Binge drinking: an American problem

By Kevin Bogardus

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A month into his presidency, George W. Bush has managed to unite his father more than he was expected: the prodigal son has attacked Iraq. Our controversial commander in chief, on his first foreign visit to Mexico, painted a neat and tidy operation with only a few casualties for Iraq: two killed and about 20 wounded by their count. The American government has been quick to control the impact of past incidences of provocation by the Iraqi military to substantiate the bombing. American and British jets have been overhead for 51 times while surface-to-air missiles have been volleyed in their direction 14 times while enforcing the no-fly zones in the northern (above the 36th parallel) and southern (below the 33rd parallel) parts of the country.

In retrospect, the above numbers are much less statistics for a figure-obsessed public who are comforted in knowing only quantity, not quality as well. One should take note of what was said, the soundbytes, because that is what is going to be repeated and hammered into our thick skulls by television, radio, and the printed press. The numbers provide supposed substance to the following quotes. “We will continue to enforce our no-fly zones,” said George W. Bush. The no-fly zones are enforced on a daily basis. It is a part of a strategy, and until that strategy is changed, it is changed at all, we will continue to enforce the no-fly zones.” The strong, simple wording of the statement is highlighted by “enforce,” “no-fly zones,” and “strategy.” Bush is delivering a clear message, a declaration of no-non-sense and authority.

“Saddam Hussein has got to understand we expect him to conform to the agreement that he signed after Desert Storm,” Bush also said. All past presidents have played this trick as well, a ruse created by Bush, Sr.: the bombing raid was an attack solely against Saddam Hussein, not the Iraqi people. Thus, the American public releases a unified sign of relief, guilt-free, since our forces have dealt the evil foreign dictator a mighty blow. Yet the Iraqi people (especially the families of the dead) have suffered a near-immediate consequences, not Hussein, who was presiding over a joint meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Baath Central Committee. The leader was killed during the attack. No one seems to take particular notice though.

Further, observe the players and the situation overall. Enforcing the no-fly zones, Saddam Hussein is isolated. Enjoying their stay in the pocket of the United States, the United Kingdom was present once again in the allied attack. Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, never smiles more than when he is at the beck and call of an American president. He seemed even more taken with Bill Clinton than Monica Lewinsky ever did—Blair is now looking for a similar relationship with W. The Labor Party leader appears to enjoying the exact answer they had for W.’s father: bomb Iraq without apparent reason. The bombing served as a wake-up call for all, as Vice-President and Secretary of State respectively. Cheney and Powell must have racked their brains intensely for a media victory for their boss. Sadly, they could only conjure the exact answer they had for W.’s father: bomb Iraq without apparent reason. The bombing served as a wake-up call for all...”