

## Cote d'Ivoire: France's Iraq

BY JOSEPH ADAMS  
Staff Columnist

While American journalists and politicians continue to celebrate, lament, and otherwise obsess over President George W. Bush's re-election, chaos has erupted across the Atlantic despite one country's efforts to contain insurgents and support a tenuous government.

Civil war has broken out across the country, and the crisis there is rapidly evolving into a quagmire after the former occupying power's military and the government's air force exchanged fire—culminating in the former occupying power's urgent dispatch of more airplanes and infantry to the battlefield.

Along the country's streets and access roads, schools and businesses associated with the former occupying country have been robbed; in some cases, buildings have been leveled. Fully aware of the consequences of inaction, the U.N. Security Council met behind closed doors this weekend and issued a plea for the country's interim government to cease hostilities against the former occupier so that order might be restored to the war-torn country.

Casual followers of international politics might naively assume that this description of events concerns the situation in Iraq. But all of this, of course, speaks to France's dilemma in the African Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

Last week, the year-long cease-fire in Cote d'Ivoire broke down, with the Ivoirian government bombing not only rebel-held territory in the country's north but also French military units in the region. The Ivoirian government's actions left French President Jacques Chirac little choice but to increase the French military commitment in Cote d'Ivoire and order that the Ivoirian air force be destroyed. All the while, the United States remained steadfastly supportive of France's mission in Cote d'Ivoire, which began when the French government unilaterally (without U.N. approval or a single European ally) intervened in the former colony more than a year ago.

## On the same day that his foreign minister offered an olive branch to George W. Bush... Jacques Chirac skipped a visit with Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi

The United States has respected and defended France's right to unilaterally intervene in Cote d'Ivoire because of French interests in the country. It is unfortunate that France does not afford the United States the same respect and understanding when it comes to the war in Iraq.

The French foreign minister made an honorable attempt in Monday's Wall Street Journal to extend an olive branch to the American government, saying that the French government is "concerned to see both Americans and Europeans expressing doubts over the future of transatlantic relations." But in the White House—where it counts most—the American president has expressed no such doubts.

As President Bush received congratulatory calls from numerous European leaders—even France's Jacques Chirac—the president made it clear that he considers a strong transatlantic alliance vital to Western security and winning the war against terrorism. In an effort to reach out to Europe, the president has announced that he will receive Tony Blair at the White House next week, and he has indicated that he will act on invitations to visit several European capitals in the coming year.

But while there can be no doubt that the French-led opposition to the war in Iraq has placed a damper on the Euro-American alliance, there can likewise be no doubt that the French government—despite its foreign minister's rhetoric—is doing everything it can do to pour salt in an open wound.

On the same day that his foreign minister offered an olive branch to George W. Bush and the American people, Jacques Chirac skipped a visit with Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi and delivered remarks in which he argued that European nations should unite and serve as a counterweight—a steadfast obstacle, not an ally—to American economic and diplomatic interests.

The past history of the United States and France demonstrate that each country owes much to the other. The French government played an instrumental role in the American war of independence, and the United States liberated the French people in the Second World War.

Just as the two countries' pasts are intertwined, so should their interests be in the days ahead. But in order for fences to be mended, a president must change his tone. The imprudent, reckless president that is continuing to undermine the Euro-American alliance is not George W. Bush. It is Jacques Chirac.

## Moral values not just about abortion/gays

BY NATJAM BRADSHAW  
Staff Columnist

Since the election was decided on Wednesday of last week, the media has engaged in a great deal of conversation about the latest four-week catchphrase: "moral values." Yes, over 20 percent of voters said that moral values were their primary concern in voting, and 80 percent of them voted for Bush. By my math, that's roughly eighteen and a half million voters: a lot bigger than the President's three and a half million margin of victory.

The question, however, is what moral values? According to everyone from CNN to FOX, moral values apparently mean two things: gay marriage and religious conviction. "Ballot measures in 11 states to ban gay marriage also helped boost turnout for Republicans," proclaims CNN. "A large swath of evangelicals and religious voters went to the polls Tuesday," states FOX. And I personally will proudly state that moral values decided my vote, too.

Trouble is, I am not particularly religious, nor am I against gay rights. The two categories of the media for what "moral values" entail seem not to fit me, or most of the other people I know who voted Bush. Where were we in this moral contest?

I found a similar sentiment watching the McLaughlin Group. The show quoted Reverend Welton C. Gaddy, an evangelical Christian, who stated, "You're not hearing today a discussion on the values of war and peace, economic disparities and educational disparities in our nation. You're hearing a focus on a very narrow definition of values."

Indeed, narrowed down to two issues of opinion. When I was

in elementary school, moral values were equated with terms like honesty, respect, and compassion. Opinions on political issues were not what Mrs. Smith taught me about character in third grade. Somebody recently expressed his outrage that "moral values" would decide an election, claiming that voting based on moral values was wrong. No, it is absolutely right.

In voting, moral values are probably all that should be considered, as we see campaign promises and policies changing at the drop of a dollar bill in Washington on both sides of the partisan line. When I filled out my absentee ballot, I thought long and hard about which candidate I felt would be more honest about his actions, would show more respect for the American people, would be more compassionate to those in need.

In spite of the panmedia effort to tell me that I voted for the gay-hating Bible-thumping president who did nothing more than play off of people's fears, I refuse to believe it. I voted for the man who, in my opinion, would represent more of what I hope the nation's character will be. Maybe your opinion was different on this "deciding issue." But that's why we have elections.

Frankly, when I hear that "moral values" were what got our President into office, I couldn't agree more. I see it in the same light as Pat Buchanan does, when he states that the election was a reaction against "elitist" upper-class Democrats. The media would have you believe that the anti-gay vote won 2004, but ponder this. If 150,000 votes in Ohio go differently, Kerry would have been put into office by the gay rights voters, as they delivered all of New England, New York, and California for him. Ohio, incidentally, is only a few hundred miles away from being not quite in the Bible belt.

## Court life is important but not the end-all

BY HALLEY AELION  
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The Court. That magical place where lives are changed. One weekend you're king of the world, living the high life at a party where you are the center of attention and everything is going right. The next weekend you find yourself dressed as a gorilla in a tuxedo, wondering how the hell you sunk that low and why your friends did not stop you before it was too late. Whether you choose to partake of Davidson's Court life or not, as a Davidson student you are inevitably affected by it. It is a fixture of the social life at this college and it wields an impressive power over all students. How this power manifests itself can never be predicted and can lead to both delightful and detrimental consequences.

The main attraction of the Court is the possibility of meeting people in all grades and in all the fraternities and eating houses. Who knows who you'll find? People you never say a word to in class become best friends. That guy you thought was cute is magically much more approachable and ready to talk. People you've never seen before share their life story. If you're lucky, you'll find someone you really connect with. If you're not so lucky, you might be stuck listening to a stranger complain about their ex-relationships for an hour.

But is the ability of the court to influence relationships a good one, overall? Is a relationship you create on a night when you and the people you meet are probably not entirely coherent as

valid as the relationships you find in the classroom and on Davidson's playing fields? There are bad decisions made on the Court every night, decisions which are detrimental to the overall feeling on campus. These decisions can lead to permanent tension between former friends, averted eyes between almost perfect strangers, and lasting grudges between roommates.

These feelings affect even those who choose to stay away from the Court. Whole halls have been divided down lines of "who goes down" and who does not. Is it possible for people trying to party to peacefully coexist with people trying to sleep? It may be possible, but it is not easy. I have seen one half of a hall give the other half the silent treatment because of loud and rambunctious behavior late at night.

Though the cold shoulder technique was a practice I hadn't been subject to since middle school, I now can attest it is a powerful weapon to employ when trying to convey feelings of disgust and disapproval at any age.

After all this, I must explain I am a fan of the Davidson Court. I think it can be a great place to go, and it offers an infinite amount of social possibilities. But if you do "go down" don't dismiss those who don't. If you don't "go down" don't dismiss those who do. Basically, while it can be argued the Court is the center of the Davidson social scene, it should never be confused with the center of the world. Take advantage of it, but be sure to look above and beyond it sometimes; you never know what or who you'll find.

## Parties must find way to work together

BY JOE REED  
Staff Columnist

One of the most intense, vicious, and personal presidential campaigns in history came to a close this past week, with both the victor and the vanquished changing their tone to one of reconciliation and unity as the country moves forward into the second term of President George W. Bush. Both candidates are to be commended for this change in tone, as reconciliation and unity are precisely what America needs to respond to the many problems, foreseen and unforeseen, that we will face over the next four years. One can only hope both candidates and their parties will maintain this spirit as they go about the business of governing.

This will require a genuine, good-faith effort on the part of both parties to work together to search for bipartisan solutions to our nation's problems. While Democrats will surely be tempted to turn the 109th Congress into essentially a two-year filibuster, they must resist. Democrats must realize, if grudgingly, that the increased Republican majority in both houses of Congress will leave them with much less of a say in the government. I am by no means saying that the Democratic Party should simply lie down and allow the Republicans to pass whatever they want; I am simply arguing that Democrats will need to pick their battles. Should President Bush make a judicial nomination or propose a piece of legislation that they see as completely unacceptable, Democratic Senators and Representatives

can and should take any steps necessary, including a filibuster in the Senate, to block it. But they'll need to be selective in their use of this technique, focusing instead on finding common ground with their Republican counterparts.

By the same token, Republicans must show a willingness to meet Democrats, if not halfway, at least somewhere in the middle. While they can and will move to implement much of their legislative agenda, Republicans must realize that the mandate they were given on Nov. 2 was far from absolute. A bare majority (51 percent) of voters chose President Bush, and there are still 44 Democratic Senators and 200 Democratic Representatives, all of whom were chosen by their constituencies to represent them, and all of whom deserve a voice in the new Congress. Strong-arm tactics on the part of the White House and Republican leaders like Tom DeLay to forcefully ram legislation through Congress will only cause Democrats to dig in their heels and fight tooth and nail on every issue, which will severely limit the efforts of both parties to get anything done. Instead the Republicans should seek to work with Democrats in crafting legislation that is at least acceptable to both parties and beneficial to all Americans.

Senator Kerry perhaps put it best when he said, in his concession, that "whether or not our candidates are successful, the next morning we all wake up as Americans." We are indeed all Americans, and it is now incumbent upon our representatives in both parties to work with, rather than against, each other, to make this country a better place for all of us.