

**THE BLOG****Bush as Bobby McFerrin**

By Marty Kaplan

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In a 15-minute phone conversation today with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, President Bush reassured him that — as Reuters put it — “the United States has not set any deadline for the Iraqi government to bring the violence under control.” Apparently al-Maliki was worried by rumors coming from the cut-and-run crowd — you know, John Warner, Chuck Hagel, Jim Baker — that a course-change was in the cards after the election. But here’s how Tony Snow summarized Bush’s message to al-Maliki: “Don’t worry.”

I know what I’d be doing with a moment like this if I worked on *The Daily Show*, or *Colbert*, or for Bill Maher. It’s made in heaven for political satire. You could do the Alfred E. Newman thing with it. You could run the Bobby McFerrin song under a montage of carnage. You could connect it to the string of Bush’s don’t-worry responses to all the warnings he got about Bin Laden before 9/11. You could contrast Bush’s “Don’t worry” message to Iraqis with his “Be afraid” message to Americans.

But I wonder whether Democratic candidates and organizations will be as quick to mine gold from it. Every day, the news offers fresh material for pounding the White House and its Republican enablers, especially on Topic A, Iraq. But it’s not enough for comics, or blogs, to point out the disastrous consequences of Bush’s intransigence. It takes a coordinated onslaught by a party apparatus — in its paid ads, in its candidates’s stump appearances, in its chatter to the media, maybe in its supporters’ homemade YouTube ads.

Democrats may not have planned it this way, but there’s a master narrative out there: “Had enough?” Every day between now and the election, it’s the job of Democrats to offer fresh, infuriating illustrations of what Americans have had enough of. (The more those examples come from Republican mouths, the better.) It’s the Republicans’ job, of course, to get Democrats off message: “Yeah, but what’s *your* plan?” And the press will believe that parroting the Republican parry should be regarded as parity.

But that doesn’t matter. What matters is the relentless driving home, with comedy and fury, of the inept blindness that something like 70 percent of the country wants deliverance from.

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