

## Pentagon Lawyer Quietly Gets Notice As She Coaches Clinton's Nominees



Paul Hasebras/The New York Times

In a year as the Pentagon's general counsel, Jamie S. Gorelick has impressed her superiors through a series of upheavals and is now on the short list of candidates for the Justice Department's No. 2 post.

By ERIC SCHMITT

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 — First she was preparing Bobby Ray Inman for his confirmation hearings as Defense Secretary. Now she's preparing William J. Perry. No matter. The issues remain the same, if not the nominee, and Jamie S. Gorelick, the Pentagon's general counsel, has been through a lot bigger upheavals than the Aspin-Inman-Perry reshuffling in her year as the Pentagon's chief legal troubleshooter.

Ms. Gorelick, who left private practice in Washington to head the Pentagon's army of 7,000 lawyers, has been tapped to coordinate Mr. Perry's confirmation hearings on Wednesday.

She performed a similar task in coaching Janet Reno when the Administration was taking no chances on its second nomination for Attorney General. Ms. Reno was so impressed that Ms. Gorelick is now on the short list of candidates to replace Philip B. Heymann, the Justice Department's No. 2 official who resigned last week

The word that Ms. Gorelick was being considered was rare public notice for someone who has quietly been at the center of some of the military's

bigger recent tempests. For instance, last year it was Ms. Gorelick (pronounced go-REL-ick) who headed the effort to turn President Clinton's policy on homosexuals into detailed guidelines.

Coming up with a code under which officers could tread the fine line between private and public conduct at the heart of the new "don't ask, don't tell" policy was a mammoth task. One meeting involved 30 lawyers from the various service branches wading through case studies and drafts of the regulations that the Pentagon finally put forward.

'A No-Nonsense Type'

As a 43-year-old woman with a civil liberties background, Ms. Gorelick might seem miscast for her job in the male-dominated military. But her skills as a tactician and problem-

solver have impressed not only Defense Secretary Les Aspin and Mr. Perry, currently Mr. Aspin's deputy, but also the most curmudgeonly generals and admirals.

"She'd make a good marine because she's a no-nonsense type who gets right to the bottom line," said Arnold Punaro, the staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a one-star general in the Marine Corps Reserve.

But Ms. Gorelick's involvement with politically sensitive issues has also made her a target of criticism

by both conservatives and liberals. The conservatives say they did not like what they saw as her high-handed manner on the nomination of Morton H. Halperin for a peacekeeping job at the Pentagon. The liberals say she should have pushed harder on behalf of President Clinton's effort to allow homosexuals into the military.

Before Ms. Gorelick came to the Pentagon, lawyers in Washington knew her as the affable president of

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the 80,000-member District of Columbia Bar. She advised Michael S. Dukakis's 1988 Presidential campaign on criminal justice issues. But many Administration officials caught their first glimpse of Ms. Gorelick in action when she was coaching Ms. Reno.

"I went in with some skepticism because here I'd put all this trust in some person's hands and I didn't even know her," Ms. Reno said in an interview recently. "But Jamie has a marvelous ability to analyze an issue, size it up and give extraordinary judgment."

In 18 years as a lawyer in Washington representing clients like National Public Radio and General Electric, Ms. Gorelick has amassed an armada of contacts in the capital's legal establishment. Many of those friends

now fill top jobs in the White House Counsel's office and at the Justice Department, allowing Ms. Gorelick to slice through the bureaucracy when a particularly tough legal issue arises.

"To the extent I can pick up a phone and get something cleared that would otherwise take more time, or speak frankly to someone because we have a pre-existing relationship, I think that's been helpful," Ms. Gorelick said.

#### Accused of Arrogance

It is the Halperin matter that has prompted the most criticism from conservative lawmakers. They say she did not respond fast enough to requests for information about Mr. Halperin, who withdrew his name from consideration after his biggest supporter, Mr. Aspin, announced he was resigning and after lawmakers assailed Mr. Halperin's work for the American Civil Liberties Union as well as his foreign policy stances.

"She handled the Halperin nomination with the arrogance and condescension I haven't seen in my 11 years in Washington," said Senator John McCain, an Arizona Republican on the Armed Services Committee.

Ms. Gorelick says Mr. McCain's criticism is unfounded, contending that the Pentagon met all senators' requests as fully and quickly as possible.

Some liberals, on the other hand, say Ms. Gorelick failed to fight hard enough inside the Pentagon to defend Mr. Clinton's pledge to allow homosexuals into the military.

"She represented quite well the interests of the military but not the best interests of the President," said Chai Feldblum, an associate law professor at Georgetown University who was legal director for the Campaign for Military Service, a coalition of gay rights group.

Ms. Gorelick said she had done the best she could within the constraints of a policy that had largely been written by the time she joined the Pentagon last May.

#### Anti-War Marches

The barbs from liberal groups are particularly stinging to Ms. Gorelick, given her upbringing. Her father, an orthodontist, and her mother, a painter, were Russian Jewish immigrants who instilled liberal intellectual values in their children.

## Jamie Shona Gorelick

BORN May 6, 1950,  
in Brooklyn.

FAMILY Married to Dr.  
Richard Waldhorn; children:  
Daniel, Dana.

EDUCATION Great Neck  
South (L.I.) High School;  
B.A., Radcliffe College; J.D.,  
Harvard Law School.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  
1975-93, lawyer and partner,  
Miller, Cassidy, Larroca &  
Lewin law firm; 1979-80,  
Assistant to the Secretary  
and Counselor to the Deputy  
Secretary, Department of  
Energy; 1992, president,  
District of Columbia Bar  
Association.

HOBBIES Tennis, cycling,  
gardening.

Reared in Great Neck, L.I., in "a family with a real social conscience," Ms. Gorelick was taken by her parents to Washington to attend civil rights marches and anti-war protests in the 1960's.

"I had a positive view of the military itself, and was much more angry with President Johnson and the people making the policy" on Vietnam, said Ms. Gorelick, who as a teen-ager help recruit young supporters for

Robert F. Kennedy's Presidential effort in 1968.

After college, she applied for a Fulbright scholarship largely because she was angry that the other major fellowships did not consider women. When she won the Fulbright, however, she chose to go to law school instead.

Although she says she has not been treated any differently as a woman at the Pentagon, Ms. Gorelick relates one telling example of the attitudes women there still face.

"You see that in the very honest way people, whether or not they're thinking about it, respond to a direction from me by saying, 'Yes, sir!'" said Ms. Gorelick. "They pause for a moment and recognize they shouldn't be addressing me as a 'sir.'"

#### Orderly Manner

In a Pentagon whose top echelons have been criticized as having sloppy management, Ms. Gorelick is a case study in organization. She is a habitual list maker. Even in casual conversations, Ms. Gorelick speaks in the orderly way legal briefs are written, ticking off her arguments, one, two, three.

Among Mr. Aspin's earliest appointments last year, Ms. Gorelick

has wrestled with legal issues ranging from aid to the former Soviet republics, the Air Force's troubled C-17 cargo plane and antitrust questions facing a Pentagon that now buys from fewer military contractors. "She's had possibly the most difficult portfolio of any of us at Defense," said Mr. Aspin.

But Ms. Gorelick is most recognized for her appearances before Congressional committees and the news media on the issue of homosexuals in the military. The new regula-

tions will take effect on Saturday.

"I honestly don't think it'll be that hard," she said of translating policy into practice. "A lot will be left up to the services, but we're hoping to give it a jump start. One reason it was so important to insure the services were fully on board is that it won't work unless they have their hearts and minds in it."

When asked if she agreed with the new policy she helped to shape, Ms. Gorelick was taken aback. She said that as a lawyer she was not used to being asked her personal opinion. A day later, she called a reporter back with a more complete response:

"My perspective from outside the Defense Department was similar to President Clinton's coming in," said Ms. Gorelick. "I had come out of the civil rights community and that was the group I identified with. On the other hand, I had to be mindful of the deep concerns expressed here by people entrusted with the military services."

Ms. Gorelick has had to make other adjustments in her new job. As a partner at the Washington firm of Miller, Cassidy, Larroca & Lewin, specializing in criminal and civil litigation, Ms. Gorelick took a big pay cut to join the Government, giving up a \$435,000 salary for \$115,700.

She was one of four women interviewed for the Pentagon general counsel's job (no men were interviewed). She was also mentioned as a candidate for Attorney General and the White House counsel. "I was flattered, but didn't think very it was realistic," she said of the Attorney General's job.

Ms. Gorelick lives in a Maryland suburb with her husband, Dr. Richard Waldhorn, the chief of pulmonary medicine at Georgetown University Hospital, and their two young children. For now, she says she has no firm plans after her Pentagon job. "Someone may have a grand career plan for me, but I don't know about it," she said.