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## Here's to the Happy Couple -- and a 10 Point Bump

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Jenna Bush and Henry Hager plan to marry. And there is already buzz of a spectacular White House wedding that will gather society, power and politics around these two cute kids.

Ordinarily, I'm a sucker for such things. I've cried when the groom kissed the bride -- and I didn't really know either of them.

But this time I have to say to Jenna and Henry: don't do it. The 16 months to go as this administration ebbs away is not too long to wait.

The bigger the wedding, the sweeter the music of the Marine Band, the greater the contrast with what is happening to some other kids in the 110 degree hell of a far away desert country.

They can try to keep it simple. But a White House wedding is going to be big. It will be the first one since the coming of cable. It's a union of Republican royalty. It could be Charles and Di -- without the carriage ride. Or, wait, the carriage might make great TV.

The thing I find most disturbing is that there is already talk that a White House Wedding will be great politics. It could be a terrific way to hook women -- who are the angriest about the war, and one of the biggest problems for Republicans going into the election.

Women -- even the angry ones -- are going to eat this up. We can't help it. It's what we do.

The father of the bride is responsible for the loss of close to 4,000 American lives, the lives of uncounted Iraqis, and many thousands of injured and maimed. He has had the big boy office in an organization that has lied, manipulated and ultimately failed at every turn. But on this day, he is the proud and loving papa walking his daughter down the aisle.

Eyes will grow moist, and approval ratings will rise.

Can I possibly be cynical enough to suggest that this is timed around the election? Could it be that the children's book Jenna Bush wrote with her mother is a bit of pre-wedding character repair for a girl who seems well-versed in the difference between shots and shooters?

The administration gives great and ongoing credence to the old saying: just when you think you're too cynical, you realize you're not cynical enough.

Let's run down just a partial list: the swift boaters, the smearing of John McCain in South Carolina, the mythical WMD, the phantom National Guard service, Brownie at the levees, Valerie Plame, secret torture sites, Pat Tillman, the stem cell veto, the fired federal attorneys, an attorney general with the memory of a gold fish, the surgeon general who was tossed out of the club house for taking on causes that upset the Republican right, and assorted other assaults on our trust in this administration's motives, methods and competence.

With that body of evidence on the record, I'm not discounting anything. Hey, if international state visits don't work any more because much of the world hates us, a White House wedding just might.

Ok -- politics is politics. And this president would not be the first to make use of photogenic offspring.

But we have this inconvenient problem of young people the same age as the happy couple dying on the roadsides and in the alleyways of Iraq. I wonder if those at risk will be gathered around the television to watch the festivities.

One who won't be watching is Army Reserve Sergeant Jose Velez, a young man from the Bronx who asked his girlfriend Naomi to marry him the day he left for Iraq. She was busy planning the wedding when she got word he was killed by a roadside bomb.

I didn't know Jose Velez. I just read about him in a magazine. I don't know the hundreds of other young women who were engaged to be married, went to Iraq, and never returned. I can't speak for them. I have no standing in their lives or their families' grief.

All I can do is wonder. As the proud parents bask in their child's very special day, as current and past members of the administration clink their champagne glasses, will they think about all those who will never have that day -- and why?