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Author: Carol Costello, Guy Raz, David Mattingly, Carrie Lee, Bill Hemmer, Soledad O'Brien, Jen Rogers, Chad Myers

COSTELLO: All right, Carrie Lee live from the Nasdaq Marketsite. Human cloning and stem cell research top the agenda at the United Nations this week. The U.N. is considering a blanket ban on all forms of cloning research, including stem cells. Top scientists from around the world are pressing the U.N. to exclude therapeutic stem cell research from its proposed ban.

One man who is front and center at the United Nations session on cloning: Bernard Siegel, an attorney, child rights advocate, and would-be adoptive father to the Raelians' allegedly-cloned baby Eve. Yes, he is the man who sued for custody of the baby.

Mr. Siegel joins us live from New York.

Welcome.

BERNARD SIEGEL, GENETICS POLICY INSTITUTE: Thank you.

COSTELLO: Before we get to what you said at the meeting, we must talk about the Raelians. They are the scary public face of cloned babies. What ever happened to your efforts to adopt this baby Eve, the allegedly-cloned baby?

SIEGEL: Well, I really didn't want to adopt the baby. I was trying to find out if there was any truth behind their claim. The case revealed that the company was nothing more than a sham. It didn't have a board of directors or a street address. But it had taken half a million dollars from a West Virginia couple trying to clone a deceased child.

Essentially, I was shocked to find out that they, the people behind this -- it was a UFO cult -- had testified in Congress and the National Academy of Science, and were actually impacting public policy relating to stem cells.

COSTELLO: Is...

SIEGEL: That's why I created the Genetics Policy Institute.

COSTELLO: Well, is that a lasting thing? Do some members of the even the United Nations feel more afraid of the idea of cloning because of wacky groups like the Raelians?

SIEGEL: Well, the science is out there, but the real scientists that I presented to the United Nations think that it's very far fetched that human reproductive cloning will take place. And it certainly would be unethical and could never produce a normal baby. And the United Nations is right to want to stop reproductive cloning. But it shouldn't get

confused with therapeutic cloning of stem cells that offers the hope for cures for millions of people.

COSTELLO: But you know that religion and politics enter these things, and some people don't distinguish between stem cell research and cloning.

SIEGEL: Well, that's true, but therapeutic cloning is taking a patient's DNA and putting it into an unfertilized egg. There's no pregnancy involved. There's no baby involved. It's something that's done in a dish, and these cells that are created could go back into a patient's body and perhaps repair a damaged organ. It is a major breakthrough in medicine, and it shouldn't be curbed, and certainly not by treaty in the United Nations.

COSTELLO: So, where does it stand now? After all of the testimony is said and done, what will happen? Will there be an outright ban? Or is there hope there won't be?

SIEGEL: Well, unfortunately, the United States and certain other governments want a total ban by treaty, and the deliberations are going to continue in October. We hope by having presented some of the leading stem cell scientists in the world, like Rudolph Jaenisch at MIT and Doug Melton at Harvard and others, that at least the U.N. has the facts now and will understand that reproductive cloning is bad, therapeutic cloning of stem cells offers promise to millions of people.

In October, they're going to take it up again, and let's hope they'll make the right decision and ban reproductive cloning but allow therapeutic cloning to continue.

COSTELLO: Just one last question. So, there may be some kind of global treaty that bans all forms of cloning, including stem cell research. Can that really stop it from happening?

SIEGEL: Well, I think countries who want to proceed with this in their own cultures will advance this research, but the sad thing is if the U.N. recommends a treaty to ban it, it would cast a pall on the research. Young scientists might not go into the field. Certain countries might adopt that treaty as their own laws and prevent this research from happening. It would have a serious impact. It's more than just a symbolism here. It's another battlefield in the United Nations in the battle for stem cell research.

COSTELLO: Bernard Siegel joining us live from New York, thank you.

SIEGEL: Thank you.