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JEW BACK CLINTON IN RECORD NUMBERS, REFLECTING BROAD JEWISH COALITION

By Larry Yudelson and Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- American Jews from across the political spectrum overwhelmingly backed Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton over President Bush in Tuesday's presidential election.

An exit poll conducted by the American Jewish Congress placed Clinton's support among Jews at 86 percent, versus 10 percent for Bush and 4 percent for independent candidate Ross Perot.

Observers said the vote reflected Jewish anger over Bush's harsh tone toward Israel, fear of the Republican embrace of the religious right and concern over eroding abortion rights, as well as the general issues of change and the economy that brought his Democratic challenger to victory.

"It is an incredibly important moment for the Jewish community," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"It's very important, very good news for the American Jewish community," said Ann Lewis, a Democratic activist and chair of the Commission for Women's Equality of the American Jewish Congress.

"The advocates of religious wars lost and lost decisively. A strong message was sent to the political system that that kind of politics is self-defeating," she said.

'A Moment Of Triumph And Joy'

"Everyone who has yearned for a more prosperous, compassionate America and a stronger U.S.-Israel relationship should regard the Clinton-Gore victory as a moment of triumph and joy," said Morton Mandel, a veteran Jewish communal activist who chairs the partisan National Jewish Democratic Council.

Given the hostility aroused by such Bush actions as withholding \$10 billion in loan guarantees from Israel until it changed its settlement policy and the overwhelmingly liberal nature of the American Jewish community, even Republican activists did not expect Bush to attain 30 percent of the Jewish vote, as he did in 1988.

The dismal Jewish vote received by Bush, whether the 10 percent reported by the AJCongress poll or the 15 percent given by other, broader surveys, reflects the lowest received by a Republican since 1976, when Jimmy Carter defeated Republican incumbent Gerald Ford.

"There has to be some element of punishing Bush," said Milton Himmelfarb, retired longtime director of research at the American Jewish Committee, referring to the defection of those Jews who previously voted Republican.

However, the votes for Clinton also reflect the Jewish community's real sense of comfort with the president-elect.

Jews have been among Clinton's earliest financial backers, closest advisers and top campaign officials. And Jews were among the most supportive ethnic groups for Clinton, possibly even exceeding support among blacks, according to polls cited by Saperstein.

Among the record turnout generated by the election across the country, were a quarter of a

million new Jewish voters, said Rabbi Gerald Zelizer, president of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly.

"That is dramatic evidence that Jews are still very much a part of the American civic process," he said.

Lewis also pointed out that this election has gotten young Jews back into the political process, "and that's good for the community."

She pointed to the particular impact of the abortion-rights debate as an "explosive, energizing" issue among young Jewish women.

Himmelfarb agreed that abortion played a major role in the community's decision.

"I wouldn't be surprised that if you sat down to speak with a focus group of Jews, that the pro-abortion passion moved them as much as the pro-Israel passion.

'Israel Thing Is Secondary'

"The Jewish voters classically have not voted on Jewish issues, but on liberal ideology. The Israel thing is secondary," said Himmelfarb.

"The Israel element is very important," said David Singer, who succeeded Himmelfarb at the AJCommittee. "But in most elections, it tends to be a washout. You've never had a candidate who was actively anti-Israel."

Bush backers, pointing to his support for the free emigration of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews and his role in arranging the peace process, said it was only the president's tone that was responsible for the perception that he was anti-Israel.

"There was a great sense of people in our community being unsure about the next four years with President Bush," said George Klein, general chairman of the Bush-Quayle Jewish Campaign Committee. But "it was more tone than substance," he added.

He said the tone was set by Bush's attack on Jewish lobbyists in September 1991, for which he later apologized, and comments disparaging the value of the Jewish vote attributed to, and denied by, former Secretary of State James Baker, who is now White House chief of staff.

Klein complained that these incidents overshadowed the administration's real accomplishments on issues of concern to the American Jewish community.

Some American Jews rejoicing in the Clinton victory, particularly those who agreed with Bush's opposition to Israeli policy in the administered territories, echoed Klein's assessment.

Jewish Advice To Clinton Is Split

The result of this broad Jewish coalition uniting behind Clinton is a strong split in the advice being given the new administration by its Jewish supporters.

Observed Michael Lerner, editor of the liberal magazine Tikkun: "Clinton had among his supporters both leaders of Jews who support the Israeli peace movement and Jews who have been in the Shamir camp in Israel.

"So there's an intense struggle that will continue in the Clinton administration, between those who think the Clinton administration should do its best to support the peace process and those who think the administration should tilt toward the hawks within the Rabin coalition."

**NEW CONGRESS TO HAVE MORE JEWS
AND IS LIKELY TO BE AS PRO-ISRAEL**

By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- The Senate elected Tuesday will include more Jews than ever before, including two from California, both of them Democratic women.

The election of Rep. Barbara Boxer and former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein makes California the first state to have an all-Jewish Senate delegation. It is also the first time both members of a Senate delegation are women.

With the election of Russell Feingold in Wisconsin, the Senate will now have 10 Jewish members, all of them Democrats with the exception of Republican Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania.

As Democratic political consultant Ann Lewis put it, "there will be enough Jewish senators to put a minyan if the minyan includes Boxer and Feinstein. There's a message in that."

The House of Representatives will include 33 Jewish members, the same number as in the current Congress, despite the departure of 11 Jewish incumbents.

Tuesday's election produced fewer upsets than anticipated, despite the congressional scandals and anti-incumbency wave that engulfed this political season.

Observers say that in spite of the changes that will occur, the new Congress will remain solidly pro-Israel.

That news comes as a relief to those who feared a massive upheaval would radically shift priorities and threaten the Jewish agenda, most notably aid for Israel. The departure of several key pro-Israel congressional leaders had aggravated that fear.

'We Have Work To Do'

In fact, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee predicted there would be more votes for foreign aid than in the current Congress.

"The 103rd Congress will consist of even more supporters than the previous Congress," said Tom Dine, executive director of AIPAC.

"I am excited by the caliber of veteran and new senators and representatives, and by their appreciation of Israel's moral and military value to the United States," he said.

"There is a new sense of pluralism," observed Steve Gutow, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, "and the Jewish community always benefits when pluralism shows its face."

"With the new members, clearly we have work to do to explain why the relationship between our country and Israel makes so much sense," said Gutow. "But, having read a lot of position papers and watched the campaigns, many of them are far ahead of the starting line."

Conservative incumbents fared particularly well in most of the tough Senate races closely watched by the Jewish community. In some of these cases, the races bitterly divided the Jewish community and underscored that Jews are not single-issue voters.

The biggest exception to the pattern of incumbent triumph was in Wisconsin, where Sen. Robert Kasten, a conservative Republican, lost to Feingold, a progressive Jewish state senator.

Kasten, a leader of the fight in the Senate to provide loan guarantees to Israel, was supported heavily by pro-Israel political action

committees, but the Jewish vote was deeply split between the two.

In what may have been the most bitter race, Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) narrowly defeated New York Attorney General Robert Abrams.

Despite the fact that Abrams is Jewish and D'Amato is Catholic, the conservative incumbent won 40 percent of the Jewish vote, which was key to his victory. He had received the lion's share of the pro-Israel PAC money.

Specter Survives Challenge

In another emotionally charged race, Sen. Specter of Pennsylvania defeated Democratic challenger Lynn Yeakel, conquering the backlash from his role in last year's confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

Jews were bitterly divided over the race. But Specter, who is Jewish and pro-choice on the abortion issue, won stronger backing from the organized pro-Israel community.

In the California races, Feinstein benefited from a hard-fought campaign and anti-incumbent sentiment when she toppled incumbent Sen. John Seymour, who was appointed when his predecessor, Pete Wilson, became governor. She will serve the remaining two years of his term.

And Boxer, who defeated pro-Israel champion Rep. Mel Levine in the Democratic primary for a full six-year Senate seat, routed conservative pro-lifer Bruce Herschensohn, also Jewish, in a race that grew much tighter than expected.

In another close race, Republican pro-Israel Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond of Missouri beat a Jewish St. Louis city councilwoman, Geri Rothman-Serot.

In Illinois, Carol Moseley Braun, a Democrat, won her bid to become the first black woman to serve in the Senate. She was strongly supported by the Jewish community, despite opponent Richard Williamson's attempt to link her to Rev. Jesse Jackson and anti-Semitic Rep. Gus Savage, who lost in the Democratic primary.

In the House, there were wins and losses for the pro-Israel community.

Rep. Mary Rose Oakar (D-Ohio) lost her bid for re-election to Martin Hoke, a political newcomer, after becoming engulfed in a series of ethical problems. Oakar, who is of Arab descent, had not been considered a friend of Israel because of her pro-Palestinian leanings.

2 Jewish Incumbents Defeated

In Alabama, a Jewish Democrat, Rep. Ben Erdreich, lost his race after redistricting forced him to run in a mostly Republican district.

Also losing a re-election bid was Jewish Rep. Bill Green (R-N.Y.), a trusted pro-Israel ally.

In Connecticut, Jewish Democratic Rep. Sam Gejdenson won re-election after an exceptionally close contest. He could become chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee if the next designated chairman, Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), is tapped to serve in the Clinton administration.

In California, San Diego City Councilman Bob Filner, a Jewish Democrat, beat Tony Valencia, a Latino Republican who had waged a nasty campaign with anti-Semitic slurs.

Other Jewish candidates who won seats for the first time, with heavy backing from the pro-Israel community, include Lynn Schenk, a California Democrat; Eric Fingerhut, an Ohio Democrat; and Herb Klein, a New Jersey Democrat.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Tom Tugend in Los Angeles.)

AIPAC PRESIDENT QUILTS AFTER BOASTING OF INFLUENCE OVER BAKER AND CLINTON

By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- The president of AIPAC has resigned after revelations of a taped telephone conversation in which he falsely claimed to have cut a secret deal with the secretary of state and to have influenced the Clinton campaign on prospective Cabinet appointments.

The tape was made without the knowledge of the AIPAC president, David Steiner, and was sent to The Washington Times, which published excerpts of it in a story that appeared Wednesday.

The incident is an embarrassing blow to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which has been attacked in the news media over the years for being politically heavy-handed.

The powerful pro-Israel lobby also has been stung in recent months by charges from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that its confrontational efforts to secure loan guarantees for Israel were counterproductive.

According to a confidential memo obtained by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that was sent Tuesday to AIPAC's executive committee, Steiner received a telephone call about two weeks ago from a man who identified himself as a "major potential political activist."

In an apparent effort to "encourage him to become more involved," Steiner told the caller stories about his own political involvement and "presented an inflated characterization of his contacts and dealings with major public figures," according to the memo.

Unaware The Conversation Was Taped

The AIPAC president claimed to have had a meeting with James Baker while he was secretary of state that Steiner said secured a \$1 billion strategic cooperation deal for Israel. He also said he had negotiated with the Clinton campaign about who would become secretary of state in a Clinton administration.

Steiner was unaware the conversation was being taped by the caller, a New York businessman named Harry Katz. Katz has been described in media reports as a man with a propensity to sue individuals and Jewish agencies.

After Steiner learned a tape of the conversation had been sent to The Washington Times, he issued a resignation statement, dated Oct. 30. In it, he apologized to Clinton, Baker and AIPAC, calling it "a difficult and painful moment."

"In an effort to encourage and impress what I thought was a potential political activist," he said, "I made statements which went beyond overzealousness and exaggeration and were simply and totally untrue."

"There were no 'deals' with Secretary Baker, nor any negotiations with the Clinton campaign, as I described," he wrote. "I know that many people in politics exaggerate their closeness to and influence with politicians to impress others, but what I did was wrong."

"I deeply believe that the relationship between the United States and Israel serves the highest interests of both democracies, and I intended to do nothing to harm this relationship."

AIPAC waited several days to go public with the development, in order to alert Baker, who is now White House chief of staff, and the Clinton campaign before issuing a disclaimer.

"AIPAC played no role in the negotiations

over military assistance to Israel that he described," said AIPAC spokeswoman Toby Der-showitz.

"These were initiated by the meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and President Bush in Kennebunkport in August, and continued to completion by Israeli and American negotiating teams during September and October."

She added: "On no occasion has the Clinton campaign engaged in discussions with Mr. Steiner or AIPAC about personnel matters at any level."

Mayer Mitchell, chairman of AIPAC's board, and Tom Dine, its executive director, paid tribute to Steiner in their memo to the executive committee. "We know that you will, upon hearing this news, share anguish for a colleague who has given everything to our cause and this organization, a man of the highest character who, during a period of physical stress, made a very human error."

Steiner had major heart surgery in June and "subsequently has been under great physical stress," they wrote.

This is a "body blow to a very important institution in Jewish life that has been under attack," said a prominent Jewish leader. "What makes it more tragic is that it was self-inflicted."

RABIN SENDS WARM MESSAGE TO CLINTON WHILE SHAMIR EXPRESSES DEEP RELIEF

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin warmly congratulated Gov. Bill Clinton on his victory in the U.S. presidential elections, but Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir was far more effusive about President Bush's defeat.

"Thank God we won't be dealing with him anymore," the former prime minister told Israel Radio.

The reactions of the two leaders highlighted the deep differences between the two sides of Israel's political divide in attitudes toward the outgoing American administration.

Shamir acknowledged there had been ups as well as downs in U.S.-Israeli relations during the Bush years. But he made it clear the negative sides were predominant.

Other Likud figures echoed Shamir's implied sentiment that Bush had helped topple the Likud and bring Labor to power in elections last June. Bush accomplished this chiefly by denying loan guarantees to the Shamir government and awarding them to Rabin in return for a partial freeze on settlements in the administered territories.

In congratulatory messages to Clinton, Israeli leaders voiced the hope that U.S. ties will be, in Rabin's words, "close as always."

President Chaim Herzog, in wishing Clinton success, hoped the "very special relationship" between the two countries would "broaden and expand" in an advance toward peace in the Middle East.

In their messages to Bush, Israeli leaders warmly lauded his help in initiating the peace process, supporting Israel's security and ensuring free emigration for Jews from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, Israel's ambassador to the United States, Zalman Shoval, told army radio that he would be staying on in Washington "until the spring" to oversee Israel's entry into a relationship with the Clinton team.

It had earlier been reported that his successor, Itamar Rabinovich, would replace Shoval as early as the end of this month.

SUPREME COURT HEARS ORAL ARGUMENT IN CASE WATCHED BY JEWISH GROUPS

By Kimberly C. Moore
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- In what is being called a landmark religious freedom case, the U.S. Supreme Court must now decide whether the city of Hialeah, Fla. is justified in banning the sacrifice of animals or if the city's law violates a church's right to practice its religion.

Douglas Laycock, attorney for the plaintiff in Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye Inc. and Ernesto Pichardo vs. the City of Hialeah, argued before the court Wednesday that the city is "openly discriminating against minority religions, principally restricting the practices of this religion."

Animal sacrifice to various spirits is the central practice of Santeria, a religion that has its roots in Africa and arrived in the United States via the Caribbean.

Jewish organizations and other religious groups are backing the Santeria church and are watching the case closely. They believe the court's decision in it could impact the way constitutionally protected religious liberty is defined in America.

Samuel Rabinove, legal director for the American Jewish Committee, said a ruling in favor of Hialeah would be "perilous for Jews" and further restrict freedom of religious expression.

"States could pass laws regulating kosher slaughter and prohibiting circumcision except when performed by a licensed physician," Rabinove said. "I'm not saying this will happen, but we would have no protection."

Practices Pose Health Hazards

The counsel for the defense maintains that sacrificing and then disposing of the animals cause health hazards, citing the discovery of a dead goat on Miami Beach.

"There are goat heads and blood being preserved where people live, creating vectors for disease," said Richard Garrett, who argued the case for Hialeah. Garrett added that Santeria practices Satanism, witchcraft and voodoo.

But attorney Marc Stern, co-director of American Jewish Congress Commission on Law and Social Action, said, "The impression is unavoidable that the ordinances were passed to do away with a particular religion."

AJCongress joined with a broad religious coalition to file a friend-of-the-court brief in favor of the unpopular church.

The high court decision will likely be based on the precedent set by a 1990 Supreme Court ruling, in Smith vs. Oregon. In this case, the court ruled that a ban on the drug peyote did not infringe on the rights of Native Americans, who use the hallucinogen in religious rituals.

While Jewish groups hope the court will use this opportunity to limit the scope of the Smith ruling, the justices may decide the case on narrower grounds, if they find the Hialeah ordinances were intended to target the Santeria church specifically.

"There are no ordinances interfering with the routine killing of animals in Hialeah every day," Laycock pointed out, citing the euthanasia of unwanted pets and the fact that hunting is a legal sport in Dade County.

The court is expected to hand down a decision after the first of the year.

JCC ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT TAPPED TO CHAIR CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- Lester Pollack, an investment banker and lawyer who is president of the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America, has been nominated to succeed Shoshana Cardin as chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

He will assume the post Jan. 1, if his nomination is approved by the nearly 60 organizations who are members of the conference at its annual meeting Dec. 2. Until now, no recommendation of the nominating committee has failed to be accepted.

Pollack was chosen Tuesday morning, as Americans were voting for president, by a committee representing six of the conference's 52 member organizations.

Three other announced candidates for the post were Alfred Moses, president of the American Jewish Committee; Robert Lifton, president of the American Jewish Congress; and Maynard Wishner, chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Pollack, a general partner of Lazard Freres & Co., was previously president of the New York Jewish Community Relations Council.

He is also chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Anti-Defamation League and a member of the executive committee of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

He serves on the boards of, among others, the Council of Jewish Federations, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, UJA-Federation of New York, Paramount Communications Inc., Polaroid Corp. and Loews Corp.

The selection of Pollack caps months of speculation that Lifton, as someone who has publicly and financially supported both the Israeli Labor government and President-elect Bill Clinton, might get the nod to head the umbrella group representing American Jewry on matters of international policy.

RABBIS AIM TO ELIMINATE SEEDS OF DOUBT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Ultra-orthodox Jewish couples seeking to have children by artificial insemination are importing gentile sperm from the United States to pre-empt possibilities of incest.

Some of Israel's strictest rabbinical authorities have approved the move with an eye toward preventing complications that might arise if sperm taken from the same Jewish donor was given to a number of women, according to Shlomo Mashiah, director of the gynecology department at the Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan.

An acute shortage in Israel in sperm donations by non-Jews led Sheba doctors to contact a "well-known" American semen bank which matches its shipment with characteristics requested by prospective parents, said Mashiah.

Applicants specify such preferences as the color of skin, hair and eyes or body structure.

Sophisticated equipment at the American firm checks sperm donations for jaundice, AIDS and other diseases.

Donations reach Israeli laboratories ready for use.

The price of a semen donation, which arrives frozen in a special container, is \$200.