

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester
September 11 Memorial Concert
Forward for Printed Program
(Remarks may be based on this text)

Ambassador Coats

Today, we mark the first anniversary of the destruction of the World Trade Center, the attack on the Pentagon, and the crash of United Airlines Flight 93. We pause to reflect on the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and to remember.

We remember the shock and horror of the first hours, the dreadful, apocalyptic pictures that remain vivid even today. We remember images of an airplane speeding towards a skyscraper, the crumbling towers, images of fire and ashes and bent steel.

We remember sorrow and tragedy. We remember the heights of heroism shown that day. We remember the well of compassion that rose throughout America, across the Atlantic, and around the world. We remember the gratitude we felt to those who stepped forward that day, and in the days that followed, and helped in so many different ways, creating a "kinship of grief."

September 11 is now a part of our past. Visitors to New York City might have the impression that life is back to normal because on the surface, it appears that way. Shoppers jam the sidewalks, taxis clog the streets, the subways rattle underground. But as a New Yorker recently said, "Even for the average person who doesn't live down near Ground Zero and wasn't directly affected, things have changed. Life is different; not what it was. You look over your shoulder and wonder what's around the corner."

The physical scars are with each passing day less noticeable but our wounds as a people are not yet healed. Like the sculpture by the German artist Fritz Koenig that once stood in the fountain of the World Trade Center - a sphere in bronze dedicated as a monument in 1971 to world peace. The bronze globe now stands in Battery Park, at the southern tip of Manhattan, a temporary memorial for the people who lost their lives on September 11. It was retrieved from the wreckage of the World Trade Center - gashed and partially crushed but far from destroyed. The principles it represents are more important than ever before.

September 11th alerted us to our vulnerabilities, but also reinforced our values and beliefs -- and the depth of our partnership. As President Bush said in Berlin in May "these values define our nations and our partnership in a unique way. And these beliefs lead us to fight tyranny and evil, as others have done before us."

President Bush was referring to the history of Europe, to the reconciliation and renewal that have transformed this continent. But he was also speaking about people like Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who left the security of America to stand against Nazi rule. In a dark hour, he gave witness to the Gospel of life, and paid the cost of his discipleship, being put to death only days before his camp was liberated. "I believe," said Bonhoeffer, "that God can and wants to create good out of everything, even evil." And this is what the President meant when, in the early days after September 11, he said " Out of this evil will come good. Through our tears we see opportunities to make the world better for generations to come. And we will seize them."

We find that same kind of hope in the face of adversity in an old Quaker hymn:

"My life flows on in endless song above earth's lamentation
I hear the real, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife I hear that music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?"