaldi, who lived also in New York as Meucci’s guest, and who exchanged letters with Abraham Lincoln, in a spirit of mutual admiration.
The present world, as I am going to state tomorrow in my speech at the United Nations General Assembly, is filled with opportunities, challenges and contradictions. The years ahead will not be easy for anyone, and in particular for Italy. But I am glad I can say to you today that in the past few days the celebrations of our 150th anniversary have seen a new spirit emerging through massive and enthusiastic public participation in all initiatives taking place in all parts of Italy. The new spirit of pride and trust to which I alluded; a new will to reinforce our national cohesion and unity, is the precondition to overcome the difficulties which are in front of us. Yes, we shall overcome.
Rome, Quirinale Palace, December 27, 2011. President Giorgio Napolitano with the new Ambassador of Italy to the U.S., Claudio Bisogniero. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
F rom my very first days in Washington, this time as Ambassador of Italy, I immediately sensed the breadth and depth of the relationship between Italy and the United States. The first proof came when I presented my Letters of Credence to President Obama; the words he used to describe Italy’s contribution to peace were unequivocal: “we don’t have a closer ally, as I always say.” Many others followed in the course of visits at the highest level by top elected and appointed officials of the Italian government. President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Senate Pietro Grasso, Prime Ministers Monti and Letta – all were extended a special welcome. These occasions also revealed an endorsement of the reforms and efforts undertaken by our government and the key role that it can play in balancing Europe’s debate on the debt crisis.

Another and very strong signal of friendship we received was the wave of enthusiasm that washed over us as we introduced 2013 – Year of Italian Culture in the United States. I would like to thank Ambassador Gaetano Cortese for his idea to dedicate the new edition of *Il Palazzo sul Potomac* to this initiative and for having completed the project with great commitment. With over 300 events in more than 60 U.S. cities, the Year was an incredible voyage to discover Italy and its connections with the United States. Thousands of Italians and Americans worked together, from the initial planning to the raising of the curtain, to ensure that each event
would meet with every success. The Year has brought to light many possibilities for increased collaboration between Italy and the United States in a kaleidoscope of sectors, from art to medicine, music to aerospace, teaching to technology, tourism to business.

There could not be clearer proof that our friendship is truly exceptional. Our bilateral cooperation covers a host of fields. A long list, based on four main pillars. The first is political cooperation and the promotion of security. In all fundamental international issues, Italy stands side by side with the United States. Our troops are operating shoulder to shoulder in Afghanistan, Kosovo and counter piracy. Not to mention Italy’s strong engagement in the Middle East where – besides the long-lasting leading role Italy has taken in the UN Security Mission in Lebanon – we have been since the beginning at the forefront in the efforts by the international community for the stabilization and reconstruction of Libya and in the context of the Syrian crisis. The second pillar is economic cooperation. Our governments share the belief that to boost our economies the priority is on economic policies capable to stimulate economic growth and the creation of new jobs. In this respect, Italy is a strong believer in the need for increasing bonds between European and American economies through the TTIP agreement. Italian exports to the USA continue to grow both numerically and qualitatively, with Italy being the sixth largest exporter of high tech products to the USA. Serving as a perfect example are the three Multi Purpose Logistics Modules (Leonardo, Raffaello, and Donatello) of the International Space Station: they are Italian built. The same is true for nearly 20% of the new Boeing 787 airline. Italian companies have sizeable investments in this country’s major high tech industries: automotive, aeronautics, energy, defense, naval construction, and biotech. The third pillar is people-to-people exchanges. Italy is the destination for about 4.5 million American tourists, as well as the second country of destination
The Embassy of Italy in Washington

Rome, Villa Madama, March 27, 2014. President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi with Secretary of State John Kerry and Minister of Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini. In the background from left to right, Prime Minister Renzi’s Diplomatic Counselor, Ambassador Armando Varricchio, and Ambassador of Italy to the U.S. Claudio Bisogniero. Photo courtesy of Laboratorio Fotografico Chigi.

Washington D.C., September 9, 2013. Ambassador and Mrs. Claudio Bisogniero welcome the Clintons at the Embassy of Italy. Photo courtesy of the Embassy of Italy in Washington.
Address by the Ambassador of Italy to the United States of America


Washington D.C., November 22, 2013. Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito on the occasion of the concert "A Stradivarius Night at Villa Firenze".

(after the UK) for American students. Over 30,000 are taking courses at Italian universities. More than 80,000 U.S. students are taking classes in Italian at U.S. universities and some 77,000 at primary and secondary schools. The fourth pillar is represented by cultural and scientific cooperation. About 15,000 Italian researchers and scholars are currently working in the United States in fields such as medicine, chemistry, and physics. There are some 700 cooperation agreements between American and Italian universities, and our countries have joint programs in the most advanced sectors. In 2013, we celebrated the first 50 years of cooperation in the space sector: from the launch of the San Marco 1 satellite to Shuttle Endeavor’s last mission in May 2011 that carried Italian astronaut Roberto Vittori; from the Volare mission, which in 2013 took astronaut Luca Parmitano aboard the International Space Station, to the first Italian woman in space in 2014, Samantha Cristoforetti.

These are today’s fruit of a longstanding relationship. The dialogue between Italy and the United States radiates from a vigorous tree of shared history that is deeply rooted in the fertile soil of freedom and equality underlying our national identities.

When, in 1961, Italy commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of its Unification, President John F. Kennedy spoke in noble terms of the cultural and ideal bonds between Italy and the United States: “All of us, in a large sense, are beneficiaries of the Italian experience. It is an extraordinary fact in history that so much of what we are, and so much of what we believe had its origins in this rather small spear of land stretching into the Mediterranean. All in a great sense that we fight to preserve today had its origins in Italy. [...] From the banks of the Tiber there rose Western civilization as we know it, a civilization whose tradition and spiritual values give great significance to Western life as we find it in Western Europe and in the Atlantic community.”

Address by the Ambassador of Italy to the United States of America

We should never forget the many who have enriched its development and growth over time. The architecture of the U.S. capital city is quintessential Italian classicism, with unmistakable allusions to ancient Rome and, more recently, to Palladio’s creativity and artistry. The friendship between our countries is ‘sculpted’ in the neoclassical icons of U.S. democracy: the White House, the Capitol (with Costantino Brumidi’s splendid frescoes), the Washington Monument, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, and the Supreme Court.

Our Embassy, Il Palazzo sul Potomac, is also architecturally iconic, reconciling Italy and the United States with its allusions to the original plan of the city, the river intersecting it, and the tradition of Tuscan villas with their medieval buttresses. Politically and culturally, together with Villa Firenze, our chancery has become center stage for some of the most prestigious events in the nation’s capital, opening doors to exchanges and interactions at all levels of civil society.

Of course, the soul and genius of the relationship between Italy and the United States is nurtured by the contribution of Italian Americans. According to the last official census, more than 17 million Americans claim Italian descent, 2.3 million more than a decade ago. The real number is probably higher, maybe 25 million. They are the backbone of the friendship between our countries. As President Obama underscored in his Proclamation for the 150th Anniversary of Italian Unification, they have made ‘incalculable contributions’ to ‘building’ the United States. “What would we be” – the President asked numerous times in his remarks at the 2011 NIAF Gala – “without the contributions of Italy and Italian Americans? What would we be without the daring voyages of Columbus, and Verrazzano and Vespucci? What would our science and technology be without not just Da Vinci and Galileo, but Fermi? What would movies and music be without the magic of Capra, or Sinatra, or Sophia Loren?”
New York, June 3, 2013. Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero and The Boxer at Rest on display at the MET on the occasion of 2013 – Year of Italian Culture in the U.S. Photo courtesy of the Embassy of Italy in Washington.


Chicago, June 20, 2013. Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero and Maestro Riccardo Muti, conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, on the occasion of 2013 – Year of Italian Culture in the U.S. Photos courtesy of the Embassy of Italy in Washington.
Buon giorno! Siamo davvero felici di essere arrivati in Italia, la terra dei miei antenati.

Sono orgoglioso di essere il nuovo Ambasciatore degli Stati Uniti in Italia.

Ora passo all’inglese.

Over the past four decades, my wife Linda Douglass and I have been to Italy many, many times. We have come back again and again, not just because of the beauty of your land or its extraordinary history. We have also been drawn here by the welcoming nature of the Italian people who have always made us – and so many other Americans – feel very much at home.

I am sure that my grandparents, Angelo Filippi and Lucy Colussi, who immigrated to America from Italy over 100 years ago, would be proud to know that their grandson has returned as the United States ambassador to the great nation where they were born.

Italy and America are true allies and have together enjoyed a close and enduring relationship over many years. Both countries share the values of freedom and commitment to human rights throughout the world. We have been steadfast partners on some of the most difficult challenges we have faced in recent years.

I am honored to represent the American people and President Barack Obama as we work to build upon the special and important relationship that exists between our two countries.

As ambassador, I will work as hard as I can to further strengthen that relationship and focus on the issues of greatest concern to both of our countries: economic progress and opportunity for the next generation, trade, innovation, sound energy policy and security for our nations.

Now I am ready to begin what I hope and trust will be a very productive working relationship over the coming years.

Thank you!
Embassy of the United States of America

I was honored to receive a request from Ambassador Gaetano Cortese inviting my comments for inclusion in Il Palazzo sul Potomac, a magnificent book on Italy's beautiful embassy in Washington. It is my pleasure to be a part of this effort.

The "Year of Italian Culture" that took place in the United States during 2013 was an important initiative and a great success. Events and exhibitions across our country gave Americans many opportunities to see firsthand the extraordinary richness of Italy's cultural achievements, whether the inspiring works of past ages or those of cutting edge modern Italian artists, musicians, architects, scientists, writers or filmmakers. Italy sent some astonishing works of art such as Michelangelo's "David Apollo" and the ancient sculptures "The Boxer at Rest" and "The Dying Gaul," which, of course, attracted much attention and large crowds. On a smaller scale but just as important, in city after city from one coast to the other there were exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and discussions for Americans to learn about Italian culture today, that is based on an astonishingly rich heritage, that is dynamic and innovative. We can only expect continued success and extraordinary achievements in the future.

For me and my fellow Americans, "The Year of Italian Culture," even though officially concluded, endures. As former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at the inauguration of this special year, "I thought every year was the year of Italian culture in the United States." Reminders of our Italian-based heritage are all around us. The very building in which Michelangelo’s work was displayed, the National Gallery of Art, is, like so many other landmark buildings in Washington, inspired by the great architect Palladio, a man honored by our Congress in 2008 as the "father of American architecture." When you look above you inside the dome of our Capitol it is the Roman-born Constantino Brumidi’s monumental fresco that you see. The New York Times chose the architect Renzo Piano to design its landmark building on Eighth Avenue, one of many examples of Italian architects’ works in the United States. Likewise, we are privileged to admire the work of the thousands of anonymous Italian artisans who did splendid work in stone and wood and paint and glass in buildings all across America.

The Embassy of Italy in Washington, the "palace on the Potomac," designed by architect Piero Sartogo, is itself a work of art that graces our capital city. It befits a great nation such as Italy. Italians have every right to be proud that their culture is represented in the United States by such an impressive structure and the fine collection of art that it houses. My warmest congratulations.

John R. Phillips
Ambassador of the United States of America
of Italy and the Republic of San Marino
Rome, Quirinale Palace, Salone dei Corazzieri. Presidential Guard stands at attention in full dress uniform when foreign Ambassadors present their credentials to the Head of State. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
Rome, Quirinale Palace, October 2, 2013. The Ambassador of the United States of America, John Phillips, presents his credentials to the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano.
Rome, Quirinale Palace. La sala delle Dame. Photo by G. Ricci courtesy of the Secretariat General of the Presidency of the Republic.
Rome, Quirinale Palace. Presidential Guard stands at attention in full dress uniform when foreign Ambassadors present their credentials to the Head of State. Photo courtesy of the Press and Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic.
Rome, Villa Taverna. Photo by Mario Guerra courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Rome.
Rome, March 6, 2014. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi at Villa Taverna (Residence of the Ambassador of the United States of America to Italy). Photos courtesy of ANSA.
Rome, March 6, 2014. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry with Minister of Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini at Villa Taverna (Residence of the Ambassador of the United States of America to Italy). Photos courtesy of ANSA.