On my mind this month...

Clearly, things are heating up in this election cycle. It must be the trial lawyer in me - I love the action. My sense, however, is that not everyone loves the give and take and just wants everyone to agree with their position (OK, I get like this at times, but that’s the judge in me!).

I understand that a prolonged battle between the two Democratic front runners can be problematic since we do need to get on with the election debate with the Republicans. However, the level of discussion that has been generated by the Clinton/Obama races has been so interesting and so stimulating that I, for one, am glad for it. Last week for the first time, in a long time, I was at a dinner party where guests talked about the issue of race without rancor or retribution. It was wonderful, intelligent and informative.

The reaction of my dinner companions last week has not always been the case and I have heard words of racism and sexism from many via the internet and at various gatherings. This is disturbing. We must speak out whenever we hear this type of speech regardless of who we support. These views only diminish us as a people and as a nation.

JAC has a long and proud history of supporting candidates who fight for our civil rights. We, as members of this organization, can do no less. Thus we must speak out against falsehoods and bigotry directed towards any person who has willingly put themselves forward for public service.

President George W. Bush visited Israel in January for the first time since he was elected in 2000. Vice President Dick Cheney was in Israel this past weekend. Cheney is on a 10 day trip to the Mideast, where oil, the future of Iraq and Afghanistan and Iran’s rising influence in the region have been the topics for discussion with foreign leaders. On Easter weekend Cheney visited Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories. Before going to the West Bank, Cheney met with Israeli officials in Jerusalem. He reaffirmed Washington’s commitment to establishing a Palestinian state - “a feat,” he said, “would require painful concessions on both sides...We want to see a resolution to the conflict, and an end to the terrorism that has caused so much grief to Israelis and a new beginning for the Palestinian people.” He stressed that the United States would “never pressure Israel to take steps that would jeopardize its security.” Cheney then flew by helicopter to meet with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. He repeated the U.S. commitment to the creation of an independent Palestinian state, saying it was “long overdue.”

He then added, “terror and violence do not merely kill innocent civilians, they also kill the legitimate hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people.” Abbas thanked Cheney for U.S. support and asked the U.S. to stop Israeli settlement expansion and military operations that target militants. According to the Associated Press, Edward Abbotting, a former U.S. consul in Jerusalem and now an adviser to Abbas, said the mood in Ramallah was grim. “Neither the Israelis or Palestinians are convinced that Cheney is an integral player in the peace process.”

(Yahoo News, AP 3/22/08)

The House passed in September, 2007, H.R 1400, and the Senate is considering legislation, S. 1430, aimed at increasing economic and political pressure on Iran. The legislation, introduced in the House by
There are five open Senate seats, all currently held by Republicans. Here is what those contests look like so far.

**Colorado** -- (currently held by Republican Sen. Wayne Allard). Rep. Mark Udall (D) faces, former GOP Rep. Bob Schaffer (R). Green party candidate Bob Kinsey is also in the mix. This race is considered a toss-up at this time.

**Idaho** -- (currently held by Republican Sen. Larry Craig). Former Rep. LaRocco is in the race, as are multiple GOP candidates. This seat is considered safe for whichever Republican becomes the nominee.

**Nebraska** -- (currently held by GOP Sen. Chuck Hagel) is a likely Republican seat. There are multiple candidates on all sides, including a Green Party candidate.

**New Mexico** -- (currently held by GOP Sen. Pete Domenici). Rep. Tom Udall (D) faces GOP Rep. Heather Wilson or GOP Rep. Steve Pearce. This is a toss-up at this time.

**Virginia** -- (currently held by Republican Sen. John Warner). Former Gov. Mark Warner (D) vs. GOP Gov. Jim Gilmore. This is a likely Democratic takeover.

**Mississippi** -- (GOP Sen. Trent Lott resigned Dec. 2007). This seat was filled by GOP Rep. Roger Wicker, who was appointed by the Governor and sworn in January 2008. He will run again in November to complete Lott’s term. Wicker will face former Gov. Ronnie Musgrove (D). The race favors Wicker who now has the advantage of incumbency. Likely GOP.

**Minnesota** -- Attorney and former Senate candidate Mike Ciresi (D) has withdrawn from the race. That leaves radio talk show host Al Franken with three, not prominent, Democratic challengers. This primary is very late, September 9, when Franken will be able to officially start his campaign against GOP Sen. Norm Coleman. The War in Iraq, the economy, health care and education issues are putting this race in the Toss-up column.

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**Israel, continued from page 1**

Reps. Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and in the Senate by Sens. Durbin (D-IL) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) gives the U.S. tools to cut off funds to Iran’s nuclear program and prohibits U.S. nuclear cooperation with those aiding Iran’s atomic efforts. In addition, the House has passed the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2007 which authorizes state and local governments to divest from companies investing in Iran’s petroleum and natural gas sector and protects fund managers who divest from such companies from potential lawsuits. The legislation was introduced in the House by Reps. Barney Frank (D-MA) and Christopher Shays (R-CT) and is sponsored in the Senate by Sens. Barack Obama (D-IL) and Sam Brownback (R-KS). Ask your Senators to cosponsor these bills. Capitol switchboard 202-224-3121

On March 25, King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud announced that he will organize an interfaith conference involving Christians, Muslims and Jews. The king said he hopes the interfaith dialogue will “prevent the rapid decline in morals and traditional family values rampant in society, and restore loyalty and caring as guiding principles in our world.” The Saudi Arabian News Agency reported that senior Muslim leaders authorized the idea and consultations would be made with Islamic religious authorities from other countries. The King went on to say that, “with God’s help we will meet our brethren from other religions, including those who believe in the Torah and in the Gospel, in order to find ways to defend humanity.” (Jerusalem Post, 3/25/08)