

At Agudath Israel Legislative Luncheon, Officials Declare: *We Must Stand Together Against Anti-Semitism*

JUDITH DINOWITZ

Just weeks after a turbulent and divisive election, on Tuesday, November 29th, an avid audience of Jewish community activists and legislators attended Agudath Israel's annual legislative gathering. Held at Alliance Bernstein Global Wealth Management in Midtown Manhattan, the luncheon featured Federal law enforcement and NYC government officials, as well as a bi-partisan panel of congressmen moderated by Rabbi Abba Cohen, director of Agudath Israel's Washington Office.

As NYC Public Advocate Letitia James declared, "In the face of hatred and adversity, the strongest weapon we have is to stand together." She stated that there is an economic anxiety in the city, and, since the election, a growing proliferation of hatred against the Jewish state. Recently, she attended a protest after a playground was defaced with swastikas. She declared that New York will take action to protect all New Yorkers against hatred and bigotry.

NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, corroborating the Public Advocate's

community - a place of fairness, of safety and security." He acknowledged and thanked the legislators present.

William F. Sweeney, Jr., FBI New York Director-in-Charge, agreed that partnerships are the key to fighting terrorism - a threat that has evolved, with younger attackers and homegrown assailants, with no obvious connection to terrorist regimes or agencies. "The FBI does nothing alone," he said. "Everything we do is based on partnerships. Thank you, especially this group, for your community and your voice."

our traditional allies in NATO. Several panelists spoke of the need to limit Iran's power. All participants agreed that we need a sane and wise immigration policy - one that does not shut the doors, but vets immigration with common sense.

In his opening remarks, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, Agudath Israel's Executive Vice President, thanked the event's sponsors, coordinator, and attending elected officials.

Sponsors included Mr. Joseph Richter, Mr. David Matovich, Mr. Simon Gans and Mr. Zurich Gabof. The event was coordinated by The Friedlander Group and its CEO, Ezra Friedlander. Elected officials included New York State Assembly Members Helene Weinstein and David Weprin; New York City Council Member Rory Lancman; Rockland County legislator, Aaron Wieder; and Mayor Izzy Spitzer of New Square.

Brief introductions to the speakers were made by: Jeffrey Wiesenfeld, principal with Alliance Bernstein Global Wealth Management and host of the luncheon; Joseph B. Stamm, Luncheon Co-Chair and CEO of MedReview; Michael A. Ramin, Luncheon Co-Chair; prominent community activist and Luncheon Co-Chair Peter Rebenwurz; and Rabbi Abe Friedman.



The theme of the luncheon, "National Security Decisions Awaiting President Trump in His First 100 Days: The View from Congress," led to a discussion of many vital topics, such as anti-Semitism, immigration, and supporting Israel. Throughout the afternoon, speakers kept coming back to the idea that cooperation and partnership - our ability to work together and present a united front - are our best weapons against anti-Semitism and the evolving terrorist threat.

words, said that since the election, hate crimes in the U.S. have risen by 31%. "We must address these issues," he said. He also warned of the possibility, based on certain campaign promises made by President-Elect Trump and a Republican Congress, of a tremendous NYC budget cut, one that would result in more homelessness and crime.

Acting Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez then spoke. He said, "I am here to commit myself to the com-

Finally, attendees enjoyed a lively panel discussion moderated by Rabbi Cohen with representatives Eliot Engel (D-NY), Paul Gosar (R-AZ), Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), and Randy Weber (R-TX). All of the panelists avowed their support for Israel and their desire to see U.S. support for Israel grow. Discourse included the Memorandum of Understanding between Israel and the U.S., additional support for Iron Dome batteries, and the need to keep a strong relationship with

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Rabbi Yosef Eisen
Rav – Kollel Bnei Torah
Friday Evening
December 16, 2016 ~ Parshas Vaishlach וישלח

Rabbi Aaron Kahn
Rav – Knesses Bals Avigdor
Friday Evening
December 23, 2016 ~ Parshas Vayeshev וישב

Refreshments will be served

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