

JAC NEWSbreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

September 27, 2011

On my mind this month...



Gail Yamner

The steady drum beat for Palestinian statehood recognition at the UN finally sounded as PA President Mahmoud Abbas delivered his bid

to the General Assembly on September 23rd. The crowds in Ramallah erupted into chants and cheers. The applause in the UN was thunderous throughout the speech. The sentiment of the majority was on the side of the Palestinian Authority as most of the assembled greeted him with a standing ovation.

In the speech Abbas laid the blame for the ills and evils of the world on Israel. As he spoke of the safety of children going to school, I wondered about the children in Israel who have rockets rained down on them in the mornings as they walk to school. As he spoke of democracy, I wondered at the lack of elections in his Palestine. As he spoke of Israel's refusal to negotiate, I wondered at his own refusal and lack of real authority to restart talks. Does he speak for Hamas-controlled Gaza? Is he willing to recognize Israel? As he spoke of the right of return and their plight as refugees, I wondered why refugee status for Palestinians is passed from one generation to the next and why only Palestinians can be both refugees and citizens of another country.

It is said that on Rosh Hashana our destiny is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed. As Jews, our destiny is inextricably linked with Israel, the Jewish homeland; as Americans, we are bound to Israel, the lone Middle East democracy. Through JAC we have worked to preserve those links and strengthen them. Standing together, even the impossible is possible. Even peace.

Thank you for your support. Shana

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Israel

The United Nations Security Council on September 26th began discussing the Palestinian bid for statehood and UN membership. No date has been set for a vote. The United States has said it will veto the bid for UN recognition of a Palestinian state if it comes to a Security Council vote. The Quartet - the US, the UN, the European Union and Russia - called on Israel and the Palestinians to resume peace talks within a month and set the goal of the end of 2012 for the completion of negotiations. A senior Israeli official said they "view favorably the call for a return to direct talks." The proposal made no mention of the pre-1967 lines or Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. President Abbas "reacted coolly to the blueprint for talks...and ruled out any plan that did not demand an end to Israeli settlement building or the '67 borders." (*Jerusalem Post, BBC.com*)

President Obama, Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas all addressed the UN General Assembly the previous week. President Obama emphatically said there is not, and never will be, a wedge between Israel and the United States. He made it clear that his administration believes the UN is not the right venue to declare an independent Palestinian state. The conflict, he has said repeatedly, can only be solved by "direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that will result in two states..." President Abbas spoke two days later, portraying the Palestinian people as victims of Israeli aggression and intransigence, offering a litany of Israeli abuses. Several times, he referred to the ongoing "Nakba" or "catastrophe" (referring to Israel's founding). He called for an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital on all of the land of the West Bank, including the Gaza Strip. Soon after, Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke. "On behalf of Israel and the Jewish people, I extend my hand to the Palestinian people, with whom we seek a just and lasting peace." Netanyahu spoke of the danger of

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United States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Last week a doctor went to an abortion clinic and received an abortion. She was not raped or abused. She was financially able to have a baby. She was married. She got pregnant, and decided after speaking with her friends and husband, that she could not have an unwanted child. This decision played out in a unique way: on the TV show *Grey's Anatomy*, one of the only network shows to actually have a character go through with an elective termination.

Unfortunately, an abortion in the United States is much harder to access than on television. The *New York Times* (9/25/11) did an exposé on vanishing abortion rights. The United States Congress with a Republican majority has attacked women's reproductive health through legislation, such as prohibiting federal funding, banning abortion in Washington DC, limiting dollars for medical facilities if they train doctors in abortion care, and banning abortions for military women who have been raped.

The largest area for the increase in barriers to reproductive rights is in the state legislatures. After the 2010 mid-term elections, the number of laws limiting those rights has skyrocketed. Such restrictions have included: required Christian-based counseling, mandatory waiting periods, parental consent, unreasonably burdensome clinic regulations and denial of abortion coverage in insurance policies. These laws make abortions harder to get and harm women seeking safe and legal abortions.

To counter these laws, the Administration is taking steps, among them approval of a recommendation from the Institute of Medicine to guarantee full health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act for birth control, including the "morning after" pill. Beginning August 1, 2012, new guidelines will require new health insurance plans to include women's preventive services including FDA-approved contraceptives, breast feed-

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Research & Races

JAC-SUPPORTED SENATE WOMEN

California -- Dem. Senator Dianne Feinstein is running for her 5th term and she is ranked as likely to win by JAC and most analysts. Currently, there are no strong declared opponents, but Feinstein has a situation that has complicated her race in the most expensive state to run a campaign. A political consultant, used by the Senator and other members of the California Congressional delegation, embezzled campaign funds -- \$5 million from Feinstein (and several million also from JAC-supported Reps. Susan Davis and Loretta Sanchez). This increases the fundraising pressure.

Maine--JAC supports GOP Senator Olympia Snowe, running for her fourth term, and one of a vanishing breed of Republican moderates. Several Democrats are mentioned but no one has officially entered the race. Snowe will face a primary challenge from the right. Scott D'Amboise, a local elected official, and Andrew Ian Dodge, a Tea Party activist, have announced. A contentious primary makes the general election more difficult.

Michigan -- JAC supported Dem. Senator Debbie Stabenow when she was in the House and in her previous two Senate races. She is perfect on

JAC's issues and continues to fight for the rights of women in health care and reproductive rights debates. She is being challenged by former Rep. Peter Hoekstra, who has good name recognition from his unsuccessful 2010 run for Governor. Hoekstra will have a primary but he is definitely the frontrunner.

Minnesota -- Dem. Senator Amy Klobuchar is completing her first term in the Senate. Her approval ratings are very high and she will definitely not have primary opposition. Klobuchar is smart, clever, and very adept at constituent service. (The former prosecutor is also versatile, having won a Minnesota Congressional delegation "Hot Dish Cook-Off" in January.) It appears that the GOP will have a primary, but there is no top tier candidate right now.

Missouri -- First-term Dem. Senator Claire McCaskill is one of the most vulnerable Democrats. Missouri is a swing state that went for McCain in 2008, and McCaskill won her seat with barely 50% two years before. Two high profile Republicans have declared: former st. Treasurer and '08 gubernatorial candidate Sarah Steelman and GOP Rep. Todd Akin. McCaskill has been excellent on JAC's issues. JAC has not received position papers from

Steelman. Akin has a good record on Israel related issues and a completely negative record on reproductive rights and separation.

New York -- Dem. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand is running for her first full term. She was appointed to fill the Hillary Clinton seat and then ran in 2010 for the remaining two years of Clinton's term. She has become a visible and vocal advocate for women, not just for their reproductive rights, but for equal employment and for a place in the political establishment. Traveling the country to urge women to run for political office, she is quick to let audiences know that women make a difference in Congressional deliberations. She cites her service on the House Armed Services committee as an example: the men only cared about the weapons, not the soldiers.

Washington -- Two-term Dem. Senator Maria Cantwell has been JAC's friend since her tenure in the House. She serves on the Commerce, Finance, and Energy and Natural Resources Committees and is especially vocal on the development of alternative energy. This should be a safe seat for Democrats, but this year could see a lot of upsets. Cantwell and JAC are taking her race seriously.

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ing support, and well-woman visits, all without a copayment, co-insurance or a deductible.

Senator Lautenberg (D-NJ) is also working on foreign appropriations legislation that would prevent Congress or future administrations from limiting funding for overseas charities that counsel women on family planning matters. The Lautenberg measure is aimed at blocking the reinstatement of the global gag rule.

The Susan B. Anthony List and its connected PAC, the SBA List Candidate Fund, "are dedicated to electing candidates and pursuing policies that will reduce and ultimately end abortion." The group presents its six-point mission: 1) To elect pro-life candi-

dates; 2) To educate voters on pro-life issues and legislation; 3) To train and equip pro-life activists; 4) To promote positive responses to what they consider distortions from the pro-Choice lobby; 5) To advocate for the passage of anti-Choice legislation; and 6) "To connect legislative and electoral consequences through its Votes Have Consequences Program."

The SBA List has asked the GOP Presidential candidates to sign its 2012 Pro-Life Presidential Leadership Pledge that has them promise, among other things, to appoint only "non-activist" judges and "pro-life" appointees, defund Planned Parenthood and similar organizations, and advance pro-life legislation, especially fetal pain legislation. Currently, Michele

Bachmann, Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, and Rick Santorum have signed the pledge. Herman Cain, Gov. Jon Huntsman, Gov. Gary Johnson and Gov. Mitt Romney have refused to sign, although all of them proclaim their pro-Life credentials. Texas Gov. Rick Perry, the latest candidate to declare, has not yet signed, but he is reported to back a constitutional amendment to ban abortion.

The SBA List also asks its supporters to sign its Pro-Life Citizen's Pledge that applies the provisions of the candidate pledge to actions they want private citizens to take. Its intention is to put pressure on elected officials to make all abortions first unavailable and ultimately illegal.

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militant Islam, an Iran armed with nuclear weapons, and the neighborhood surrounding Israel. He enumerated the peace offers that Israel previously extended, in 2000 and in 2008 -- all rejected or ignored. Israel

he said, withdrew from Lebanon in 2000 and all of Gaza in 2005. "We didn't freeze settlements in Gaza, we uprooted them." In contrast to the tone of President Abbas' remarks, Prime Minister Netanyahu ended his

speech saying "we're both in the same city, we're in the same building, so let's meet here today in the United Nations...what is there to stop us from meeting today and beginning peace negotiations?"