

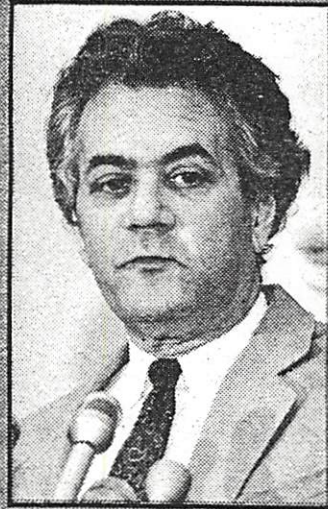
# U.S. Gay leaders urging ILGA to oust NAMBLA

by Aras van Hertum

Openly Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) said last week that Congress would likely support a move to rescind the recently achieved status of a Gay organization at the United Nations should the group continue to include pedophile groups in its membership.

And other Gay leaders interviewed by the *Blade* this week unanimously urged the group, the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), to expel the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) from its membership. They said the pedophile group's calls for repeal of age of consent laws are incompatible with the Gay civil rights movement's advocacy of laws that legalize homosexual activity between consenting adults.

The controversy surrounding ILGA's status at the U.N. erupted last month when John Blaney, a State Department official and part of the U.S. mission to the U.N., delivered a statement to the U.N. General Assembly. In that statement, Blaney said the U.S. delegation to the U.N. "recently



by Doug Hinatis

Rep. Barney Frank: NAMBLA "detracts" from ILGA's image.

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## World News

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learned" that NAMBLA is a member of ILGA, which was given "consultative status" as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The U.S. had voted to approve such status for ILGA, but Blaney said the U.S. may now change its mind and seek to rescind that status.

"We understand that the primary purpose of [NAMBLA]," said Blaney in the Oct. 19 statement, "is to advocate pedophilia, a form of child abuse opposed by all members of the international community. Had the U.S. delegation known at the time of the vote that NAMBLA was a member of ILGA, we would not have been able to support the committee's recommendation to grant official status to ILGA."

Blaney said he had written to ILGA to "request clarification" of NAMBLA's affiliation with the group. He said that if he does not obtain a "satisfactory clarification," the U.S. would ask the U.N. to "change its vote."

"In our view," said Blaney, "the goals of NAMBLA, as brandished in its name, are reprehensible and have no place in any United Nations forum and we are seeking clarification from ILGA that there is no intention of presenting or defending these goals in the process of consulting" with the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Blaney is the U.S.'s deputy representative to that Council.

Blaney did not return a reporter's phone calls by *Blade* deadline to clarify his statement or the U.S. delegation's letter to ILGA.

The *Blade* obtained a copy of the Oct. 15 letter to ILGA, signed by Lisa Williams-Manigault, identified as "advisor" to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. In the letter, Williams-Manigault said "We understand that ILGA will review its membership at its executive session in November."

"If at that meeting, ILGA were to take action to disassociate itself from NAMBLA and other affiliate organizations whose objectives are not consonant with United Nations human rights activities,"

she wrote, "such action would be significant in the reconsideration of our position on ILGA's consultative status."

Peri Jude Radecic, executive director



By Doug Hinckley

HRCF's Tim McFeeley said the organization "would not be unhappy if ILGA took away membership from NAMBLA."

of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said her organization, which is a member of ILGA, would support efforts to oust NAMBLA from ILGA. Tim McFeeley, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, said HRCF had not yet taken a position on the controversy but that, "We would not be unhappy if ILGA ... took away membership from NAMBLA." And Gregory May, cochair of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Forum, said the Leadership Forum's board of directors had not taken a stance on the ILGA controversy, but would meet Nov. 4 to take a position on "our perspective to NAMBLA itself." That decision was not available by *Blade* deadline.

The steering committee of Stonewall 25, organizers of next June's massive festival in New York City to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots, passed a resolution Oct. 25 "urging"

ILGA to disassociate itself from NAMBLA. As part of the Stonewall 25 celebration, the organizers are planning a march on the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) and the National Federation of Log Cabin Clubs also issued statements calling on ILGA to expel NAMBLA.

Rep. Frank, in an Oct. 25 letter to Julie Dorf, executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and a prominent ILGA member, wrote that "Having NAMBLA as part of ILGA detracts substantially from what you're working so hard to do."

"[I]f NAMBLA remains part of ILGA," he warned, "there is no way in the world anyone could stop a resolution from going through both Houses of Congress insisting that the president repudiate our support for ILGA."

But a number of Gay leaders expressed anger at Blaney's suggestion that the U.S. delegation to the U.N. was ready to rescind ILGA's U.N. status. Many said the U.S. position was based on "homophobia" rather than on real concern about NAMBLA's membership in the group.

"I think it's a homophobic move on the part of the U.S. government," said NGLTF's Radecic.

"I'm not happy that the U.S. government ... is leading the charge," added HRCF's McFeeley.

And May, cochair of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Forum, said the U.S. efforts to remove ILGA's U.N. status "have very little to do with NAMBLA, but more with a degree of ignorance and homophobia."

Dorf said ILGA "should have gotten rid of NAMBLA a long time ago," but believes the U.S. government was "absolutely wrong" to publicly announce its stance on ILGA without first discussing the matter with the group.

Rep. Frank, on the other hand, said he supports the U.S. government's position.

"The fact is that [NAMBLA] is only one part of [ILGA], but it is part of it," he

said. "I am in favor of observer status at the U.N. for a Gay organization, but if ILGA insists on keeping NAMBLA, I would prefer a different Gay organization."

ILGA's leaders are scheduled to meet in New York City today, Nov. 5, as well as tomorrow. The group's constitution stipulates that members may be expelled only at ILGA's annual meeting in June. However, Dorf said the ILGA leaders could take other action this weekend. She said they could ask NAMBLA and another pedophile member group, Vere-niging Martijn in Holland, to withdraw their memberships, or approve a recommendation to ask the annual meeting that the groups be expelled.

According to Dorf, any decisions at this weekend's meeting will be made by representatives of three groups: her group, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, which serves as ILGA's action secretariat; by Pink Planet, a British group that serves as the finance secretariat; and by LBL, a Danish group that serves as ILGA's women's secretariat. Representatives of three organizations serving as backup secretariats also have votes, Dorf said.

Representatives of NAMBLA are planning to attend the meeting, she added.

Dorf said that on Monday, she and other ILGA officials will meet with the U.S. mission to the U.N. to clarify the group's position on NAMBLA.

ILGA is the first Gay group to win a voice at the U.N. The U.N.'s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) voted July 30 to offer consultative status to the group, despite strong opposition from some Islamic nations.

In his Oct. 19 statement to the U.N., Blaney also expressed support for "much greater attention" to coordinating the U.N.'s HIV/AIDS programs, and said the U.S. delegation members "strongly underscore our support for ECOSOC's resolution" to develop proposals for a joint program on AIDS with the World Health Organization.▼

Lisa Keen contributed to this report.