



NOVEMBER 14, 2007

The politics of dancing

BY [BOB GEARY](#)

Musically speaking, few songs sound more like slippery politics than Strauss' "Blue Danube Waltz." It was the melody heard over a windsurfing John Kerry in George W. Bush's memorable 2004 campaign ad that criticized Kerry's shifting positions on the war. The punch line: "John Kerry, whichever way the wind blows."



Now, in an ad, *The Politics of Parsing*, John Edwards' campaign placed the waltz beneath several Hillary Clinton soundbites gleaned from the recent Democratic debate in Philadelphia. Clinton is shown taking different tacks on Iraq, Social Security and—in the most quoted exchange of the debate—on whether illegal immigrants should be eligible for driver's licenses. ("It makes a lot of sense," Clinton said initially. Asked if she's for it, however, she replied no—despite the fact that she previously stated her support.)

Whether because of Edwards' attacks, similar criticisms by Barack Obama or her admittedly weak performance in Philadelphia, Clinton's lead in the polls has slipped slightly since late October. Iowa remains close among the three; and in New Hampshire, Clinton is ahead of Obama, but only by about 10 points, not 20.

Edwards continues to add to his portfolio of issues against Clinton—most recently, cutting military spending and opposing NAFTA expansions.

On the first, Edwards welcomed the endorsement of Iowa group Caucus4Priorities, whose goals are contained in its proposed Common Sense Budget Act. It would chop \$60 billion from the Pentagon's budget, mainly from weapons systems designed to fight the Cold War, and redirect the money toward domestic programs. Edwards didn't go that far, but he pledged a itemized review of the Pentagon's budget, and backed cuts totaling \$31 billion, according to ABC News.

Caucus4Priorities claims a membership of 10,000 Iowans pledged to support its candidate at caucus time. If so, that could be one out of every 10 caucus-goers on the Democratic side.

As for NAFTA, Clinton and Obama support the Bush Administration's measure to bring Peru into the North American free trade deal. It passed the House last week with Republicans in favor and Democrats split. Edwards denounced it, saying: "At a time when millions of Americans are concerned about losing their jobs and the economy," Democrats shouldn't "side with corporations, their lobbyists and the Bush administration in support of a flawed trade deal that expands the NAFTA model."