



Plenum Insider

Tuesday, February 19, 2002

Issue #2

Jewish Council for Public Affairs Plenum 2002
Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Plenum 2002 – Highlights From Monday

EDELMAN: WE HAVE THE RESOURCES TO LIFT EVERY CHILD OUT OF POVERTY

WASHINGTON – Marian Wright Edelman, legendary activist and founder of the Children’s Defense Fund, rallied support for domestic programs to end poverty in a speech Monday. Addressing delegates from the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the Hillel Spitzer Forum from more than 100 communities across the United States and Canada, Edelman spoke about the growing gap between rich and poor in America. She called upon Congress to enact the “Leave No Child Behind Act” that includes a plan to add two million uninsured children to the nation’s health care rolls.



Speaking about the solutions to poverty, homelessness, abuse, and the millions of children without health insurance, Marian Wright Edelman, Children’s Defense Fund founder, said “they are our moral and political choices in America.” Referring to the annual budget debate in Congress, “we don’t have a money problem, we have a priority problem,” she said.

Panel Tackles Civil Liberties and War on Terrorism

A lively panel discussion on the Jewish community’s responsibilities to guarantee civil liberties in the face of new terrorism threats awoke bleary eyes at the morning’s first session. The ACLU’s Anthony Romero urged the Jewish community to remain a leader on civil liberties issues by speaking out in opposition to current Justice Department policies. The American Jewish Committee’s Steven Pomerantz and former Justice Department official Victoria Toensing both defended the Bush administration’s efforts to prosecute and investigate terrorists in the wake of the September 11th attacks.

Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg Receives JCPA Award

JCPA presented the Albert D. Chernin Award to U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Monday evening. Past JCPA Chair Arden E. Shenker hailed Ginsburg’s service to the country and for inspiring a commitment to social justice.

Preview of Tuesday’s Plenary Events

10:00 am – Congressional Rooms and Ballrooms

Administration and Diplomatic Briefings

Receive briefings from high-level Bush Administration officials and ranking diplomats. Presenters will be Aaron David Miller of the State Department, EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Treasury Juan Carlos Zarate, Argentine Ambassador Diego Ramiero Guelar, and First Counselor Philip Austie of the French Embassy.



LATEST NEWS FROM JTA:

Palestinian terrorists are focusing on Israeli soldiers and settlers, defense officials said.

A forum of former Israeli defense officials called for unilateral separation from the Palestinians.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority official Ahmed Karia reportedly met Sunday night.

Syrian President Bashar Assad said violence against Israel is, for the Palestinians, "a national duty and not terrorism."

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JCPA Executive Director Hannah Rosenthal shares a light moment with Ben and Jerry’s founder and social activist Ben Cohen (center) and Hillel’s President and International Director Richard Joel.