

Is Maltese's Post Threatened By Possible Bloomberg-Bruno School Aid Deal?

Will state Senator Serphin Maltese have to give up his chairmanship of the Queens Republican Party as part of a deal between Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno to settle

when aides to the mayor said he would try to defeat the veteran Middle Village lawmaker when he runs for re-election this year. The mayor would provide financial and other campaign support, they said, saying he had reached out to City Council member Addabbo Jr., an Ozone Park Democrat, to challenge Maltese. Addabbo never accepted the mayor's deal.

ago, then mayor-elect Abraham Beame, displeased that the Queens Democratic leader, Matt Troy, had supported Mario Biaggi against Beame in the Democratic primary, started making telephone calls to Queens Democratic leaders after he had won the mayor's post, telling them he was supporting Donald Manes as Troy's replacement.

In no time at all, Beame had all the votes he needed to get Manes elected county chairman.

Reportedly, the mayor and Bruno worked out a "tentative understanding" of what the school aid package would look like, but neither side confirmed this.

Nor did the mayor nor Bruno reveal any details about their private meeting, adding that it was premature to talk of any agreement. The mayor pointed out he still would have to work out agreements with Governor George Pataki and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, the other two-thirds of the ruling Albany triumvirate, before he could be assured of winning the school construction funding he hopes to get.

This being said, we think the

Bruno/Bloomberg dialogue represents a gain for the mayor in his high-stakes quest. Remember, he's been going, hat in hand, to Albany for several years and each time hardly got the time of day from Bruno and Silver.

This time, after Bloomberg got Bruno's attention by threatening to use his considerable wealth to try to defeat Republican senate incumbents and thereby weaken Bruno's leadership position or gain Democratic control, Bruno travelled down to the city for his private talk with the mayor.

MALTESE ELECTION AS LEADER UPHELD: Amid all the talk about possible threats to Maltese's party leadership, he announced that a court challenge to his last re-election as county leader had been rejected by state Supreme Court Justice Charles Thomas.

The suit had been brought by Bart Haggerty of Forest Hills, one of the leaders of an insurgent group that had run against Maltese in party elections last September, supported by Bloomberg. Maltese had won those elections and later, was elected again as party leader. Haggerty challenged the way the vote was counted.

Maltese issued a statement expressing delight with the court ruling. He also noted that recently the county organization had hosted the most successful county dinner in many years and that all the leaders there had responded favorably to Maltese's call for unity and cooperation and would work with Maltese on behalf of the county organization.

Commenting on the judge's ruling in the Haggerty case, Vincent Tabone, vice chairman of the county organization, stated that the edict "makes it clear that the Queens County Republican Party conducts its elections in full accord with the requirements of the election law."

SHORT TAKES: Majority Leader Bruno, speaking on a Sunday morning talk show, said that GOP leaders are discussing cross-endorsing Thomas Suozzi, a Democrat, for governor. Suozzi is already challenging Eliot Spitzer for the Democratic Party nomination for governor.

•A Park Avenue matron, Kathleen Troia (K.T.) McFarland, is getting ready to announce her candidacy as the Republican candidate against U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in November. She joins former Yonkers Mayor John Spencer as a

would-be Clinton challenger.

•The Pan-Macedonian Association, based in Whitestone, honored Assemblymember Michael Gianaris and Councilmember Hiram Monserrate at a dinner-dance at the Crystal Palace in Astoria last Saturday night.

•At an Albany ceremony yesterday, state Senator Frank Padavan, a Polytechnic University graduate (Class of 1955) received the college's prestigious Presidential Medal in recognition of his helping his alma mater and his 32-year tenure in the Senate. Padavan earned an electrical engineering degree, was employed by Westinghouse Electric and served as a deputy commissioner of buildings before being elected to the state senate in 1972.

•Queens state Senators Serphin Maltese, a Republican and Toby Ann Stavisky, a Democrat, assure bipartisan support for a bill prohibiting the MTA from charging administrative fees for E-Z Pass electronic toll collections. E-Z Pass recently imposed a \$1 monthly service fee.

•Congressmembers Joseph Crowley and Gary Ackerman support the U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement signed by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Singh in New Delhi. Crowley noted the plan deals with civilian nuclear development, and Ackerman said that despite his support for the signing, the president has done "a horrendous job of convincing Congress that the agreement is a good idea."

•Congressmember Carolyn Maloney hailed Northwest Airline's announcement that it will not replace 2,600 American attendants with foreign workers on international flights, because to do so would have raised serious security questions and it would have been "unfair to hard-working American flight attendants."

•Republican gubernatorial candidate John Faso, who has been endorsed by state Conservative Leader Michael Long, will address the Queens Conservative organization's meeting Thursday, March 16 at 8 p.m. at the American Legion Continental Post, 107-15 Metropolitan Ave. in Forest Hills, party chairman Tom Long announced.

On politics By John Toscano

increased state aid to the New York City school system?

That's what *Daily News* columnist Michael Goodwin said in a story last Sunday which revealed for the first time that the mayor and Bruno held a secret meeting two days earlier in a midtown hotel to discuss the school aid issue.

Both the mayor and Bruno confirmed the secret meeting story later on Sunday, and both said no agreements had been reached. Neither made any mention of Maltese's future as the Queens GOP leader.

Maltese had been dragged into the dispute about a month ago

Defeating Maltese at the polls would weaken Bruno's majority hold in the senate and would also let the mayor exact revenge for Maltese's not supporting the mayor early in last year's campaign.

The Goodwin column made another reference to Maltese, saying the mayor agreed to remain neutral in his re-election campaign as part of any deal with Bruno. However, the mayor denied this was true.

The mayor wouldn't necessarily have to ask for Maltese's resignation as Queens Republican leader as part of a larger deal on state school aid. About 30 years

Crowley, Rice Meet At Foreign Aid Budget Hearings

Congressmember Joseph Crowley, a senior member of the House Committee on International Relations, recently met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice when Rice testified in support of the foreign aid budget for Fiscal Year 2007. At the meeting, Crowley expressed concerns about the recent Hamas win in the Palestinian elections as well as the Bush Administration's plans to cut international family planning programs for women in the developing world. Crowley has been one of the leading congressional supporters of funding programs for women's health, HIV/AIDS and child survival in the developing world. His 7th Congressional District is one of the most diverse in the United States.

