

age and not the substance. They grossly underestimated me."

Five years later, certain Pentagon procurement officials are known to refer to Rasor only as "that bitch," and they've stopped underestimating her abilities. Rasor's credibility among the people she uses, with the media and even within the Pentagon comes from the desire to be seen as neither ideological nor rhetorical. The project avoids any questions of strategy or philosophy, and deals only on the level of what the money is being spent for and whether the product works. They don't look at, for instance, whether the B1 bomber *should* penetrate Soviet air defenses, but whether it can.

The difficulty of being a woman investigator of military programs continues, however. "My friends inside the Pentagon call it 'my physical problem,'" blonde-haired, blue-eyed Rasor says a little bitterly. "It's a real double-edged sword—some people that I deal with can't accept a girl doing this, and won't deal with me directly. They'll leak to someone else who'll leak to me. I really go out on a limb for these guys and protect them, and they won't accept me as part of the group. In the beginning I really wanted to belong, but now it doesn't matter."

There is a group of defense experts in Washington who are concerned about the lack of female involvement and influence in the halls of the Pentagon and the columns

of important newspapers. To redress this imbalance, two of Washington's more liberal defense groups have recently begun a series of morning briefings on defense issues for women. The purpose, according to Barbara Levin, director of the Women's Agenda for the Center for Defense Information and co-sponsor of the series, is to "encourage and highlight the role of women in determining national security issues."

Building an "old-girl" network: When Levin and the other co-sponsor, Anne Cahn, director of the Committee for National Security, began to research the invitation list for these briefings, they consulted a media directory and found only one woman assigned to the Pentagon and defense beat. In the field of foreign affairs and diplomacy, they found about five out of 40 assignments.

"Women are just not part of the 'old boy' network in the defense and national security establishment," says Levin, "and they are not affecting policy. The media is an important and central place to start."

Levin and Cahn issue invitations for the briefings to women covering all different beats of Washington journalism. "There is a concern for those not covering the defense beat that they may be inhibited," Levin says. "The issues are technical and complex, particularly for those who are relatively new. We want to encourage women to get comfortable with the issues involved; then maybe

they'll venture forth."

The goal is twofold: to encourage women journalists to delve into the rather intimidating complexity of defense and national security, and to give more exposure to women experts already working in the field. The briefers have all been women so far, both in and outside government, formidable experts in fields ranging from arms control to space weapons, military policy and U.S.-Soviet relations. "Women in the field are invisible," says Levin, "and they don't get the kind of recognition and exposure that men do."

Co-sponsor Anne Cahn concurs. "Who do you see talking about arms control issues in the newspapers and on television?" she asks. "It's always white males. The country is depriving itself of 50 percent of its brain power." And, presumably, making it less likely that a woman would be drawn to a field so apparently male-dominated.

Cahn is herself an arms control expert, having served in the Carter administration's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency as chief of the social impact staff, studying the economic consequences of defense spending abroad and at home. She has first-hand experience in the problems facing women in the defense field. "You run up against a lot of old attitudes, especially from older men who figure women don't really know the issues. They say, 'Now, now, Mrs. Cahn,' and are surprised when you want to talk

about hardware."

One of the problems or barriers to women in the field, according to Cahn and others, is the fact that most of the defense establishment is made up of men who have served together in the armed forces. "They believe that they know the real threat," says Cahn, and assume that professional women in the defense field have a stereotypical opinion about national security issues.

Women without peers: Do women look at defense issues differently than men? Both Cahn and Levin deny that their defense briefings are motivated by any assumption about female attitudes toward national security. "I don't hold with the idea that women necessarily bring a different viewpoint to defense," insists Cahn. It is a question of numbers, she says, and there are just not enough women in the field to determine whether they would make a difference. "Now it's an isolated woman who makes it to the top in a man's world. She doesn't have any peer support for opinions that differ from those of the male bureaucracy."

Cahn says that she'd like to see an "old girl's network" develop within the defense establishment. Levin is more specific and hopeful about what that might accomplish.

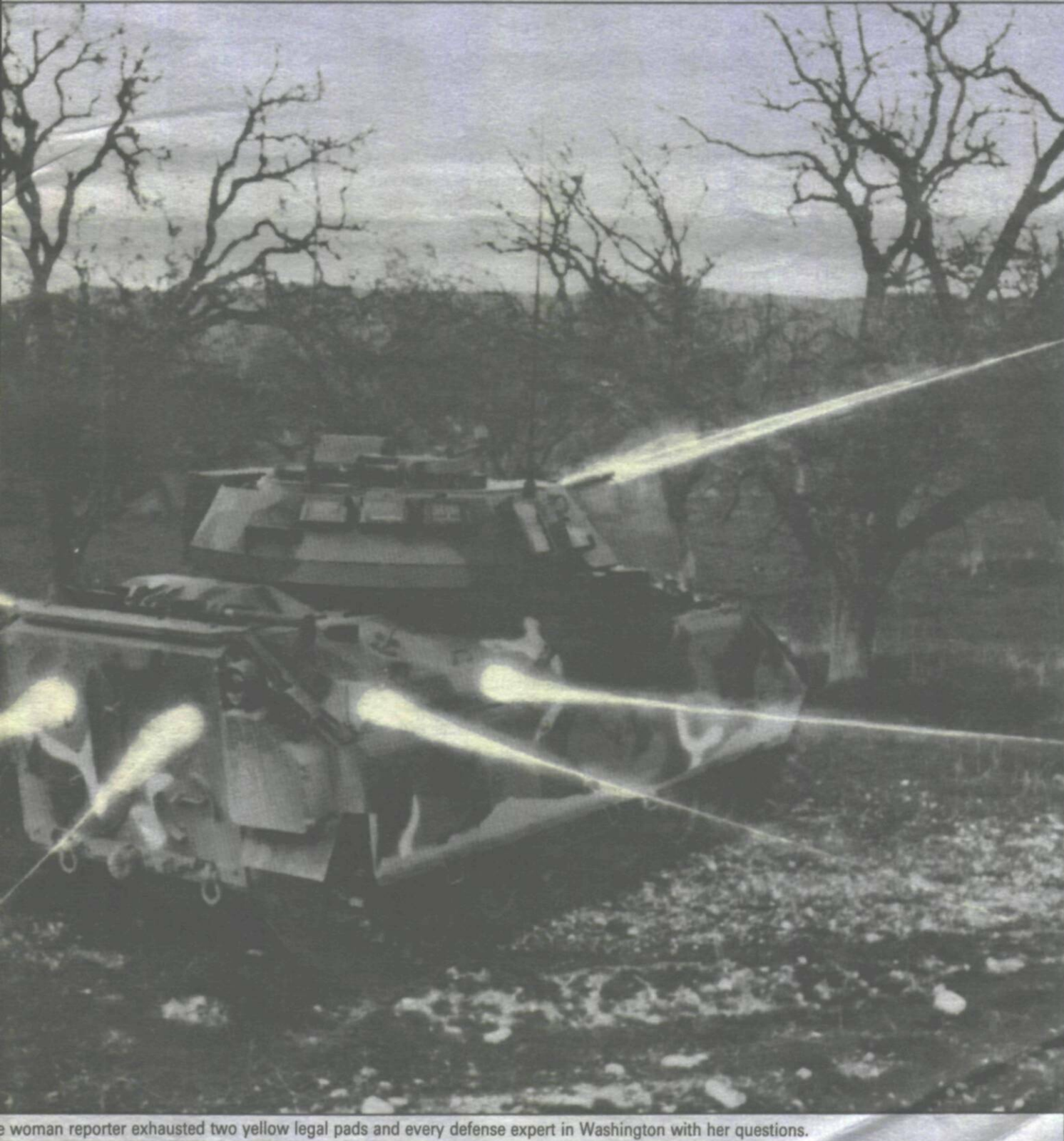
"Some social scientists think that women solve problems differently than men, that they are more empathetic—more cooperative than confrontational," she says. "Perhaps women would put less emphasis on peace through strength, be less inclined to pursue military superiority. At this point the spending on military strength is 25 times that on global cooperation. If they are not compelled by peer pressure, women might bring a somewhat different perspective. It can't be proven, but it won't hurt to try. It won't make things any worse."

Meanwhile, no professional journalist, investigator, defense expert or lobbyist would admit to a bias based on sexuality. As in any male-dominated field, it is essential that a woman establish herself as an equal before she has the credibility to insist upon being different. As Dina Rasor put it, the "package" should have no bearing on the "substance."

Yet, in the waning days of the Reagan administration, sometimes style can make a difference where politics and ideology remain inflexible. Rozanne Ridgway is the current Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and is one of the highest-ranking women involved in the administration's arms control debate. At a State Department foreign policy seminar for journalists last year, Ridgway summed up what she saw as the three basic precepts of U.S.-Soviet relations: "We are two fundamentally different systems; these systems are bound to be in competition; it is a competition that we want to win."

After decades of Cold War and billions of nuclear dollars, after decades of nuclear debate couched in weighty and intimidating terms of deterrence and flexible response, Ridgway's analysis made the issue suddenly terrifyingly simple. Her clarity reduced the debate to the level of a massive and ultimate sports event—a Harvard-Yale football rivalry on a global scale. By spurning the usual comforts of "defensespeak," Ridgway humanized the issue and brought it closer to the concerns and comprehensions of those it affects. As more and more women join the debate, an insistence on clarity and basic common sense will be the first step in the long process of bringing national security back to the people it makes secure.

Alisa Joyce covers defense and foreign affairs in Washington, D.C.



A woman reporter exhausted two yellow legal pads and every defense expert in Washington with her questions.

EDITORIAL

Soap! Soap! Blaine's only Hope!

BLAINE'S FUNERAL

DIED NOVEMBER 4th, 1884.

HON. JAS. G. BLAINE, and with him the REPUBLICAN PARTY, AGED 24 YEARS.



Conceived in Sin—Matured in Tyranny, and died of Chronic Disease of the Bloody Shirt.

PALL BEARERS.

JOHN A. LOGAN, JAY GOULD, EX. GOV. CORNELL,
and JOHN I. DAVENPORT.

Undertakers, Hon. G. S. CLEVELAND, of New York, and THOS. A. HENDRICKS, of Indiana.

James G. Blaine's defeat and Gary Hart's ordeal

Just over a century ago—in 1884—our nation was engaged in a presidential contest that pitted public against private morality. The contestants were Maine Republican James G. Blaine, known as one of the “railroad congressmen”—a corrupt group of officeholders who served the interests of Robber Barons like Jay Cooke and Jay Gould—and Democrat Grover Cleveland, who ran as a reformer.

Blaine, though shaky in his public morals, was a model family man, Cleveland, though seemingly incorruptible in his public life, had an illegitimate daughter in Buffalo, N.Y.—where he had been mayor. His private indiscretions led the Republicans to campaign against him with the jingle, “Ma, Ma, where’s my Pa? Gone to the White House, Ha, Ha, Ha.”

This, in turn, led Democrats to suggest that since Blaine’s private morality was exemplary, despite his compromised public morality, and Cleveland’s public morality was exemplary, despite his blemished private morality, Blaine should be returned to private life and Cleveland should be kept in public office. And so it was. Cleveland was elected president, the first Democrat to win that office since the Civil War.

Now, with a Republican president serving the interests of the truly greedy—and an administration that extols greed as having made our country great, while its own corruption is being laid out before the public—we also have a Democratic contender for the presidency under fire for his private morality. And we have media only too happy to pursue the private affairs of a candidate in a seeming effort to limit exposure of the corruption of the Reagan administration.

There are, of course, many ways to look at the predicament in which Gary Hart now finds himself. Given his invitation to the press to follow him around, he cannot be pitied too much for the result. But even so, it is a sad reflection on our media, and on the state of our political culture, that personal social or sexual relations are considered bigger news than the pursuit of policies against the law and the public interest—not to mention the betrayal of public trust and constitutional responsibilities of which the Reagan administration is guilty.

But it is equally disturbing that Hart, in defending himself, has not seen fit to insist that he should be judged on the basis of his

policies, rather than on his private activities. He has not done that, in our opinion, because he does not differ substantially in his social priorities and political principles from his rivals—or because he believes that the only way he can win is to obscure his views on such matters.

We do not share this contempt for the intelligence and concern of the American people, implicit in the kind of campaigns being conducted so far by all the Democratic presidential contenders—Jesse Jackson excepted. Given the debacle of the administration—and of so many other recent administrations that, like Reagan’s, tried to ignore the historic changes occurring in our own society and in the world—the need for fundamentally new domestic and international policies should be apparent to our political leaders. We believe that most Americans would welcome a campaign that took the larger issues seriously. It is probably the only kind of campaign that could get them genuinely interested in politics, rather than in titillating gossip.

Reagan's administration continues to unravel

Meanwhile, in the past week the Reagan administration continued to unravel. The CIA and the State Department have both been implicated in the contragate operation by Lewis Tambs, who resigned as ambassador to Costa Rica after it was revealed that he had given illegal aid to the contras operating in that country. It wasn’t his idea, Tambs said. He was ordered to do it by a group appropriately known as RIG—the Restricted Interagency Group—which consisted of Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, Alan Fiers, head of the CIA’s Central American Task Force and—you guessed it—Oliver North.

And Ret. Maj. Gen. Richard Secord testified before congressional hearings in Washington that he had discussed his activities with then-CIA Director William Casey, and had been told both by North and by then-national security adviser Adm. John Poindexter that President Reagan was “pleased with the work” he had been doing.

These revelations—at the very beginning of the contragate hearings—indicate that the continuing investigations may take on a life of their own. And that despite the evident desires of the media and members of Congress to contain the situation, the administration may be in more trouble than anyone in high places would like to admit.

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