On March 23rd, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, Meron Reuben, sent letters to the head of the UN Security Council and to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to express his “grave concern in the face of a very serious escalation of Palestinian terrorist attacks targeting innocent Israeli civilians, which threatens to undermine stability in our region.” (*JFA*, 3/11)

March has been a tragic month for Israel. March 11th: Palestinian terrorists entered an Israeli home and brutally murdered 5 members of the Fogel family including 3 children, ages 2 to 11. March 13th: Palestinians named a town square in the West Bank after a terrorist involved in the killing of 37 Israelis after a bus hijacking. March 19th: Hamas forces in Gaza bombarded the Negev with over 50 rockets. March 23rd: a bomb exploded next to a bus in Central Jerusalem killing 1 and wounding 30. March 24th: 6 rockets from Gaza entered Ashdod. In response Israel has been striking smuggling tunnels in Gaza and other terrorist targets. Israeli citizens are feeling deliberately targeted. Schools in Beersheba, Kiryat Gat and Ashdod were closed this week, as was the entrance to the city of Jerusalem. Mayors in these towns say they could not take responsibility for endangering the security of any child in the city. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3/24/11)

These sustained attacks affect children and adults trying to live normal lives. Speaking at a joint press conference with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Tel Aviv, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said Israel will not tolerate firing against its citizens. He said the IDF knows what it needs to do and will work to:

(Choice, continued on page two)
Choice, continued from page one

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Senior Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) was the surprise winner in the 2008 special election. Massachusetts favors Democrats but there is no front-runner for the Democratic nomination, thus the “toss-up” designation.

Missouri-- Senator Claire McCaskill (D) finds herself fighting an ethics scandal over unpaid taxes. Missouri is not hospitable to Democrats and this will make the race that much tougher. The GOP primary is heating up between former state Treasurer Sarah Steelman and Former Senator Blunt’s Chief of Staff Ed Martin.

Montana-- Freshman Senator Jon Tester (D) faces the state’s only congress-man, Rep. Dennis Rehberg. Rehberg has represented Montana for 12 years and won in 2010 with 60%.

Nebraska-- Senator Ben Nelson (D) already has two top-tier opponents: Attorney General Jon Bruning and state Treasurer and former Attorney General Don Stenberg.

Ohio -- Senator Sherrod Brown (D) could face any GOP member of the Ohio delegation, state Treasurer Josh Mandel, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, or former Attorney General Betty Montgomery. Unless the job numbers improve, Brown is in trouble.

West Virginia -- Senator Joe Manchin (D) won a special election to fill the unexpired term of the late Senator Robert Byrd (D). Manchin is anti-choice and pro-gun, but a strong GOP candidate will give him trouble.

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Hawaii-- Hawaii has always been considered a Democratic state, but if former GOP Gov. Laura Lingle runs, this could be a horserace.

Nevada-- GOP Rep. Dean Heller hopes to keep this seat in the GOP column. Several Democrats are looking, but no one has declared. Nevada has been hard hit by the recession and this race will be tight until the end.

New Mexico-- This is definitely in the “toss-up” column. Former GOP Rep. Heather Wilson has declared and received the endorsement of the establishment. Several Democrats are mentioned, including both Dem. Reps.

North Dakota -- Another “toss-up” race, but the state leans Republican. There are no announced candidates from either party.

Texas -- GOP Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison is retiring. The other sitting Senator is Republican, the Governor is Republican, and the state legislature is Republican. It’s hard to see a Democrat taking this seat.

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Research & Races

2012 OUTLOOK: HOUSE

All 435 districts will be redrawn before the 2012 elections. The biggest states - California, Florida, New York and Texas - will account for 33% of seats in the next Congress. California continues to have 53 seats; Florida will gain 2 seats bringing its congressional delegation to 27; New York loses 1 seat giving it 28; Texas gains 4, raising its tally to 36. Six states place the power to redistrict in the hands of a bipartisan, nonpartisan and/or citizen-based commission - Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, New Jersey and Washington. State legislatures control the process in the remaining states. If no final results are reached, the process ends up in court. In a state such as Illinois, which is losing a seat, and where a Democratic legislature will make the decisions, it is likely that two Republicans could end up in the same district competing against each other. On the other side, Texas Republicans are likely to draw four new districts to GOP advantage.

SENATE UPDATE

There are 51 Democrats, 47 Republicans, and 2 Independents who caucus with the Democrats. Republicans need a net gain of 4 seats to take control. Democrats are defending 23 seats, Republicans 10.

STATES TO WATCH

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Senior Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) have introduced the “Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act” which would strike the main funding for the programs and instead fund $50 million a year of comprehensive sex education programs that include abstinence.

Israel, continued from page one

make sure there is not an escalation.

Recent unrest in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Jordan and Libya has Israel concerned about whether fundamentalist Islamic factions will be part of leadership in these new governments. Israel is nervous about current relationships and peace treaties. Syria, which is on Israel’s northern border, and has always been antagonistic towards the Jewish state, has had deadly protests and crackdowns in its major cities. Security forces killed fifteen protesters after a week of unrest. Despite the force, 20,000 Syrians marched and chanted freedom slogans in the city of Deraa. Opposition groups have been banned in Syria since the Baath Party took power in a 1963 coup. (LA Times. 3/23/11) The protesters, like others in the Middle East, are revolting against government corruption and cronyism.