

[Start](#)**Berlin Film Festival - American Reception**

Ambassador Coats  
Berlin, Sony Center  
February 11, 2003

Guten Abend.

Welcome to the American reception at the 53rd Berlin Film Festival.

I would like to offer a special welcome to the American Talent Campus participants. Please raise your hands. Welcome to Berlin.

Last May, President Bush visited Berlin, and like all visitors to this city -- and I am sure you will also have experienced this same feeling -- he could not help but be touched by the significance of the events that have unfolded here. With this spectacular view of the Reichstag, I am reminded of his words in his speech to the German Parliament, "The history of Berlin is a history of our times."

The U.S. Embassy is proud to be a small part of the Berlin Film Festival -- an important and exciting Berlin tradition.

American films play a larger role, of course, in the festival.

Marsha and I attended Chicago at the premiere last week. Unfortunately, because of other travel commitments, we have not been able to see as many of the films on the program as we would have liked.

American films are the element of American culture that is probably most widespread around the globe. The idiom of film is one that transcends cultural borders. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. And a film, composed of thousands of images, conveys much more than words.

But American culture in the very broadest sense is not just our film and our music and our literature, but really everything about America. It is the whole package -- good and bad. The arts and humanities help teach us to celebrate the cultural diversity unique to America, to answer the questions we might have about who we are as individuals, about who we are as a society?

In these difficult days, the most important part of my job as a diplomat is dialogue and discussion.

But there are also cultural aspects of diplomacy that are important -- understanding the culture of where you are and doing your best to look not only at the differences, but to seek the similarities and find a common ground and move on from there. The challenge of telling America's story abroad is important. Our artists should be and can be and are our greatest spokespeople. But it is also just as important that Americans look beyond their borders to comprehend and appreciate the rich tapestry of knowledge, invention, artistry and spiritual strength to be found in cultures around the equator and from pole to pole.

And that is why I am so pleased that we were able to help bring over young American film-