JAC
Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs

JAC *NEWSbreak*

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

HOT NEWS THIS MONTH

DETAILS ON THESE STORIES IN THIS ISSUE:

ISRAEL/FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Saddam Hussein has transferred more than $20 million to the families of Palestinian terrorists.

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RELIGION/STATE

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CHOICE

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JUDICIAL WATCH

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RESEARCH & RACES

A new House member is elected in Hawaii. Senate races shape up for 2004.

...and much more

There's still time to register...
JAC Annual Meeting
March 4-5, 2003

JAC NEWSbreak, for JAC Leadership Circle, is a monthly publication prepared by Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs. Editor: Katherine Gurvey. Research Director: Joy Malkus. President: Lois Zoller. Executive Director: Marcia Balonick. JAC, P.O. Box 105, Highland Park, Illinois (847) 433-5999, Fax (847) 433-6194. E mail jacpac123@aol.com © JAC, 2002.

ISRAEL/FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DATED MATERIAL
Jan 27, 2003
READ IMMEDIATELY

By the time you receive this *Newsbreak*, the Israeli elections will have taken place. Rather than predict the makeup of the new Knesset in this issue, an analysis will follow next month.

Hamas spokesman Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi, speaking before 3,000 Palestinians, called for Iraqis to "blow yourselves up against the American army — bomb them in Baghdad." "I call on all Arab nations to burn the ground underneath the feet of the Americans in all capitals." The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) reported that Rantisi, in a recent article, encouraged Iraq to establish "a suicide army against any U.S.-led attack...Iraq should establish thousands of squads of martyrs who have at their disposal thousands of sophisticated explosive belts." The AIPAC *Update* of January 14 reports that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has transferred more than $20 million to the families of Palestinian terrorists and continues to play a significant role in funding and directing anti-Israel attacks. In preparation for a possible American attack on Iraq, cooperation between Israel and the United States has been stepped up. An American liaison unit has been stationed in Israel to coordinate communication between the IDF, the Pentagon and any American forces in the region. The two countries plan to hold joint exercises this month.

Aaron Miller, a 25-year State Department veteran and senior adviser for Arab-Israeli negotiations, is leaving the State Department to become president of Seeds for Peace, an organization which runs summer camps and programs bringing together Jewish and Arab teenagers. Miller, who has spoken at several JAC Washington conferences, was part of a

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SEPARATION OF RELIGION & STATE

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed that religious groups be permitted to use federal money to build houses of worship, as long as part of the building is also used for social services. The White House says this shift in policy will end discrimination against religious groups. Current regulations prohibit religious groups from using federal housing and community development grants to build or rehabilitate structures. The new rules, subject to final approval by housing officials, "allow the use of federal aid to acquire, rehabilitate or build centers used for religious and specifically approved nonreligious activities, so long as no federal money is used for the religious section." Richard A. Hauser, general counsel of the Housing Department, said, "there's no reason you can't have a cathedral upstairs and something that would look like any other room in the basement for counseling." In response, Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) replied, "You run into the nightmarish problem of having the government monitor what goes on inside churches and sanctuaries...Are we going to start sending in the inspector general to charge people with committing a bar mitzvah?" Christopher Anders, legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, said, "this is probably the most clearly unconstitutional aspect of the White House's faith-based initiative that we've seen up to this point." *(NYTimes, 1/23/03)*

Rep. JoAnn Emerson (R-MO) has introduced a proposal (H.J.Res 7) to amend the Constitution to permit government-organized prayer in public schools or other public institutions. Opponents (including JAC) argue that the First Amendment already allows individuals to worship in public. "If ...a child is being told by her teacher or principal that she cannot say grace over her lunch, then the answer is to educate the teacher or the administrator — not to amend the constitution." Voluntary prayer is permitted in public schools under current law. *(RAC News* 1/16/03)

CHOICE

January 22 marked the 30th anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision which, after years of back alley abortions, gave women the choice to have a safe and legal abortion. It took only two years for the courts and lawmakers to restrict that decision. *Bellotti vs. Baird* in 1976 allowed states to require a minor to obtain parental consent before having an abortion. And, in 1997, the House of Representatives passed the Hyde amendment denying medicaid funding for poor women wanting to obtain an abortion. *Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services* (1989) gave states the right to restrict access to and even deny abortion services. Between 1995 and 1999, 219 anti-choice measures were passed by the 50 states. Since 1977, 5 abortion providers have been murdered; there have been 17 attempted murders, 41 bombings, 165 arsons, and 557 anthrax threats. Both the 108th House and Senate have anti-choice majorities. On January 15, conservatives and religious leaders who oppose abortion rights announced the formation of an alliance of at least 35 groups that will band together in an "all out push against abortion."

The following highlights the results of a *USA*

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JUDICIAL WATCH

On January 7, President Bush renominated the 30 judicial candidates that were pending at the end of 2002, including Charles W. Pickering, Sr. and Priscilla Owen. Both Pickering and Owen were rejected by the Senate Judiciary Committee under Democratic leadership in the prior session. Bush won confirmation of 100 judges, but Republicans were critical of the Democratic-run Senate Judiciary committee, saying it was deliberately delaying action for political purposes. Democrats accused the GOP of doing the same thing during the Clinton administration. The renomination of Pickering, whose past record according to the Leahy-led committee, showed an "insensitivity to minorities," has put Democrats in the position of promising to filibuster if the confirmation makes it to the floor of the Senate. The president's decision to send Pickering back was "really an extraordinarily brazen finger in the eyes of the Senate," said Ralph Neas, president of People for the American Way. And, Elijah Cummings (D-MD), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said, "the renomination of Pickering undermines the administration's attempt to recast itself in the wake of the Lott controversy as committed to racial harmony and civil rights." (*CQ*, 1/11/03)

FYI: Interesting Population Statistics

Hispanics have surpassed blacks as the nation's largest minority group. The Latino population grew to 37 million in July 2001, up 4.7% from April 2000. The African American population increased 2% during the same period to 36.1 million. Four first term Representatives have joined the Hispanic Caucus - Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL). The Congressional Black Caucus boasts five new members - Artur Davis (D-AL), Kendrick Meek (D-FL), Denise Majette (D-GA), David Scott (D-GA), and Frank Ballance (D-NC).

Israel, continued from page one

State Department team lead by Dennis Ross which at times included current American ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer, and former Ambassador Martin Indyk. The team was dedicated to advancing Israeli-Arab reconciliation and worked tirelessly to move the peace process forward. Dennis Ross left early in 2001 and the team was dismantled. Miller stayed on as an adviser on Israeli-Arab issues. Asked in an interview with Nathan Guttman of *HaAretz* what was the low point in the years he was actively engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Millers answered, "Pick any day in the last two years. I do not believe that in this environment there can be any connection between the use of terror or any violence on the ground to create a more productive environment for negotiations." He didn't always feel this way. He believed "at certain times in the past two years of the Intifada that when the situation would become awful enough, the two sides would realize they had gone too far and must stop. That was an illusion. Why would we Americans want to help to bring into the world a Palestinian state that is linked with terrorism?" Nevertheless, Miller has not utterly lost hope. He still believes an Israeli-Palestinian agreement can and will be reached.

RESEARCH & RACES

2002 House

The newest member of the House is Democrat Ed Case who beat out 43 other candidates to win a special election in Hawaii's 2nd district. Case won with 43% and will finish the remainder of the late Rep. Patsy Mink's term. Case served as a legislative assistant to the late Hawaii lawmaker Spark Matsunaga in the 1970s, first in the House and then in the Senate.

2004 Senate

California

At least six House Republicans are considering challenging Dem. Sen. **Barbara Boxer** in 2004. The only declared candidate so far is GOP Rep. Doug Ose. Boxer won with just over 53% in 1998 and is a GOP target.

Florida — Dem. Sen. **Bob Graham** has indicated that he might make a run for the White House. If that happens, several Democrats - Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas, former Attorney General Janet Reno, Reps. **Peter Deutsch**, **Jim Davis** and Alcee Hastings have all expressed interest in running. On the Republican side, Rep. Mark Foley is a sure candidate if Graham doesn't run, but is likely to bow out if Graham chooses to stay in the Senate.

Georgia — Democrat **Zell Miller** has announced his retirement. Several members of the Georgia House delegation, both Democrats and Republicans, have expressed an interest in running. At this point, only Republican Johnny Isakson has officially declared. Former Democratic Sen. **Max Cleland**, who lost his re-election bid last year, is being mentioned as a potential candidate.

Illinois — Former Democratic Sen. **Carol Moseley Braun** has announced that she will not seek her party's nomination for U.S. Senate. She is considering a run for President. The Democratic field to challenge GOP Sen. Peter Fitzgerald is still very crowded. It includes former Chief of Staff to Mayor Richard Daley and President of the Chicago Board of Education Gery Chico, st. comptroller Dan Hynes, st. Sen. Barack Obama and investment banker Blair Hull. Fitzgerald continues to be the most vulnerable GOP incumbent and the prime target of Democrats.

North Carolina — Constituents of Dem. Sen. **John Edwards** don't seem to appreciate his running for President and Senate at the same time, although North Carolina law allows him to do so. GOP Rep. Richard Burr says he has White House support for a bid against Edwards. Former Clinton advisor Erskine Bowles, who lost his bid for the Senate last November would be the likely Democratic candidate if Edwards decides not to run or receives the Democratic nomination for president.

Pennsylvania — GOP Rep. Patrick Toomey is considering a primary challenge to incumbent Sen. **Arlen Specter.** Toomey term limited himself and is now serving his final term. Specter will be 74 in 2004 and has indicated that he plans to seek a fifth term year. Those mentioned as possible Democratic contenders are: state auditor Robert Casey, Jr, st. Sen. **Allyson Schwartz**, and Rep. **Robert Brady**.

South Carolina — Dem. Sen. Ernest Hollings will be 81 in 2004. He has so far made no announcement concerning a re-election bid but rumors are that he will retire.
Myrtle Beach Mayor Mark McBride (R) has already announced his candidacy and Rep. Jim DeMint (R) is expected to announce shortly. DeMint would be the GOP frontrunner. Democrats will have trouble keeping this seat if Hollings retires and no candidates are currently mentioned.

More next month...

(names in bold indicate current or past JAC support)

Choice, continued from page one

Today/CNN Gallup poll of 1,002 adults on issues affecting the abortion debate:

* 88% of respondents support laws requiring doctors to inform patients of alternatives to abortion before performing the procedure.
* 78% support a 24-hour waiting period before a woman can undergo an abortion.
* 73% support parental notification laws for women under age 18.
* 72% support laws requiring women to notify their husbands if they are going to have an abortion.
* 70% support banning so-called "partial-birth" abortion except in cases to save a woman's life.
* 38% favor a constitutional amendment banning abortions in all cases except to save the life of the woman. (Kiely, *USA Today* 1/16)

President Bush told anti-abortion protesters marching on the Mall in Washington that "he shared their commitment to protect the lives of innocent children waiting to be born." He also said that "he expected Congress to pass a ban this year on the late-term medical procedure that critics call 'partial birth abortion'." He promised to sign legislation to end the procedure, which he called "an offense to human dignity."

It should be obvious that abortion rights are in the greatest danger since the historic Roe decision in 1973. JAC will alert you when you need to contact your representative or senators on proposed legislation chipping away at these rights. It is crucial that you respond to these alerts.