

## IN THIS ISSUE

As this issue goes to press, relations between the United States and Nicaragua show no signs of improving. Bilateral talks have broken down, and the U.S.-sponsored 'Contra' war continues. At the root of American concerns is the fear that Nicaragua represents the thin end of a Soviet wedge on the American mainland. The Sandinistas deny this vehemently. Theodore Schwab and Harold Sims explore this problem by describing the extent of the Soviet-bloc relations with Nicaragua in the diplomatic, economic, and military fields. They contend that the relations developed in response to both internal and external challenges confronting the Sandinista regime.

The Middle East remains a volatile region as 1985 begins; two aspects of conflict therein are examined in this issue. The Israeli armed forces have begun to withdraw from southern Lebanon amid concern about the future security of that area, in view of the perceived weakness of the Lebanese Army. Joseph Kechichian's article sheds some light on the role of the Army in Lebanese politics, and offers some insights on the Army's performance and disintegration during the most recent phases of Lebanon's ongoing civil war. Peace is obviously a matter of perhaps greater urgency in the Middle East than anywhere else. Paul Dekar looks at the peace movement in Israeli in an effort to understand why would-be peacemakers often fail to contribute to the peace-making process.

With television conveying in dramatic fashion the visual, visceral horror of terrorist actions, it is easy to lose sight of the important fact that these actions are undertaken for political ends. Remembering this is not just a problem for the disinterested observer; it is a dilemma which confronts terrorist groups themselves. Arthur Aughey's study of the Ulster Protestant paramilitaries highlights the difficulties such groups encounter when they try to move from the military into the political domain. The UDA and other militant organizations typically find it hard to define realistic political goals in a polarized, militarized social setting. The use of such violence towards political ends raises a variety of moral problems. Grant Wardlaw reviews a recent volume entitled *The Morality of Terrorism*, which he assesses as an intelligent introduction to the discussion of the moral issues surrounding the use of terrorism. Few terrorist incidents have attracted as much attention and speculation as the attempt to assassinate Pope John Paul II. Vittoriofranco Pisano reviews two accounts which explore the background to the event and the subsequent investigations. Both authors, Claire Sterling and Paul Henze, reach, by different investigative processes, the same conclusion: that the would-be assassin was acting as a 'proxy' for the Soviet government. Pisano notes that recent political and judicial developments have tended to reinforce these findings. But the judicial process is by no means complete, and it is in the nature of incidents involving terrorism and intelligence services that the whole truth may never be known.