

In This Issue

The recent dispute between the Reagan administration and Congress over the mining of Nicaraguan ports by CIA-backed "Contra" rebels has once again focussed a critical spotlight on the CIA as an institution and on American policy for handling these types of low intensity conflict. These matters are addressed in a pair of articles in this issue. Reflecting on the prevalent fear that American military involvement in Central America will lead to "another Vietnam," Sam Sarkesian examines American readiness to respond to low intensity conflict in light of American traditions and values, perceptions of war, and military posture. He concludes that these factors leave the United States ill-prepared to deal with revolutionary/counter-revolutionary conflicts, and offers a prescriptive framework for analyzing the problems associated with developing effective responses. Glenn Hastedt explores the scope for studying one of America's principal arms of low intensity operations — the CIA. Noting the wide availability of open literature on the agency, he discusses shortcomings in analysis and makes a case for developing conceptual frameworks to facilitate objective, scholarly study of this controversial institution. He rounds out his argument by discussing two fields of CIA activity — covert action and intelligence estimating — which highlight important issues and research questions that bear further exploration.

With the inconclusive Israeli election turning attention once again to the unresolved Middle East conflict, Joseph Nevo offers an unique perspective on a largely overlooked aspect of Middle Eastern affairs — peace negotiations between Israel and Jordan. He compares the periods following the 1948 and 1967 wars, and argues that between the two wars the stakes had changed and grown; it was much more difficult for either country to make peace with the other after the second war than it would have been after the first. He concludes that any would-be peacemaker must now contend with two dominant factors: the polarized and intransigent nature of the inter-Arab system, and the intractable Palestinian question. Success or failure will depend on how these factors are handled.

The personal security of world leaders is a matter of concern for intelligence services and law enforcement agencies. As events in 1981 showed, neither Pope, President nor Peacemaker could take the protection for granted. A public figure who wishes to be seen by his constituency simply cannot be guaranteed foolproof security. Yet, as Peter Hoffman's article shows, the same can be said even for a reclusive dictator in a totalitarian state. Adolf Hitler was the target of numerous assassination plots during every year of his rule, but the protection afforded him was not always of a high quality or consistency and Hitler himself often disregarded simple precautions. That Hitler survived these attempts is a testament to his incredible luck rather than to efficient security.

