

IN THIS ISSUE

At a time when many people are concerned about a possible nuclear Armageddon, it might seem pointless to dwell upon terrorism, which claims only a few thousand lives per year. Yet, as small as the problem appears, it is as much a part of international politics as the issues of nuclear war and disarmament. Time and again terrorists have shown their ability to influence the politics of the day, the assassination of Sadat and the attempt on the life of the Pope being cases in point. This issue contains two articles on aspects of terrorism. The first, by William Waugh, examines the objectives that terrorists hope to achieve. The murder of a diplomat, the bombing of an embassy, or the killing of alleged informers might seem mindless to laymen, but, as Waugh shows, virtually every terrorist act has some kind of political or organizational objective. He concludes that it is important for governments to recognize the distinctions between these objectives, and between the threats they pose, in order to gain the greatest degree of flexibility in selecting the appropriate response. David Charters has studied recent trends in international terrorism with a view to identifying possible threats to the 1984 Olympics, now less than a year away. Conceding that most terrorists would be deterred by the elaborate security measures currently being planned he concludes, nonetheless, that there are perhaps a half dozen groups with the will and the resources to attempt an operation.

G.M.E. Leistner and Amadu Sesay in turn look at the problems of African politics, both international and internal. Against a background of escalating conflict in and around South Africa, Leistner argues that South Africa's long-term interests would be served by strengthening its economic relations with the neighbouring regimes. Recognizing that attitudes, national, regional and international, are of crucial importance, he concludes that the future of southern Africa is very much an open question and that neither the route toward conflict nor toward cooperation has been foreclosed.

"What is a Revolution?," Amadu Sesay asks at the outset of his study of the change of government in Liberia in 1980. Looking in vain for the kind of radical institutional or structural changes that are supposed to characterize genuine revolutions, Sesay finds only a *coup* and empty rhetoric. He concludes, moreover, that the new leadership under Samuel Doe was ill-equipped for political leadership, let alone a revolution.