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JEANE THE DRAGON KILLER

The stereotypes of men's and women's roles teach us that the man is the one expected to enforce discipline, while the woman is the fountainhead of tenderness and forgiveness. As every parent knows, reality is often the other way.

One of Ronald Reagan's best appointments has proved that a woman can administer the necessary discipline to naughty juveniles which a long succession of male predecessors could not or would not do. Maybe those predecessors were "quiche-eaters" rather than "real men." In any event, Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick has proved to be a real woman who did a "real man's" job in a hostile environment against great odds.

When President-elect Reagan tapped Mrs. Kirkpatrick to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, some thought she was the Administration's token woman and token Democrat (that counts for two in the affirmative action scheme of things). Others thought it didn't matter anyway since the UN was sinking into irrelevancy, internationally impotent, something to be endured like the chatterings of a senile relative.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick's first couple of years would have tried the patience of a saint. In addition to Secretary of State Alexander Haig's notion that her role should be merely as an appendage of the U.S. State Department, he seemed to think that the U.S. State Department should take its policy direction from the British Foreign Office. Mrs. Kirkpatrick believes that the Western Hemisphere is important, too.

To the surprise of practically everyone, including Mrs. Kirkpatrick, it was Haig and not Kirkpatrick who first departed from the Reagan Administration. Mrs. Kirkpatrick calls this "a liberating experience, one that made her seem as though she's ten years younger."

Now that she is her own woman on her own turf, and she has had two years to figure out what motivates the perverse players on the UN stage, she has slain a couple of dragons. The Washington Post cartoonist didn't exactly picture her as St. George, but he did draw her like a GI armed with a fixed bayonet and beady eyes glaring at the enemy.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick discovered that, under all the anti-American bombast and cocktail-party arrogance, the delegates have one element of realism. Their soft, cushy, tax-free jobs depend on Uncle Sucker continuing to pay the lion's share of the UN budget.

She observed all the politeness and protocol of the diplomatic world. But she made the bottom line clear: if the UN kicks Israel out of the UN Assembly, the U.S. cuts off its funding of the UN.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick wasn't bluffing; she issued a credible threat; and she was backed up by the Reagan Administration. So, the United States actually won a vote in the UN -- and by an overwhelming margin!

Not just one, but a brace of victories was scored by Jeane the dragon-killer. Under her deft leadership, the United States even defeated a Cuban effort to force a full-scale debate on whether Puerto Rico should be made independent from alleged U.S. "colonialism."

Mrs. Kirkpatrick claims that she is a liberal in the Hubert Humphrey tradition. As far as I am concerned, anyone has the right to call herself whatever she wants.

But the clique of politicians and journalists who label themselves liberals will never accept her as one of their own. While doctrinaire liberals are very tolerant of people who flout traditional morality, they are very intolerant of those who flout the peculiar liberal double standards in foreign policy.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick espouses one view which is traditionally anathema to the nontraditionalist liberals: she thinks that Communist regimes are more inhumane than other totalitarian regimes. Even worse, she thinks that Communist regimes are more dangerous to U.S. interests than other totalitarian regimes.

Here is the way she puts it. "Only intellectual fashion and the tyranny of Right/Left thinking prevent intelligent men of good will from perceiving the facts that traditional authoritarian governments are less repressive than revolutionary autocracies ... and that they are more compatible with U.S. interests."

The trouble with Mrs. Kirkpatrick's making such a statement is that it's not just a knee-jerk reaction; it's a scholarly conclusion by a university professor based on historical fact. And the liberals are supremely intolerant of such heresy, most particularly when it's backed up by scholarship.