



**Marine Ball  
November 15, 2003**

**Ambassador Coats**

It is an honor to be with you here at the Marine Ball, the traditional birthday party for the U.S. Marine Corps. It is a particular pleasure for me to be part of this birthday celebration this evening because it is an opportunity for Marsha and I to personally thank the Marines here at post. But I also speak on behalf of the whole Mission and also on behalf of Secretary Powell.

I would like to read to you this message from the Secretary:

"On November 10, 1775, a Corps of Marines was created by a resolution of the Continental Congress. This year we are commemorating the 228<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that historic event. Since those early days of our great nation, the Department of State and the U.S. Marine Corps have had a unique bond. Marine security forces have escorted diplomatic personnel and treaties or rescued and defended American embassies and consulates around the world.

Today, Marine security forces are on duty at 133 diplomatic missions around the world. Each of you play a vital role in keeping the United States engaged across the globe. You not only protect our people, you also protect our facilities and keep our secrets secure. As our nation and coalition partners pursue the terrorist menace while assisting host nations to achieve a brighter future for their citizens, we are truly grateful to you, the men and women of the Marine Security Guard Program and the India Company , 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade. You serve on the front lines of freedom selflessly and steadfastly protecting our diplomatic missions with skill, bravery and resolve that reflect highly on each of you and the Corps.

I wish to express on behalf President Bush, the American people, and the men and women of the State Department our profound gratitude for your faithful commitment to our country.

Happy Birthday Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

Colin Powell"

This is indeed a very special birthday party, celebrating a 228-year legacy unlike any other -- a legacy of service, of excellence, of heroism and of honor. There is something special about a Marine. President Reagan once said: "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference. The Marines don't have this problem."

You are indeed our "ambassadors in blue." We are very proud and very thankful for all

that you do.