



**Marine Corps Ball
Berlin, November 6, 2004**

Ambassador Coats

Good evening. It's a great privilege to take part in this wonderful celebration. As Marsha and I conclude our time in Germany, the Marine Corps Ball will be one of the traditions that we will look back upon with great pleasure and pride.

And so we have been looking forward to this event. Although to be honest -- I look forward to anything that includes birthday cake. And your birthday cake is always very special cake.

One of the other events of the season that we have been looking forward to is the Embassy tag football match with Berlin Thunder's management team. That takes place next week. Last year, the Embassy team beat Berlin Thunder easily (thanks to the Marine Detachment). I wonder if that's why Berlin Thunder hired a Marine themselves. Welcome, Coach _____!

Tonight we celebrate the 229th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps. All over the globe, the Marines have fought for freedom and democracy and against tyranny and injustice. And even in the most peaceful of times, the Marine Security Guard of every era has performed missions that have the potential for risk. We honor that history tonight. Your ideals are America's ideals. Facing threats in every major war or conflict in which the United States has been involved -- from the War of Independence to Operation Iraqi Freedom -- those who come to know the Marine Corps are humbled by the dedication of the men and women who comprise its ranks. We know that the world today is very dangerous and that the demands of tomorrow will be enormous. In the coming months and years, the Marines and all our military forces will play a pivotal role in events that are poised to shape this century.

The Marines, as a corps of individuals, work as a collective team to protect our people, our principles, and when needed, to defend our way of life. I would like to commend each individual Marine here for your contribution.

Since the early days of our nation, the Department of State and the U.S. Marine Corps have had a unique bond. Marine security forces have served as special couriers, escorted diplomatic personnel and treaties, and rescued and defended American embassies and consulates around the world. Today, Marines watch over 133 U.S. diplomatic missions around the world.

You stand watch day and night to protect our Embassy and our community. I know the Embassy staff and their spouses and partners and families here tonight join me in thanking you for your dedication. The sight of the Marine on duty is always a reassuring and a comforting sight. I would like to thank you personally for your dedication to duty.

Day after day, the Marines here at Embassy Berlin live up to the trust that we place on their shoulders, guaranteeing the security we all need to do our jobs. We join Secretary Powell in wishing the Marine Corps all the best. I would like to read from the Secretary's birthday message:

"On behalf of the Department of State, I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes on this two hundred and twenty-ninth anniversary of the United States

Marine Corps. Since the Corps' inception on November 10, 1775, Marines have served our great nation valiantly in the support of freedom. Whether as a member of a Marine combat unit, as a Marine Security Guard, as a member of a specialized security force of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism), as a Marine attache, or in some other capacity, your professionalism, courage and dedication has consistently been exemplary..."

And the Secretary concludes:

"I salute your selfless devotion to duty, honor and country as we work to bring freedom, prosperity and stability to our 21st century world."
Happy Birthday Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

Colin L. Powell"