

news [freetime](#) [travel](#) [homezone](#) [cars](#) [shopping](#) [working](#)

metro/region nation/world politics business sports variety opinion fun talk classifieds Home d

[Subs](#)



Last update: April 28, 2004 at 7:29 PM

## Editorial: War on terror/Iraq is hurting, not helping

April 29, 2004 ED0429

A front-page article in Monday's New York Times told a chilling story: Across Europe, radical Islamic clerics are urging young Muslim men to join in jihad against the West. Reporters Patrick E. Tyler and Don Van Natta Jr. wrote of the clerics: "They swear allegiance to Osama bin Laden and his goal of toppling Western democracies to establish an Islamic superstate under Shariah law, like Afghanistan under the Taliban. They call the Sept. 11 hijackers the "magnificent 19" and regard the Madrid train bombings as a clever way to drive a wedge into Europe." Young men, terrorist wannabes, are signing up in droves. Why? Because the war in Iraq "dramatically strengthened their recruitment efforts," one counterterrorism official told the reporters.

President Bush continues to define the war in Iraq as an essential piece of the struggle against terrorism, a war that is making America and the world safer. Americans continue to believe him. A new poll from the University of Maryland reports that 57 percent of Americans believe that Saddam Hussein gave substantial support to Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaida; 45 percent said "clear evidence" has been found to prove that support. An equal number, 45 percent, said Saddam had weapons of mass destruction shortly before the United States invaded Iraq; 22 percent say he had a "major program for developing them."

Get a grip, folks: There is not one shred of credible evidence that supports any of those views. None. There is much evidence that those views are wrong.

So why do many Americans continue to believe them? Partly because Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney continue to insinuate that they are true. Just Monday, Bush asserted that of course Saddam had WMD; we know that because he used them on his own people.

He did do that, in 1988. But that was before the Gulf War and before a decade of sanctions and years of U.N. weapons inspections. It has now been accepted that in the early 1990s Iraq destroyed what weapons the U.N. inspectors didn't find.

It also has been established, for those willing to see and as critics of the war in Iraq long have argued -- Republicans such as former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft among them -- that the war in Iraq was both a diversion from the war on terror and an action that has made the real war much more difficult to fight. The Times story on Al-Qaida-associated recruitment in Europe illustrates the latter reality. So does the seething cauldron of hatred for the United States that the Muslim world, including Iraq, has become.

Americans seem to believe, however, that most of the world stands

Story to

- [Email this](#)
- [AIM this](#)
- [Print this](#)
- [Make up home page](#)

Search

News

Search

[More options](#)



[Trainer / Coordinating](#)  
Starkey  
Laboratory

[Social Services](#)  
Andrew C

[Roofing](#)  
Fridley R

[Heat Treatment Operator](#)  
Gear Anc

[Project Management](#)  
Crown R  
Inc

[Faculty - Hennepin Community College](#)

[Fiscal Analyst Services](#)  
City Of E

[Finance](#)  
Home Se

[Quality Assurance](#)  
Novartis  
Corp

[Drivers - Building Services](#)

[Databases Integration](#)  
Nazca Sc

[Auditing](#)  
Metropoli

[Cabinet](#)

Welcome,  
**mtaylor123**

[Member Center](#)

[Log out](#)

[index](#)

[cartoons](#)

[commentary](#)

[editorials](#)

[letters](#)

[netlets](#)

[lou gelfand](#)

[lori sturdevant](#)

[arguments](#)

[through the](#)

[ages](#)

[projects](#)

[china: a brighter](#)

[moon](#)

[compete or](#)

[retreat](#)

[imagining africa](#)

[tending the](#)

[cities](#)

[learning to die](#)

[news projects](#)

[contact](#)

[how to submit a](#)

[letter or](#)

[commentary](#)

[feedback](#)

[archive](#)

[stories](#)

[corrections](#)

[reprints](#)

[projects](#)

[feedback](#)

[news](#)

[advertising](#)

[general](#)  
[contact info](#)

behind them in the Iraq war. Again, Bush and Cheney continue to suggest this, but it is simply not so. An overwhelming majority of people worldwide do not support the war and are hostile toward the United States, as polling by the Pew Global Attitudes Project has shown.

There are two components to the war on terror. One involves making the United States more secure. Creation of the Department of Homeland Security and a number of other measures may indeed have heightened the safety of the homeland.

But the other component involves taking down Al-Qaida and associated terrorist organizations, plus taking steps to ensure they don't get replaced. The war in Afghanistan was an essential part of that task. The war in Iraq has undermined it severely.

Moreover, the Bush administration has fatally compounded its error in attacking Iraq by botching the aftermath of the war. It committed enough troops to win the initial war, but far too few to win the peace that followed. That problem was further compounded by the Bush administration's decision to dissolve the Iraqi army and dismiss everyone with Baathist Party ties, which included most of those individuals with the skills and knowledge to hold Iraq together and reconstruct it into a prosperous democracy. In large measure, that mistake is what has made the stabilization of Iraq so difficult.

Now the Bush administration is trying to undo the error, but too much time has elapsed and too much violence has taken place. As a result, Iraq has been radicalized while terrorist hatred of the United States has grown dramatically.

The American people appear to like George W. Bush because he is firm and unwavering. But his firmness is in the pursuit of wrongheaded policies. Bush should be taking the fight to terrorists in every way he can; we vigorously support that. But invading Iraq wasn't part of that fight. It was a horrible mistake. It has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of brave and dedicated Americans. Worst, it has put the nation and world at greater risk of continuing terrorist attacks while diverting attention from that risk. That is what Bush's leadership has wrought.

**Advertiser Links**

**[Advance Humanity](#)**

Health, Education, Equality & Protection for Every Child.  
[www.UNICEFusa.org](http://www.UNICEFusa.org)

**[Join ICYE today](#)**

Make a Difference in Intercultural Learning & Volunteering Worldwide!  
[www.icye.org](http://www.icye.org)

Ads by Google

**Being on the right calling plan sure feels good.** club wireless

Chaska E  
Center

[Sales - M](#)  
[Direct Sa](#)

[Caretake](#)  
[Compani](#)

[View All](#)

[Browse n](#)

[Shopping](#)