

**Independence Day 2002
Official Remarks**

**Berlin
July 4, 2002
6:05 – 6:15**

Ambassador Coats

Minister Fischer,
Minister Scharping,
Minister Schmidt,
Representatives of the German Government,
Colleagues from the diplomatic corps,
Friends from the cultural and business communities,
And special guest, Representative Jo Ann Davis

Liebe Gäste,

heute feiern wir den Geburtstag Amerikas.

Welcome to our Independence Day celebration -- here at the Official Residence, a residence maintained by American taxpayers as the symbolic home of the American family in Germany. I want to thank our many sponsors, whose names are listed on posters around the grounds, for their support in helping us to mark this important day on our calendar and make this celebration so special.

Born on July 4, two hundred and twenty-six years ago, the birth of the United States can be fixed in a moment -- the moment when the first Founding Father signed the Declaration of Independence. The United States of America was the first nation to be founded on a dream and an ideal. That is what we celebrate every year on the 4th of July. No other nation has forged its core identity so directly and explicitly on the basis of universal human values. And the most eloquent expression of those values is in the Declaration of Independence.

Just as today, the founding pioneers with all their cultural diversities discovered that more united them, than divided them. And the overwhelming force that united America was liberty.

For the founding fathers, America was a place where the Old World order could be remade, but not entirely forgotten. America's greatest power -- more than our vast resources, more than the overwhelming beauty of our country, more than our great ethnic and cultural melting pot -- is freedom. People from everywhere in the world come to our country with what a statue in New York's harbor calls a yearning to breathe free. And so, as we gather to celebrate America's birthday, we also celebrate that new birth of freedom. A nation where the right of the people to govern themselves is realized, where religion is a matter of personal conscience, where dreams are large. But as we learned last September, there are those whose dreams are small, whose world is defined by bigotry and persecution, resentment and oppression, hatred and death.

Yes, September 11 changed the world in ways we can't yet understand, but some things remain constant

even in the context of radical change-- and freedom is one of those constants. Indeed, the freedom we celebrate today goes beyond a guarantee on a piece of time-yellowed paper or a vision of individual freedom that allows Americans to take risks to get ahead in life. As President Bush said in his speech to the Bundestag, to create a safer world, we have to create a better world. That means placing renewed importance on the values and ideals we celebrate -- today -- as defined in our Declaration of Independence -- that all men are created equal, and endowed by their creator, with the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The community of caring and compassion that stretched across America and around the world on September 11 was also built on those values and ideals. The outpouring of support -- and that of people of all walks of life across Germany -- was an expression of friendship and spontaneous emotion that Marsha and I will never forget.

I want to use this opportunity to commend my colleagues at the Embassy here in Berlin and the Consulates around Germany -- fellow Americans, Germans, and people of many nationalities -- for their unwavering support and enormous initiative in shouldering the many new challenges that have arisen in the last 10 months. I know President Bush shares these sentiments, and so in closing, I would like to quote to you from his Independence Day statement to the American people:

"As we honor our Founders' bold vision on this first observance of Independence Day since September 11, Americans possess a greater national unity and a deeper appreciation of the things that matter most in our lives -- our faith, our love for family and friends, and our freedom. In this new era, Americans share a renewed appreciation for the ideals that make our country strong."

Heute an diesen 4. Juli feiern wir die Freiheit.

And now, our Marine Colour Guard will post the Flag of the United States of America.