





Search 💽 Recent I	News OArchives OWeb for	Go	Welcome Lisa My Classifieds My Account Sign Out
Jobs	Back to Home >		Tuesday, Jul 12, 2005
O Cars		News 💴	
Real Estate			
Apartments			email this 💻 print this
 Local Shopping Find Sales & Deals Shop Local Stores 	Posted on Tue, Jul. 12, 2005 Restore America's hono	r	
All Classifieds	abroad, at home	FEELING L	LEFT OUT?
Personals	abroad, at nome	SEE THE	COMMERCIALS
REGIONAL NEWS	War in Iraq has taken away the respect had in the world	t we once EVERYON TALKING	E IS
Local News	BOB PERKOWITZ Special to the Observer		АВООТ.
Cabarrus	•	199	
Catawba	On Sept. 11, 2002, I was riding my bicycl		
Gaston	Australia. I wore a red, white and blue Le American Cyclists jersey and socks that s		
redell	was proud to be an American.		
Mecklenburg	On the first anniversary of the World Trac	de Center	Click here to view the spots
Union	attack, the emotional worldwide support f		a a va a v hutil d'a v
York	America was still vibrant.		careerbuilder .com ⁻
News • Breaking News • Columnists • Nation • Photos • Politics • Weather • Weird News • World	 The following two years, as I pedaled my way across Europe and South America, I no longer felt as confident being flagrantly American. Though I wore jerseys showing the continents and the flags of the countries I rode through, the usually friendly locals became questioning and in some instances hostile when they learned that I was an American. Here in America, though, insulated from the rest of the world, our values and patriotism are only challenged as a matter of internal politics. Yet over these same years the pride of ordinary Americans in our nation seems to be dwindling. In spite of increased pay and death benefits, our Army no longer attracts enough volunteers. The national debates, like the current divide on replacing Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court, are rancorous 		bugh, the usually friendly locals and that I was an American. And patriotism are only challenged ordinary Americans in our nation ats enough volunteers. The national
Opinion	partisan affairs, with little concern for our		
Business	The dwindling patriotism issue surfaced i	n another way in The Charlott	e Observer last week. The feature
Sports	The dwindling patriotism issue surfaced in another way in The Charlotte Observer last week. The feature story in the July 4 issue was titled "A few fight to restore Fourth's old glory: Apathy threatens celebration that once rallied community." The article stated that "We are not as inclined to publicly celebrate things like		
Entertainment			
Life & Home	community or perhaps country."		
ONLINE EXTRAS	It seems that the Independence Day para national holiday, the only thing that still s		
Today's Paper			
Archives	The thought that Americans are not as proud of our country as we once were is upsetting. I believe, or want to believe, that Americans are as patriotic as ever.		
Weather			

Apparently though, we have a problem. We are losing respect from the rest of the world, and we may be losing our own self-respect.

Forums

Traffic Reports

Ads From Observer		
Local Coupons		
Celebrations		
Yellow Pages		
Maps & Directions		

SITE SERVICES

RSS
Place an Ad
Contact Us
Contact Observer
Feedback
E-Edition
Staff Listing

THE DAY IN PHOTOS



» Today's photos

» Photo Gallery

I think there are two reasons for our diminished pride and confidence. The first is the lack of credibility of our government. The second is that our current national priorities are not in alignment with our patriotic American values.

The biggest example of both of these is the war in Iraq. We invaded Iraq under false pretenses. President Bush himself said there is "no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with Sept. 11," and his own extensive report on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq completely discredits the U.S. government's repeated prewar claims of their existence.

Whether we were deliberately or mistakenly misled into the Iraq war may be an open question. In either case, a majority of Americans now believe that the war is a mistake, that it was not necessary for us to invade Iraq to prevent terrorism in the United States, and that we would be better off if we set a timetable for removing our troops.

According to a Gallup poll last month, only 10 percent of Americans are "very satisfied" with the way things are going in the war on terrorism. President Bush is among that minority. He says he believes the war in Iraq is "vital to the security of our country," and "we're making really good progress in Iraq."

Vice President Dick Cheney is even more optimistic. In May, on the Larry King Show, Cheney claimed that the insurgency in Iraq was "in the last throes" of resistance.

There are some very big inconsistencies here. We all want to believe that America fights wars reluctantly for noble causes with the intent to win. Iraq is not such a war. Bad intelligence is not noble, and Bush refuses to commit the additional U.S. troops our military leaders say are required to stabilize the country.

Yet leaving Iraq presents an even more formidable problem. As Colin Powell warned before the war, "You break it, you own it."

Though it might save many American and Iraqi lives, it would be irresponsible for America to pull out and leave Iraq in potentially greater chaos.

My solution to this would be to build a democratic, multi-national coalition to explicitly aid Iraq in unconditionally establishing their democracy and provide humanitarian and developmental aid.

America is, however, unable to lead such a coalition. As we all know, President Bush has never made a mistake and he is never wrong. It will likely be 2008 or later before we can solve this problem.

In the meantime, I will ride across Asia and Africa over the next couple of years in a very understated manner.

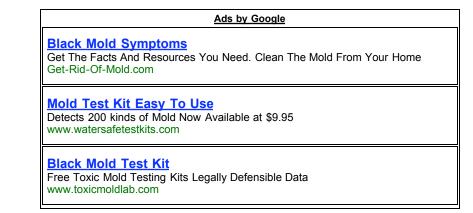
Bob

Perkowitz

Observer community columnist Bob Perkowitz of Charlotte is a businessman and environmentalist. Write him c/o The Observer, P.O. Box 30308, Charlotte, NC 28230-0308, or at rperks282@aol.com.









Click here to visit other Real Cities sites News | Business | Sports | Entertainment | Living | Shop Local | Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Homes About Charlotte.com | About the Real Cities Network | Terms of Use & Privacy Statement | About Knight Ridder | Copyright | RSS Feeds