

ONE YEAR LATER

By Ambassador Daniel R. Coats

Today is, above all, a day of remembrance and prayer. Throughout the world, people will gather to mourn the thousands of innocent victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks, and to pay tribute to the heroes who perished trying to save them.

The immediate response to those attacks was an unprecedented wave of solidarity with America -- a recognition that, though the attacks may have occurred in the United States, they were aimed at us all. The outpouring of support from German citizens in all walks of life was nothing short of overwhelming -- something for which America will be forever grateful.

The expressions of solidarity were backed up by effective action. Working swiftly and with great composure, President Bush assembled a broad coalition as the foundation of a sustained anti-terrorism campaign. U.S.-European leadership has played an important role in the global effort to uncover and disband terrorist cells, to coordinate the arrest or detention of hundreds of terrorists around the world, and to freeze millions of dollars in global assets linked to terrorist cells.

In the first days after the attacks, however, President Bush cautioned that this struggle would not be easy or painless, and would demand from all of us patience and perseverance. While the United States and Europe have found much common ground in this past year, differences have arisen, especially lately, that will require continued attention.

On the one hand, some (by no means all) Americans perceive Europeans as unwilling to acknowledge the positive role that military power still plays in international relations; and on the other, some (also by no means all) Europeans believe the United States increasingly prefers to act unilaterally rather than with its allies and the international community.

To claim that Germany sees no role for military power is not justified. German military forces are an important part of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Stability Force in Afghanistan, as well as in the Balkans. All of the decisions to deploy these troops have been as politically painful as they have been historically significant.

Americans recognize, also, that international problems cannot be solved solely by military means. We applaud Germany's key role at the Bonn UN conference to create an interim administration for Afghanistan. And without the remarkable cooperation between American and German law enforcement agencies, we could never have identified the perpetrators and masterminds of the September 11 attacks as quickly as we did.

I have just finished reading Antony Beevor's The Fall of Berlin 1945, with its gruesome depictions of the horrors of the final weeks of the war in Germany. I understand the profound anxiety Germans feel about the use of force. And I agree completely with the view that military force should be the *ultima ratio* of political action. But *ultima* does not mean "never"; and it is a sad but indisputable fact that the use of force, or the credible threat to use it, is sometimes necessary in order to prevent even greater violence and inhumanity from being perpetrated. Germany's own history has shown all too well that at times only force can stop a barbarous dictator from endangering the peace and security of the world.

Today, we face a new threat – terrorist organizations and regimes that either have or are seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Is diplomacy alone, unsupported by a credible threat to use force if necessary, adequate to prevent the world from experiencing a catastrophe? America's challenge, and Europe's, is to find a common answer to this question.

Both unilateralism and multilateralism are means, not ends, a fact that both Americans and Europeans must recognize. The question we should ask ourselves, then, is what end is being pursued, and which of these means is better suited to achieve it. From my vantage point in the U.S. embassy, I see every day the countless ways in which, unnoticed by the public, my country pursues its goals in cooperation with our allies and international organizations. Yet there are times when unilateral action is the only option available to achieve a particular goal. In such cases, we must be sure that our policy is justified, and that we have explained it as thoroughly as possible to our friends and allies.

While we do have differing opinions on some important issues, in his speech to the Bundestag, President Bush put these differences in their proper perspective. "The magnitude of our shared responsibilities" -- said the president -- "makes our disagreements look so small." Europeans and Americans must remember that our disagreements have to do with means, not ends. From defeating the scourge of international terrorism, to furthering the growth of democracy, prosperity and justice around the globe, to defending human rights, to, yes, bringing war criminals to justice and protecting the environment, Europe and America share the same goals, even if we do not always agree on the best way to achieve them. And we must also remember that, in the end, neither of us -- neither Europe nor America -- can achieve these goals alone.