

COLUMNLEFT

A Holiday Party To Remember

BY ALON BARLEVY, PH.D., PRESIDENT,
HUBERT HUMPHREY DEMOCRATIC CLUB

As told in *Wag the Dog*, the 1997 movie with Dustin Hoffman and Robert DeNiro, when things under your control start to unravel, you create a distraction to take attention away from your troubles. This is exactly what we see happening with the conservatives in the U.S.

The war in Iraq, which started on false pretenses, is going horribly wrong with an average cost of 15 casualties and \$1 billion per week without an end in sight. The federal deficit and debt are at all-time record highs. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita demonstrated that our government's capabilities are not much better than the average government in the Third World. The administration is under a cloud of investigation, which for the first time in over 130 years has already resulted in an indictment of a high-level official. All that has taken a toll on the president's approval rating, which now stands at 37% – second only to Richard Nixon on the day he resigned the presidency.

So what to do? In the movie *Wag the Dog*, the distraction was a war against Albania. Since we are already involved in wars in two different countries, adding another literal war would be quite difficult, as our military is already stretched thin, and it would certainly not deflect attention from the current wars. The conservatives' answer: Declare a figurative "war to save Christmas."

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O'Reilly on his Fox News Channel show, in which he argued with his guest, Philip Nulman, a marketing and advertising executive, that it is insulting for Christians to use the terms "Happy Holidays" and "Season's Greetings." He has since called for a boycott on all retailers who do not use the word "Christmas" in their advertisements and promotions.

The ultimate proof that this campaign is completely contrived came from a source not very far from O'Reilly's show, the Fox News online gift shop. They used to sell "Holiday Ornaments" with O'Reilly's logo on the ornaments, until some user on the liberal blog dailykos.com wrote about this hypocrisy. Within one day, Fox News changed their website, and they now sell "Christmas Ornaments."

When it comes to parties during this time of year, it would seem to make more sense to call them "Holiday Parties" rather than "Christmas Parties," as they are rarely held on the actual date of December 25 (does anybody hold a 4th of July barbeque in mid June?). Although it is not uncommon to have gift exchange games at such parties, it is very rare for holiday parties to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Holiday parties are usually intended to celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of the year, rather than the Christmas Holiday. The Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club will hold a *Holiday Party* on Sunday, December 11 at 6 p.m. at the El Torito Restaurant in Cerritos, with guest of honor Congresswoman Linda Sanchez. We will be celebrating her promotion this year to Deputy Minority Whip, and hope that at next year's *Holiday Party*, we will be celebrating her promotion to Deputy Majority Whip.

Text of Article

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Alon Barlevy, PhD.
President, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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