

Watching from afar

Students studying abroad cope with America's domestic crisis



Courtesy of accuweather.ap.org

By Lisa Hoppenjans
Perspectives Editor

As Americans learned of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York City, a wave of patriotism and unity swept the nation, lending reassurance to many as they struggled to come to terms with a world that no longer seemed so secure. Americans turned to each other and found comfort within their community and nation.

Across the globe, however, there were Americans who learned of the events within the less familiar atmosphere of a foreign country. Students abroad confronted not only the shock of the attacks, but isolation from America as well. Junior Caitlin Brez, a student at Worrell House in London, heard of the attacks from a cloakroom attendant while visiting the Queen's House in Greenwich, England. "(He) said a plane flew into the World Trade Center," she said. "He also thought there was an attack on the Pentagon and the White House; it was really unclear. I didn't think much of it at that point, it just sounded so bizarre."

The shock of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks was felt worldwide as people across the globe poured out their tears and prayers for those killed. At least 50 countries have citizens who have been confirmed dead or are missing.

The United Kingdom has stood out as a strong supporter of the United States since the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Immediately following the attacks, British Prime Minister

Tony Blair voiced support for the United States in its time of crisis and condemned the terrorists.

"Their utter barbarism will stand as their shame for all eternity," he said.

Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles and Blair also joined 10,000 mourners at a Sept. 14 memorial service in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Those studying in London said that they have witnessed an outpouring of British support in their everyday activities as well.

"I have been absolutely astounded about how sympathetic the entire British population has been to not only the people who lost their lives and to all Americans, but particularly those of us that are here. I almost feel it's like being in America," senior Mark Jones, a student at Worrell House, said.

Jones also referred to the surprising number of British people who have personally expressed their sympathy to him.

"It happens at the gym or on the tube; every time I open my mouth (that's how they know I'm an American), there are always people there saying they're sorry," he said. "People go out of their way so that we know they're supporting us."

Junior Ross Mangin, studying in Australia, learned of the attacks over the television when the station he was watching transferred to CNN coverage.

"I found out within the hour that it happened. I saw both the buildings go down live," he said.

Australia is still missing 69 people from the attacks and Australian Prime Minister John Howard was staying just several hundred yards from the White House, now identified as a possible target for the Sept. 11 attacks, when the planes hit the World Trade Center.

In an interview with *60 Minutes* he described an "incredible sense of unease and insecurity and almost a guilt feeling that other people have died" following his close call.

Students at Casa Artom in Venice, Italy got word of the attacks at 3:15 p.m. (9:15 a.m. EST) when junior Christie Witzig received an instant message from a friend. Students gathered around the television, struggling to understand the Italian coverage, and used IM to get updates from those in America.

Witzig said that the Italian police visited the house on the afternoon of the attacks.

"They knew that there were Americans here, so they came to check on us," she said. "They asked for names of the students and they stationed guards, with guns, outside each of the doors to the house, as well as a police boat patrolling the front

of the house for the night."

According to Witzig, the city hall of Venice, just across the Grand Canal from Casa Artom, flew their flags at half-staff for several days and a nearby church held a requiem mass for the victims.

"I think the country was just as shocked as Americans were by the attack," she said. "The incredulous expressions on the news reporters faces and the extensive coverage in Italian newspapers ... demonstrates the impact the attack had on Italy."

Being geographically removed from the tragedy has made it harder for some students to cope, but others said that the removal provides them with a sense of normalcy not present in the United States right now.

"I think it is a little easier because I don't feel directly involved or threatened over here," Mangin said.

Witzig commented on the difficulty of being away from friends and family "when just a hug or the touch of a hand or the sound of their voice would have been so reassuring, to know that they were still all right."

Witzig also said that it may be easier to deal with the repercussions of the Sept. 11 events from abroad because daily life in Italy has not been interrupted to the extent that it has in the United States.

"When I stepped outside of the house that Tuesday evening, once I got past the guards, Venice was exactly the same as it had been earlier that day," she said. "For me, finding some



Courtesy of accuweather.ap.org

Queen Elizabeth II, American ambassador William Farish, and Prince Philip greet the crowd at a Sept. 14 memorial service in St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

normal things in the midst of chaos is helpful in coping with the tragedy."

Senior Katie Rutherford is one of 15 Americans in a program of over 400 international students in Geneva, Switzerland. "I have friends here from Libya, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and I think we're all a little uneasy about the prospect of war," she said. "I can't really say how I think that will affect people in terms of getting along. Most of these people grew up in American or international schools, so they're more open-minded, but still ..."

All 240 students abroad this semester have been contacted

via e-mail by the international studies office. Lee Hatchett, study abroad advisor, cautioned students to keep a low profile and avoid congregating in very public areas in a Sept. 11 e-mail. She also urged them to avoid travel right now and to register with the American embassy in their country.

Hatchett said that none of the study abroad programs have been evacuated and that the international studies office will be following the State Department warnings in advising students. "So far the correspondence I've had with students has been overwhelmingly positive," she said.



Courtesy of Meredith Carroll

Mourners for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks placed flowers outside of the American Embassy in London.

Inside St. Paul's

Editor's note: Susannah Rosenblatt, an Old Gold and Black staff member, offered this account of London's reaction to the attacks.

By Susannah Rosenblatt
Senior Reporter

Days before, I had wandered the cool marble aisles of St. Paul's Cathedral in London as a tourist, jotting down notes as I peered up at its domed heights. Friday, Sept. 14, I reentered not as a sightseer, but as a mourner.

Last Friday at noon was London's gesture of sympathy to the American people: a deeply moving memorial service attended by thousands of Americans and Britons alike.

After milling about for hours in the cold morning air, friends and myself finally secured seats four rows behind Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by Prince Charles and the United States' ambassador to the United Kingdom, William Farish.

The subdued crowd reflected the diversity of America itself as stranded, middle-aged tourists mixed with college students and business people. Everyone seemed anxious but friendly, a bewildered community of expatriates banding together in shared sorrow.

A rainbow of international diplomats and politicians gazed

gravely on as religious leaders processed in, and then St. Paul's great bells chimed noon. The white-robed boys' choir and organ broke the silence with the familiar strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner." The tune echoed magnificently throughout that cavernous space. As Americans far from home joined together in song, the Queen lifted her voice graciously with ours; tears rolled unexpectedly down my face.

The Archbishop of Canterbury offered eloquent words of solace. Silent moments provided opportunity for the grim mental replaying of those horrific images: towers burning, bodies plummeting to the ground, glass and smoke, flames and chaos. He reminded us of hope, of peace, words that sounded distant but inviting.

The choir's thin, clear voices led us in a few appropriate hymns; but it was the Battle Hymn of the Republic that steeled us. Resolve mounting with each lyric, the crowd seem to straighten up, holding their heads higher with each resounding "Glory, glory hallelujah!"

We felt profound sadness, grief and loss bordering on despair. Underneath, we shared the President's "quiet, unyielding anger."

England's people stood proudly beside us; suddenly home didn't seem so far away.



Photos courtesy of accuweather.ap.org

The world joined the United States in honoring the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. TOP LEFT: Flags fly at half-staff outside the European Union in Brussels. ABOVE: Italians urge an end to terrorism at a rally held in Rome. RIGHT: Flowers and cards surround a fire helmet left outside the American embassy in Sydney.

