

23/10/03

ALLOW ME FIRST TO WELCOME YOU ON MY BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BOUCHES DU RHONE.

YOUR VISIT HONORS US AND WE WANT TO TELL YOU ALL OUR RESPECT AND ALL OUR PRIDE IN HAVING YOU HERE, AFTER THE TRAGIC EVENTS WHICH HAVE, 2 YEARS AGO, PLUNGED INTO MOURNING ALL YOURS FAMILIES AS WELL AS SO MANY AMERICAN FAMILIES.

AS THIS HORRIFYING ATTEMPT OCCURRED, YOUR NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT ACTED WITH VERY HIGH COURAGE AND UNLIMITED SELF-ABNEGATION. YOU DEEPLY MOVED ALL THOSE IN THE WORLD FOR WHOM LIFE HAS NO PRICE SO MUCH IT IS PRECIOUS AND WHO STAND ON THE SIDE OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY . YOU BECAME THIS WAY THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVES AND DEFENDERS OF THESE VALUES .

EVERYONE WILL KEEP IN MIND THE IMAGES OF THE INFERNAL TOWERS , WHERE YOU CARRYED ON YOUR DANGEROUS MISSION WITHOUT ANY PANIC, CONSCIOUS OF DOING YOUR DUTY.

MANY OF YOU, ENCIRCLED BY FLAMES, SMOKES AND SHOUTS, SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES IN ORDER TO SAVE OTHERS. MANY WERE AWARE THAT FOR THEM THIS MISSION WAS THE LAST ONE. THEY KNEW THAT THEY COULD NOT COME BACK ALIVE.

IN MEMORY OF YOUR 343 COLLEAGUES DISAPPEARED ON SEPTEMBER 11TH 2003, IN MEMORY OF ALL THE INNOCENTS WHO FALL VICTIMS OF FANATICISM, I WOULD LIKE TO RESPECT WITH YOU ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE.

—THANK YOU.

RHONE IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF OPERATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND MATERIALS.

THE TRAINING OF FIREMEN IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT SO AS TO KEEP MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS.

DOCTOR STEPHAN HITTMANN, I THINK YOU WILL AGREE, AS A SPECIALIST OF THIS MATTER IN YOUR COUNTRY, THAT A CONTINUAL QUESTIONING CANNOT BE IGNORED IN THIS ESSENTIAL DOMAIN.

THE BOUCHES DU RHONE WILL BE SOON AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE TRAINING OF FIREMEN WITH THE SETUP OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY FOR FIRE OFFICERS .

THE CONSEIL GENERAL SHOULD INVEST THERE IN A « TECHNICAL SET » WITH THE AIM THAT THE DEPARTEMENTAL SCHOOL FOR THE FIREMEN SHOULD PROFIT FROM IT.

DEAR FRIENDS FROM NEW YORK, YOU WILL SHARE WITH THE FIREMEN OF THE SDIS SEVERAL OPERATIONS, WHICH, I AM SURE, WILL BE BENEFICIAL FOR EVERYONE.

I AM SURE ALSO THAT THE COLONEL JORDA AND ALL HIS « FELLOWS » WISH TO CARRY ON THIS COLLABORATION WITH YOU, IN NEW YORK AND IN THE BOUCHES DU RHONE.

I SHARE THIS POINT OF VIEW AS THE EXECUTIVE OF THE CONSEIL GENERAL, WHO WANTS TO PRESERVE THE LIVES AND THE PROPERTIES OF THE CITIZENS AS WELL AS THE COMMON HERITAGE.

I HOPE YOUR STAY WILL BE AS PLEASANT AS POSSIBLE IN OUR BEAUTIFUL DEPARTEMENTSEE YOU SOON.

THANK YOU

WITH YOUR ACTS OF COURAGE, EVERYONE HAS MEASURED MORE THAN EVER THE RISKS INCURRED BY THE FIREMEN IN THE EXERCISE OF THEIR MISSION .

I KNOW, DEAR FRIENDS FROM NEW YORK, THAT SOLIDARITY AND FRATERNITY ARE ALWAYS PRESENT AMONG FIREMEN WHEREVER YOU GO. IT IS ALSO A REALITY DURING YOUR FIGHTS AGAINST FIRES AND NATURAL, TECHNOLOGICAL OR CHEMICAL DISASTERS .

FIRE BRIGADES OF THE BOUCHES-DU-RHONE INTERVENED SEVERAL TIMES IN OTHERS FRENCH « DEPARTEMENTS » TO ASSIST THE POPULATION .

WITHIN THE LAST YEARS, THEY OPERATED ABROAD IN ARMENIA AND ALGERIA AFTER THE EARTHQUAKES . THIS YEAR, IN SUMMER, WHEN THE PROVENCE SO MUCH SUFFERED FROM ARIDITY AND FOREST FIRES, FRATERNITY HAS COME FROM EVERYWHERE.

THE FIREMEN WANT NOW TO INCREASE THIS UNLIMITED COLLABORATION THROUGH THE SHARING OF THEIR KNOW HOW, THEIR TRAINING IN THE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES AND THE RESEARCH OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE FIGHT AND PREVENTION MEANS.

THE SDIS WISH TO BE INVOLVED IN SUCH A PROCESS AND HOPE TO ESTABLISH WITH YOU DURING THIS WEEK A TWINNING, WHICH WILL BE A DURABLE COLLABORATION IN TECHNICAL, OPERATIONAL MEANS AND TRAINING.

DURING THIS WEEK, YOU WILL VISIT, OR YOU HAVE VISITED, THE FIRE STATIONS OF SALON AND OF « LA BASSE VALLEE DE L'ARC », THE ALERT CENTRE (CTA) AND THE FIRE AND SAFETY OPERATIONS CENTRE (CODIS). YOU WILL NOTICE THAT OUR COUNTY BOUCHES-DU-