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"America Fights Back: Be Careful in Selecting New Allies"

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The September 11 attack on the United States was a frontal assault on optimism, opportunity and the concept of tomorrow. It was undertaken by those frustrated by fatigue, imbued with righteous indignation and driven by fatalism. Twenty-six days later, the U.S.-led coalition began punishing those who perpetrated and supported mass murder.

Our objective is to have law and freedom succeed over jungle politics.

In his remarks to the joint session of Congress, President Bush said, "We will direct every resource at our command to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network...We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism."

The President was clear: There will be zero-tolerance for terrorism. Only time will tell if the Bush speech was the foundation for the Bush Doctrine.

By comparison, in a March 1947 speech to another joint congressional session, President Harry S. Truman said, "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." That speech was a response to the European communism threat against Turkey and Greece; the policy that followed signaled America's post-war embrace of global leadership; it ended our long-standing policy of isolationism. Turning Truman's ideals into deeds was accomplished neither quickly nor easily. But by sticking to the Truman Doctrine, we won the Cold War 40 years later.

In 1947, the American people were reluctant to take on European communism alone; they insisted that NATO and the United Nations play a significant role. While there are no calls in Congress today to let the United Nations lead, NATO is still a formidable piece of our coalition. Significantly, unlike 1947, we sought associates from bordering countries. And herein is our potential Achilles heel.

For joining our coalition, some countries will want American military assistance, others foreign aid or better trade relations. That is fine. But that is where the give and take ends.

In building our desired coalition, we can't be lax in defining terrorism or indulgent of a particular country for supporting it. We cannot countenance turning a blind eye to a country that does not prosecute or rein in its terrorists, just because that country joined our coalition. We cannot promise not to attack a particular country today, if we find out tomorrow that the country's leaders were soiled by association with terrorists.

The Truman Doctrine persevered; the Bush Doctrine enjoys the same potential. But alliances should not force us to change our definition of terrorism or our objectives; we should stick with the ideals that enabled America to be a beacon for freedom. To modify either means not remembering those who were slaughtered by terrorists.

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