

IN THIS ISSUE

'Covert Action' is back in the news as President Reagan and the Congress square off on the question of resuming military aid to the Nicaraguan rebel forces. Together with the recent flight into exile of Haitian despot "Baby Doc" Duvalier and American attempts to persuade Philippine strongman Ferdinand Marcos to step down, this calls to mind an earlier era when covert action played a larger, but less visible role in American foreign policy. Stephen Rabe examines covert American efforts in 1960-61 to remove from power another despot: Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic. Rabe concludes that although the U.S. government, through the CIA, aided the dissidents who ultimately assassinated Trujillo, it is not at all certain that either President Eisenhower or President Kennedy intended that he should be overthrown in that manner.

If there is a lesson in this it is probably that there are limits on the ability of a superpower to control discreetly the actions of its 'proxies', and that their actions may have unintended consequences. This message is implicit in Efraim Karsh's study of the Soviet experience in using arms supplies to influence the actions of its allies in the Middle East. Karsh sees the arms/influence relationship in these cases as one of negative returns for the Soviet Union. The Soviet clients persisted in pursuing their own national interests, which were invariably at odds with Soviet interests, in spite of Soviet exercise of its power as the principal supplier of the clients, weapons.

In some circumstances, however, the exercise of superpower influence may be more hazardous for the client. Timothy Lomperis argues that insurgencies, such as that in Vietnam in the 1960s, are essentially crises of 'legitimacy' for the incumbent government. The latter's struggle to retain legitimacy in the eyes of its own people may be undermined by foreign intervention on behalf of the regime. Such intervention may, in any case, rebound on the foreign power itself, undercutting the legitimacy of its intervention policy among its domestic political constituency. Lomperis' conclusions counsel caution and political sensitivity in the formulation of policy to deal with these complex forms of low-intensity conflict.

The "Achille Lauro" incident notwithstanding, concern about the legitimacy of possible American actions appears to have guided U.S. policy for countering terrorism in the direction of caution. In spite of enormous pressures to 'do something' about international terrorism, the Reagan administration has shown remarkable restraint. It clearly recognizes that public support for a policy involving the use of force can evaporate overnight if force is mishandled or unsuccessful. As this interception of the "Achille Lauro" pirates demonstrated in dramatic fashion, the key to successful action using minimum force is accurate intelligence. Richard Crabtree takes this as a starting point for his assertion that legislative constraints on domestic intelligence-gathering restrict dangerously the ability of law enforcement authorities to deal with terrorism. In the event that foreign terrorists bring their wars to American streets, something Libya threatens to do, Crabtree believes that American security forces may be hampered severely in their ability to respond. He acknowledges, however, that there is an inherent conflict between a democracy's right to protect its citizens and institutions and its duty to preserve the liberties and rights of those individual citizens. Legitimacy

thus cuts both ways; it may be undermined by over zealous attention to security or to civil liberties.

On behalf of the Staff and the Editorial Advisory Board, I am pleased to welcome Professor Richard E. Morgan to the Board of *Conflict Quarterly*. A graduate of Columbia University and former Fellow at the Harvard Law School, he is Professor of Constitutional Law and Government at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. An established scholar of the American political and legal system, Professor Morgan devoted considerable efforts to the study of the American intelligence community. His major work in this field, *Domestic Intelligence: Monitoring Dissent in America*, was published by University of Texas Press in 1980.
