



**4th of July Reception  
Berlin Wannsee, American Academy  
June 30, 2004**

**Ambassador Coats**

Good evening, and welcome to our American and German guests.

Guten Abend und herzlich Willkommen.

This evening we celebrate America's 228th Birthday. Our nation was founded on the fundamental human right to freedom – freedom to live, to speak, to assemble, to worship – to enjoy the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We gather to honor the courage of our founding fathers and are grateful for the commitment and sacrifices of the men and women of our Armed Forces.

We are dedicated to preserving freedom not only for ourselves, but extending it to others. Here in Berlin, Americans and Germans stood together through all the difficult days of the Cold War. Many said the Wall would never come down – that 18 million Germans living in darkness and despair would never be able to enjoy the sunlight of freedom.

But together through our resolve, persistence and yes, sacrifice, today there no East and West Germany – but 1 Germany – 82 million Germans living together at peace and in freedom.

So let us celebrate this freedom together – here in Berlin. But let us also be mindful of our responsibility to do what we can to bring freedom to those still oppressed.

And may God, the author of freedom, in his grace, bless the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany.