

JAC NewsBreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Aug 23, 2010

On my mind this month...



Gail Yamner

Last night I dreamed that a mama grizzly went on a rampage and attacked a rather large pink elephant. After a night of feasting, Mama set out looking for a donkey. The donkey was backed into a corner by the roaring, gun-toting grizzly. It looked as if the donkey was a goner until a group of JAC members strode in and chased off the grizzly.

When I woke up in the wee hours, I knew what my unconscious was trying to tell me. No matter how upset we are with politics and the slow pace of change, no matter how we want to sit out this election and catch up on our novels, no matter how much we do not want to write another political check, we have to.

This year even entrenched incumbents are in trouble. An angry out-of-work voter, with no more unemployment benefits, is not a reasoning voter. She forgets the past and blames the present on whoever is currently in office. Pretty soon the sound bytes begin to make sense and she votes against her own interests.

Many of our JAC friends are in deep trouble. Some like Gabby Giffords proudly cast a vote for health care even though she knew it would be unpopular. Some like Barbara Boxer and Patty Murray successfully defeated antiabortion foes on health care; others like Loretta Sanchez fought for military women in her role on the Armed Forces committee. I regret I cannot list each member of Congress who is responsive to JAC and votes right on our issues. I *can* ask that you give generously to their campaigns. *Big* donations will fight the grizzlies and restore my night time peace.

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Israel

On August 20, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that direct talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will resume in Washington on September 2, 2010. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas have been invited to Washington by President Obama for dinner on September 1 with talks to commence the following day. After grueling diplomatic efforts by special envoy George Mitchell, the two leaders have agreed to a one-year time table to discuss the entire range of issues. This is the first direct negotiations have taken place in 20 months.

The United States- Israel relationship has expanded over Obama's first term, through increased military cooperation. The Wall Street Journal's Charles Levinson recently wrote an in-depth analysis of this intensified partnership. "This month, about 200 US Marines joined a battalion of Israeli soldiers for an all night march through the Negev desert, the culmination of three weeks of joint drills." In October, more than 1,000 US soldiers conducted a missile defense exercise when Turkey pulled out of planned exercises following the flotilla episode. Two joint US-Israel committees have become strengthened with the appointment of senior US officials. President Obama has worked furiously for the tougher Iranian sanctions through the UN and especially here in the US.

A senior US official was quoted as saying, "President Barack Obama felt the increased military support is necessary to assure Israel's security against mounting regional threats, including Iran and its allies; Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah."

For the first time in a decade, American military leaders, including the chairman of the joint chiefs, Adm. Mike Mullen visited Israel 4 separate times. The Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak has come to Wash DC more than other Israeli defense minis-

United States

CHOICE

The Food and Drug Administration approved a new emergency contraceptive pill that prevents pregnancies if taken as many as five days after unprotected intercourse. The pill, called ella, will be available only by prescription. Ella is more effective than Plan B, the morning after pill now available over the counter to women 17 and older. Abortion rights groups were enthusiastic about the decision which was condemned immediately by anti-abortion activists. Dr. James Trussell, director of the Office of Population Research at Princeton, says "Emergency contraception has no effect on pregnancy rates or abortion rates... Women just don't use them enough to make an impact."

Abortion rights activists are working to change the image of doctors who perform abortions. "The bold idea at the heart of this effort is to integrate abortion so that it's a seamless part of health care for women - embraced rather than shunned," writes journalist Emily Bazelon. (*NYTimes* magazine, 7/18/10) The strategy is to move stand-alone facilities into hospitals and encourage family physicians to offer abortions within their practices. Two training programs have been established at the University of California at San Francisco. The first, called the "Family Planning Fellowship," is designed to further equip doctors for providing abortions and contraception. The second helps supply medical schools with funds to train ob/gyn residents in providing abortions. Two of the doctors who spoke with Bazelon said that the money for these programs has come from the Buffett Foundation. Warren Buffet has chosen to give the money anonymously, but the Buffett Foundation's tax records reveal that most of its spending is allocated to "abortion and contraception advocacy and research."

In addition to these two programs, the foundation has given millions to Planned Parenthood and to other abortion rights groups like Catholics for Choice.

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Research & Races

ENDANGERED INCUMBENTS

Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) - Sanchez has not had to run a real campaign in years. An Independent Hispanic candidate is on the ballot who could cut into Sanchez' share of the Hispanic vote. The demographics are changing, with a sizeable influx of Vietnamese favoring GOP Assemblyman Van Tran. She still has an advantage but this is a REAL race.

Betsy Markey (CO-04) - In '08 freshman Markey defeated ethically challenged far right Republican, Marilyn Musgrave. The district favors the GOP and this time Markey will face st. Rep. Cory Gardner, a popular and carefully recruited candidate. This is a toss-up.

Ron Klein (FL-22) - Klein's opponent, Allen West, was the '08 nominee. West is a darling of the Tea Party and disputes any allegation that the Tea Party is not hospitable to African-Americans like himself. He has the endorsement of Sarah Palin and is outspoken against abortion and health care reform. West

has raised \$3.5 which makes him a formidable opponent. Klein has been visible and vocal in his support for Israel and initiated the legislation that halted U.S. aid to Lebanon last week.

Bill Foster (IL-14) - Foster first won this seat in a special election following GOP House Speaker Dennis Hastert's resignation. Foster is a scientist turned legislator with real concern for JAC's issues. He will face st. Sen. Randy Hultgren, a favorite of the National Rifle Association and National Right to Life. Being the incumbent may not be an advantage in this district.

Dina Titus (NV-03) - Titus barely won this seat with 47% in '08. She will face hand-picked GOP former st. Sen. Joe Heck. Titus has voted right on all JAC's issues. Heck, a veteran and a doctor, has aligned himself with GOP Senate candidate Sharron Angle and the tea party movement.

Patrick Murphy (PA-08) - Murphy defeated GOP Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick in

'06 by only 1,518 votes. A rematch in this political environment is going to be very tough. Murphy, an Iraq veteran, spearheaded the legislation to end "don't ask, don't tell" in the military and the GOP has used that to drive up enthusiasm of their conservative base. He looks like a future Democratic star that we can't afford to lose.

Steve Kagen (WI-08) - Steve Kagen was a longshot winner in '06 and again in '08. He represents a northern Wisconsin district that favors Republicans. Wisconsin's primary is not until September 14, so Kagen doesn't know who is opponent will be. None of the four candidates is pro-choice and all talk about repealing health care reform.

To support JAC's endangered incumbents, complete the enclosed form and mail in the envelope provided or contribute online at www.jacpac.org/candcontrib.php

Separation of Religion and State

The leader of Reclaiming Oklahoma for Christ, Pastor Paul Blair, said he was within his constitutional rights when he sent out an e-mail titled "RALLY FOR SALLY" for Republican st. Legislator Sally Kern. "We haven't done anything, we haven't endorsed, we didn't underwrite. We did nothing. It was just an information piece." In 2008, Blair told his congregation that he would be voting for John McCain. "The first amendment guarantees my right as a pastor to proclaim truth in here and not have the government tell me what I can and cannot say." Bruce Prescott, the Executive Director of Mainstream Baptists and a religious talk show host does not agree and is concerned about the impact endorsing candidates could have on religion. "What worries me the

most is it undermines the credibility of the church. My major concern is any time the church has been involved in politics it has been to the detriment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ." So far, the IRS has not taken action against Blair's church. Blair says if the IRS were to take away the church's tax exempt status, he would "continue to preach harder and harder." Americans United for the Separation of Church and State feels Blair stepped over the line in the '08 Presidential race and has done so again.

There is a duel of billboards in western North Carolina. An atheist group has erected six billboards with the phrase "One Nation Indivisible," leaving the words "Under God," from the Pledge of Allegiance. A church group was

outraged and responded by putting up a dozen billboards featuring the phrase "One Nation Under God." The billboards went up just before the July 4 weekend in Asheville and five other North Carolina cities along the Interstate 40 and Interstate 85 corridors. Rev. Ralph Sexton, Jr., pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church in Asheville says he is offended by the "One Nation Indivisible" sign, "We were established as a Christian nation, so don't try to rewrite history and sanitize it to write out God." Jennifer Lovejoy, a retired Army noncommissioned officer and an atheist, says the Constitution bans prescribed religion as reflected in the "Under God" pledge. So far, the billboard debate remains just a billboard debate, without incident, other than a few insulting blogs.

Israel, continued from page one

ters to speak to our leaders. Ambassador Michael Oren, (*The Hill* 6/10/10), when describing the aid given to Israel cites, "The Obama administration, for example, allocated \$205 million to the Iron Dome program that is vital to protecting Israel from Hamas and Hezbollah rockets, as well as far-reaching support for other systems — Arrow III, Arrow II and David's Sling

— designed to intercept longer range missiles from Iran. " This funding is in addition to the billions of dollars allocated to Israel through military aid. At our JAC fly-in, Amb. Oren spoke forcefully about the importance of these joint exercises and funding and stressed that these items were unprecedented in any other administration. Israel is an important ally of the United

States and should remain a bipartisan issue. Leaders on both sides of the aisle should be reminded that Israel needs support from our entire congress and can not become an issue that gets debated over. This increased aid in funding and information shows that despite the rhetoric, Israel is being protected and supported by our government and military on all levels.