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## MAINE VOICES

### FULL SUPPORT IN CONGRESS

# U.S. attacked for what we value

● Bipartisan action shows unity and purpose in collective power.

By TOM ALLEN

It has been said that on Sept. 11 America lost its innocence and its sense of security. But the unspeakable horrors that came to our shores also reinforced our resolve to overcome these threats, and solidified our commitment to each other and to the fundamental values that define our country.

In his speech to the Congress and the nation last week, President Bush eloquently gave voice to this commitment. He also cautioned that our struggle will be long, and that our response must not only be powerful and sustained but comprehensive.

The immediate priority will be to degrade, if not destroy, the capacity of terrorists to strike again. This will entail military strikes, covert action, invigorated investigations here and abroad, and intense diplomatic and economic pressure on nations that have provided support and sanctuaries for our enemies.

As the president said, we must put the world on notice that we will treat those who harbor terrorists just as we do the terrorists themselves.

In these efforts, the president and his defense and foreign policy advisors have the full support of Congress and the American people. Improvements in intelligence, counter-terrorism, airport security and border security have already begun. America's economic strength is dependent on commercial airlines, essential transporters of business and tourist travelers, mail, lobsters and other cargo.

This rapid and coordinated response is a reminder that in times

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of crisis, we rely on our collective power, our government. As Abraham Lincoln noted nearly 150 years ago, "The legitimate object of government is to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves."

This crisis has also demonstrated the individual power of the American people. Just as Maine saw generous strangers come to our aid during the devastating ice storms of January 1998, Mainers have donated blood, raised relief money, driven to the scenes of devastation to offer their labors, volunteered for military duty and reached out in so many ways to people they will never know.

*America's economic power and cultural diversity will make us a target for years to come.*

To win this war we also must understand the reasons the United States has been targeted. It is our identity itself, the very things we take most pride in - our material abundance, our respect for individuals, our tolerance for diversity, our forward-looking spirit, even our belief in democracy - that have made us the focus of the intense loathing that fueled these attacks.

To the bin Ladens and other terrorists of the world, the United States is "the Great Satan," a mortal threat to their traditional societies. The Internet, television, movies and other modern means of spreading information have hastened global exposure to our way of life.

For young people, in particular, America's economic success, as well as our political and cultural freedom, are enticing, often more appealing than the traditional cultures in which they were born. But the contrast also breeds resentment and anger.

America cannot escape this reason for being targeted. Indeed, we must take care that in response to these attacks we do not sacrifice what makes us a free, open and tolerant society. We must be prepared to assume a greater degree of inconvenience and caution in our lives. But increased security must not include abandoning the rule of law or turning a blind eye to ugly acts of racism against fellow Americans.

Nor can we retreat from the world, avoiding engagement in crises that focus hostility toward our country. Abandoning our commitment to Israel, ignoring the genocide in Kosovo or otherwise isolating ourselves would offer no protection.

A realignment of America's international attitude - more humility and multinational cooperation - may be in order and could marginally reduce anti-American sentiment abroad. But America's economic power and cultural diversity will make us a target for years to come.

Americans' acts of courage, sacrifice and concern are vivid reminders that our nation has the unity and strength to prevail. More important than our incomparable military power, it is this resolve that will sustain us in the struggle that lies before us.

— Special to the Press Herald