

Pelosi proclaims women as "peacekeepers of our societies"



Carey Roberts

[Carey Roberts](#)

May 15, 2007

I once assumed that Mother's Day would be immune from the intrusions and calculations of partisan politics. But no longer.

This past week House speaker Nancy Pelosi used Mother's Day to launch her latest salvo against the Iraq war. And while she was at it, she indulged in some back-handed gender stereotyping, making the remarkable claim that "Women have always been the peacekeepers of our societies."

So is it true that women are the gentle harbingers of peaceful co-existence? And men are testosterone-addled warmongers, as Pelosi seems to imply?

Of course, women have long played supportive roles for male combatants, serving as nurses, supply specialists, and the like. In his report *War and Gender*, University of Massachusetts political scientist Joshua Goldstein documents how women have actively encouraged military adventurism, both in modern and indigenous societies.

Goldstein notes that in the face of imminent conflict, women goad their men into combat. In the Revolutionary War, women were known to withhold sexual favors from reluctant fighters. During the Civil War, Southern belles refused to accept suitors who did not take up arms. In World War I, British women organized the White Feather campaign, calculated to shame able-bodied men into uniform.

Among the Bedouin, frenzied Rwala women bare their breasts and urge their men to war. And before the 1973 coup in Chile, women threw corn at soldiers to taunt them as "chickens."

There are numerous documented cases of women killing prisoners of war, often in retaliation for the loss of loved ones. In colonial Massachusetts a mob of women tortured two Indian prisoners to death after they overcame their guards. During the era of the Soviet Gulag, female interrogators were just as ruthless as their male counterparts in extracting "confessions." In 1993 a group of enraged Somali women murdered four foreign journalists.

Women also play a key role socializing future warriors. Goldstein explains, "since mothers control child care, they could change gender norms, training girls to be aggressive and boys to be passive. But in fact mothers worldwide generally reward boys for being tough and girls for being nice."

Based on his extensive review, Goldstein reaches this simple conclusion: "Most women support most wars."

A scan of history likewise reveals that female political leaders are fully adept at the war-making craft.

Let us recall the crusade of Queen Mary I of England, who beginning in 1553 betrayed a fondness for

burning unrepentant Protestants at the stake? A sobering thought the next time you plan to raise a toast in the name of Bloody Mary.

Anne of Great Britain was the first female monarch to have an entire war named in her honor — Queen Anne's War. Thanks to her unblemished support, that devastating conflict persisted in both North America and Europe for over a decade.

It was the scheming Queen Isabella II of Spain who saw to it that military expenditures were multiplied during her rule. That enabled bellicose sorties to be launched against Morocco, Peru, and Chile.

In 1982 British prime minister Margaret Thatcher decided that a chain of wind-swept islands in the South Atlantic warranted the shedding of blood, which triggered the Falklands War. That escapade cost the lives of 258 British and 649 Argentinian soldiers.

During the 1994 Rwanda genocide, Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, former minister for family affairs, handpicked the "nicest" Tutsi women to be abducted and de-flowered. Nyiramasuhuko was later tried for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal.

Three days after the 9/11 attacks, an Authorization to Use Military Force was brought before Congress. All but one female member of Congress voted to authorize to "use all necessary and appropriate force" to wage the war on terror.

And a few weeks ago the eight Democratic presidential candidates squared off in a South Carolina debate. In response to a question about responding to a terrorist attack, Hillary Clinton shot back, "I think a president must move as swiftly as is prudent to retaliate."

"Retaliate" — spoken like a true peacekeeper, for sure.

But what about the women's peace movements that have sprouted up over the years — don't they prove the ladies are peace-makers at heart? No, for one simple reason: History proves that when women begin to fear for their personal security, they quickly revert to a pro-military stance.

So coming just a month after her ill-fated peace mission to Syria, it's regrettable the Speaker of the House would tap the occasion of Mother's Day to indulge in gender stereotyping and male-bashing. As my mother used to say, "If you can't speak well of someone, it's better to not speak at all."

Carey Roberts is an analyst and commentator on political correctness. His best-known work was an exposé on Marxism and radical feminism.

Mr. Roberts' work has been cited on the Rush Limbaugh show. Besides serving as a regular contributor to RenewAmerica.us, he has published in The Washington Times, LewRockwell.com, ifeminists.net, Men's News Daily, eco.freedom.org, The Federal Observer, Opinion Editorials, and The Right Report.

Previously, he served on active duty in the Army, was a professor of psychology, and was a citizen-lobbyist in the US Congress. In his spare time he admires Norman Rockwell paintings, collects antiques, and is an avid soccer fan. He now works as an independent researcher and consultant.

© Copyright 2007 by Carey Roberts
<http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/roberts/070515>