

Oh say can we see...

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The right stuff. Kennedy had it. So did Eisenhower, so did the astronauts. What is this right stuff? The ability to stand up against the issues, the one man against all others standing up against unimaginable odds in single combat. Is this the attraction of the martial arts. Preparing ourselves to be the hero we all look upon as the epitome of courage. Of course the top dog, the sensei is the most courageous, the leader from which all courage, the right stuff flows. As George Anderson, USA Karate President, once wrote, "When a student dreams of entering into karate practice, he has visions of himself as a medieval knight on a quest to right the wrongs a capricious world has foisted upon a defenseless humanity. Karate is the mental power that will enable him to do the wonderful, stupendous and terrifying deeds that must be accomplish to reach his goal. He fantasizes himself invulnerable to common assaults on his person. He is invincible, with powers to encounter and conquer the worst life has to offer."

Perot before he withdrew from running for president was viewed by the public as having this right stuff. Bush was a navy pilot and flew off aircraft carriers for the USA in combat. This is probably why he cannot understand the constant question of his image as a leader, but enough of this. Why all this concern about the right stuff? Is this the American fantasy? The right stuff, the patriot saving his country, his family, his friends, the poor or downtrodden who cannot take care of themselves and need a savior. Does karate allows ourselves to play this romantic role? Are we the patriot who against all odds in single combat can right the wrongs foisted on a capricious society? I think we all like to think that. But I see this in the context of making a better America and I do not look kindly on those things that weaken our strength. I would never pledge allegiance to another country's flag -- would you? Of course not! I would never hold an other's flag over my own and I doubt neither would you. Yet how many karateka do just that. How many schools hoist the Japanese flag or Korean flag over our own. I've seen this many times in the USA. I've seen it at tournaments, in dojos and dojangs where a foreign flag is worn by everyone, or where our flag is just hung incorrectly and flags of other nations given precedence. Come on America! Why do so many wear the Korean or Japanese flag on their uniform? I would never decorate my self in this manner.

•When karate reached Japan and was known as Chinese hands do you think the Japanese even considered sporting the Chinese flag? Can you see the Koreans sporting another flag? So why do we? Are we so given into the fad of displaying our differences that we would give America a second place in anything? Or our we so blinded or brainwashed or considerate more of our sensei then our own god and country that we would forsake the token of our society for an other's? Is the ultimate irony, the joke that we can be so easily tricked that we so freely display the banner of another who conquers our minds in the same breath as telling us that our minds are being developed? Well, USA Karate stands for America. So does the USTU (United States Taekwondo Union).

Symbols are very important in what they say and in what we stand for. The flag of the USA must stand supreme. Our martial arts predate the founding of our country. Only one generation of difference between the introduction of karate in Japan and its introduction in the United States. While the oriental flavor helps sell the martial arts in the USA as did the "Chinese" flavor in Japan in the early 1900's, karate is today as American as apple pie, part of our culture, and a fast growing almost mandatory part of the training of our young. Karate can

provide many of the lessons that our schools cannot -- loyalty to the family, the state, and the country. We must be careful that our young are raised up in the American ideals of family, god, and country. They should, they must be trained to wear and display the American flag proudly and not be subtly influenced, tricked to voluntarily display an other's flag. We send our kids to the martial arts to learn values -- like how to be better citizens, to have self pride in their own accomplishments and to keep those things which we hold dear. So we grace the dobak, the karategi, with a flag of a foreign power. Something is very wrong where we let this take place. If there is one thing I am sure of, money speaks. Support those who support America and teach the value of being American.

If you see the US flag improperly displayed, insist that it be displayed correctly and given dominance -- centered and higher than any other flag present. The blue field should be to the left. Further, make sure that you do not "bow-in" to a foreign flag at a tournament or at a dojo. Just do not do it regardless of what others do or expect of you. The martial arts should give you the strength to do what is right and just. Finally, if you are supporting a foreign flag on your karategi, dobak, jacket or anything else, tear it off. Do not worry about your Sabum or Sensei being upset, the wise ones learn from their students.