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After Much in Common, a Split on Central America

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WASHINGTON, June 29 — Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick have much in common: ideological roots in the neo-conservative movement, reputations in the academic community that have enhanced their public policy positions, strong support for Israel.

And, not least, they are Democrats who have served Republican Administrations at the United Nations, striking strong positions in defense of the United States against criticism from the third world.

But for all they have shared in the distant and recent past, as well as the intellectual dialogue they have enjoyed, the two have begun to diverge sharply on the issue that until a few years ago was remote from both of them: Central America.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick, once a professor at Georgetown University, is a sharp voice molding the Administration's policy; Mr. Moynihan, a former professor at Harvard, has been strongly skeptical of the Administration's posture.

At the heart of their differences is the Senator's position that there is little the United States can do to influence internal events in Nicaragua.

"One hates to say it, but the capacity to control events in a consolidating Marxist-Leninist country like Nicaragua is very limited, and we have to face that," he said.

'It Is the Right Thing'

Mrs. Kirkpatrick has none of these reservations. The United States, she said, should "give arms and advice to the Nicaraguans who are fighting their government."

"One has to make careful prudential judgments of lesser evils and greater goods. I think it is possible to prudentially decide that yes, it is the right thing for us to do — to give arms and advice to persons attempting to reclaim their own countries from dictatorships; to resistance movements in other words."

These differences of tone and substance have caused reverberations among neo-conservatives, who suspect Mr. Moynihan of distancing himself from them in order to fit the liberal complexion of the New York Democratic Party and to keep his op-

tions open for either a Presidential or Vice-Presidential bid.

Norman Podhoretz, once a close ally of Mr. Moynihan, is the editor of Commentary Magazine and an arbiter of neo-conservative credentials. He believes that the Senator's posture toward Central America is the latest example of this drift. Mr. Podhoretz edited Mrs. Kirkpatrick's Commentary article on human rights, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," which brought her to the attention of the Reagan Administration, as well as Mr. Moynihan's Commentary piece "The U.S. in Opposition," which led President Ford to appoint him to the United Nations. He agrees with Mrs. Kirkpatrick on Central America.

Those in the neo-conservative ranks who perceive Mr. Moynihan as having moved to the left include Elliott Abrams, the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights who is also Mr. Podhoretz's son-in-law and is now a Republican; Carl Gershman, Mrs. Kirkpatrick's executive assistant, and Arnold Beichman, the author. "We all believe Pat is making an error," Mr. Abrams said.

In early April, Mr. Moynihan, the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, was the first to publicly raise the possibility that the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement in covert operations against the Nicaraguan Government might be breaking the intent of the Boland amendment. That measure, passed at the end of last year, prohibited American support for any military effort designed to overthrow the Sandinista regime.

Mr. Moynihan said in an interview that the Reagan Administration policy was "a failure."

"It can't bring the Congress with it, it can't bring the people with it, it can't bring the hemisphere with it," he said. "All it can do is threaten that if you don't do it, we'll blame you for something. I don't threaten that easily. I've been threatened by more intimidating people than this Administration."

One Inherent Problem

He said that one problem with the policy was inherent in the character of the Administration: "A rightist government, which is a general description of the Administration, sends out signals which get received very badly."

The Senator, at home with verbal dissertations on say, the Soviet Union or arms control, seems ill at ease on Central America and skittish about offering solutions. He prefaced his comments with: "I don't know very much about it, I've never been there." By contrast, he noted that Mrs. Kirkpatrick speaks Spanish and French, wrote her doctoral dissertation on Argentina and has traveled in the region.

Asked whether the United States should enter into negotiations in El Salvador with the guerrillas, he replied: "I'm not going to say things I don't want to say." Asked how much of a national security concern it would be if the guerrillas won in El Salvador, Mr. Moynihan replied: "These things are still fundamentally internal and won't go external unless the Soviet Union decides that's what they should do."

Mrs. Kirkpatrick, in an interview in her office at the United States mission at the United Nations, said that negotiations between the rebels in El Salvador and the United States were inappropriate. "We are not parties to a conflict in Central America. We don't even give very much assistance, as compared to the kind of assistance, we give, my God, in Europe," she said.

"We give billions of dollars of economic and military assistance throughout the world, year in and year out and we do not believe that gives us the right to negotiate the destiny of the countries who receive our assistance," she said. "I believe we should treat Central American countries with as much respect as we treat any other countries who are recipients of American assistance."

The Nicaraguan Government, said Mrs. Kirkpatrick, was undertaking the "deliberate destabilization" of the governments of El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica with aid from a "repressive international" made up of Cubans, Bulgarians, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Libyans and East Germans.

"I don't think there is anybody we know who would approve," she said. "I don't think anyone thinks that's just a matter of taste, just like some

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