

# Edwards criticizes Kerry as Washington insider

During Sunday's debate Edwards moved to attack Kerry, shedding his image as the race's 'nice guy'

By Steven Thomma  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

NEW YORK — Facing a possible 10-state loss that would doom his campaign, John Edwards shed some of his nice guy persona Sunday and launched his most pointed attack on rival John Kerry in their long competition for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Edwards portrayed Kerry as a typical Washington politician, one promising more new government spending than he could pay for. He said that he offered a fresh, outside-the-Beltway voice, a better approach to trade and jobs and brushed aside a question about his own wealth by noting that Kerry is far richer.

Kerry, sensing the opportunity to effectively clinch the nomination if he can defeat Edwards in all 10 states voting Tuesday, returned the rhetorical fire. He all but ridiculed Edwards

claim to be an outsider, noting that he has been in the Senate for five years.

The hourlong clash between the two senators — Edwards from North Carolina and Kerry from Massachusetts — came three days before voters in 10 states will choose 1,151 delegates to the Democratic National Convention in July, half the 2,162 needed for the nomination.

Edwards insisted that he would remain in the race even if he loses all 10 states. "I'm going to be the nominee," he said.

Edwards, however, trails Kerry in every state where public polls were available. He trailed by large margins in California and New York, the two biggest states voting on Tuesday. Even more troubling for his campaign, polls showed he remained behind in Georgia and Maryland, two states where he thought he had the best chance of overtaking Kerry.

In Georgia, a poll by independent pollster John Zogby for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and television station WSB showed Edwards losing ground. Kerry led by a margin of 45

percent to 26 percent among likely primary voters, gaining 4 percentage points from Friday to Saturday.

Another poll by the nonpartisan American Research Group showed Kerry leading Georgia by 48 percent to 38 percent.

The same group's survey in Maryland showed Kerry leading by a margin of 46 percent to 34 percent.

Reflecting the bare-knuckled politics typical of New York, the debate, co-sponsored by CBS and The New York Times, was marked by frequent interruptions by candidates and questioners alike.

Kerry and Edwards clashed repeatedly over the value of Washington experience.

"Do you believe we're going to change this country out of Washington, D.C.?" Edwards asked Kerry.

"Yes," said Kerry, a 19-year veteran of the Senate. "Because that's where the Congress of the United States is and that's where 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is."

Kerry added, "Last time I looked ... he's been in the Senate for the last five years. That seems to me to be

Washington, D.C."

Edwards criticized Kerry for promising too much new government spending to be able to fulfill his promise to cut the deficit in half.

"It's the same old thing," Edwards said. "He would drive us deeper and deeper into deficit. ... This is the same old Washington talk that people have been listening to for decades. They want something different."

Kerry said his proposed spending to stimulate the economy shouldn't be counted toward the deficit because it's normally not counted under congressional rules. And he said the account didn't include his proposed \$139 billion cut from a recently enacted Medicare bill.

"He should do his homework," Kerry snapped. "I do not spend more."

Asked to reconcile his personal wealth with his populist message, Edwards laughed, remarking that Kerry has "got a lot more than I've got."

Both men dismissed a question about whether they're liberals, stemming from a new study ranking Kerry as the most liberal member of the

Senate and Edwards as the fourth most liberal. "It's a laughable characterization," said Kerry. "I don't think anybody in America cares about what some inside Washington publication says."

They reacted differently to a question about President Bush's assertion that God is on the U.S. side in the war on terrorism.

"I believe in God, but I don't believe the way President Bush does," Kerry said. "We pray God is on our side and we pray hard."

Edwards quoted Abraham Lincoln's answer when asked to pray that God was on the U.S. side in the Civil War. "I won't join you in that prayer," Edwards quoted Lincoln as saying. "But I'll join you in a prayer that we're on God's side."

(The American research polls in Georgia and Maryland were conducted Feb. 27 and Feb. 28 and each had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. The Zogby poll in Georgia had a margin of error of plus 4.1 percentage points.)

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# Iraqi leaders grapple with administrative goals

Sunday's negotiations saw continued disagreement regarding Kurdish issues, women and Islam's role

By Hannah Allam  
and Ken Dilanian  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

BAGHDAD, Iraq — After missing the deadline to draft a framework for Iraq's first post-Saddam Hussein government, the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council continued to negotiate Sunday about religion, the role of women and Kurdish autonomy.

At stake is what kind of temporary regime will take over when the U.S.-led coalition relinquishes sovereignty on June 30 and what procedures will be set up for electing a permanent government later. Two American plans for the transition have fallen by the wayside, and officials are now trying to hammer out an agreement on a third option.

The failure to produce a constitution on schedule was the latest in a series of missed deadlines as the coalition prepares to cede authority to Iraqis by June 30. Nevertheless, coalition and U.S. officials continue to insist that the handover will take place on schedule.

Instead of American-backed

caucuses to pick a transitional government, the new plan will hand power to a revamped version of the unpopular and unelected Governing Council, Iraqi politicians and analysts said. The council is leaning toward establishing a one-person presidency with two vice presidents, all three elected by the other members, officials said.

Under that plan, Iraq would continue to be governed for the near term by an American-picked body whose stature has diminished in the eyes of Iraqis during the seven months that it has existed. More than 100,000 U.S. troops would remain in the country, and the transitional government would steer the country toward elections.

The original American plan called for elections in December 2005, but Iraq's most influential political voice, Shiite Muslim Ayatollah Ali al-Hussein al-Sistani, has demanded a vote no later than the end of this year. The United Nations has said that elections could occur within eight months if major legal and logistical issues are tackled immediately.

A final draft of the transition blueprint won't be signed until after an Islamic holiday on Tuesday, council members said. They added that discussions have mellowed considerably

since a third of the council walked out of talks Friday, complaining that they were blindsided by a vote on women's rights.

Negotiations extended beyond a midnight Saturday deadline agreed on by the U.S.-led coalition and the council. By late afternoon Sunday, council members were still debating the most divisive topics: quotas for women in government, the level of Kurdish autonomy and to what degree Islamic law, known as Sharia, would shape the new constitution.

Sami al-Askari, the senior aide to current Governing Council Chairman Mohammad Bahr Ulum, said the name most commonly mentioned as a possible president is Ebrahim Jafari, a leader in the Islamic Dawa Party, a moderate Shiite organization.

Jafari, a physician who fled Saddam's repression in 1980, is the only member of the governing council who consistently gets a favorable rating higher than 50 percent in opinion polls, said Munquith Dagher, who runs an independent polling institute that's conducting monthly in-home surveys of Iraqis.

The negotiations are playing out against a backdrop of great paradoxes in the country.

A January opinion poll in six major

cities showed that 45 percent of respondents believe that "conditions for peace and stability" are improving. Salaries are higher, there are more goods in the markets and people are less afraid to walk the streets in most cities.

In the same poll, by Dagher's firm, the Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies, 70.7 percent of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that "democracy offers Iraq the hope of peace, stability and a better life, while the people attacking coalition forces offer only chaos."

However, the U.S.-led occupation and the political vacuum created by almost a year without a sovereign government, coupled with the continuing unemployment and gaps in basic public services, has caused widespread frustration.

"Given more than three decades of despotic rule, a ruined economy, a devastated country and the collapse of state institutions, conditions in Iraq are daunting," said a recent United Nations fact-finding report. "The underlying tensions could fuel the existing potential for civil strife and violence."

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## CAMPUS BUZZ

Monday

Art exhibition featuring the work of Jennifer Fogerty-Gibson, today-March 29, Adell McMillan Gallery, EMU, 7 a.m.-11:30 p.m., opening reception 5 p.m., March 5.

Humanities Symposium reception to discuss the themes of militancy and martialism with the texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Browning Room, Knight Library, today from 9-11:30 a.m.

Art exhibition featuring photography by Malheur Workshop participants, today-March 4, LaVerne Krause Gallery, Lawrence Hall, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Opening reception today from 6-8 p.m.

Food for Thought film entitled "Race: The Power of an Illusion," Episode III - The House We Live In," Board Room, EMU, today from noon-1:30 p.m. Pre-registration required.

Humanities Symposium lecture by Temple University Islamic studies Professor Mahmoud Ayoub entitled "Jihad and Fighting: Peace and War in the Qur'an," Room 182, Lillis Hall, today at 8 p.m.

UO Chamber Ensembles Concert featuring a string quartet, a piano trio and a cello sonata, as well as pieces by Walter Piston and Franz Schubert, Beall Concert Hall, today at 8 p.m.

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