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During the summer of 1987, American and international attention has been focused on the Congressional Hearings into the U.S. Administration's covert support for the "Contra" war in Nicaragua. This provides a timely backdrop to Gary Prevost's critical examination of the Contra campaign. Prevost discusses American policy toward the region and toward Nicaragua, the development of the counter-revolutionary movement, insurgent strategy and operations, and the problems the Contras have encountered in attempting to forge a cohesive and effective campaign. In spite of the damage the Contras have been able to inflict upon the Nicaraguan economy, Prevost concludes that the Sandinista regime will survive, even if the Contra war is sustained into the future.

Both the Hearings and the Prevost article illustrate many of the problems that arise out of the conduct of low-intensity warfare. As Andrew Terrill's article indicates, these problems are not confined to Central America. Indeed, their complexity is of a significantly greater magnitude in the Middle East. Terrill explains how Israeli security policies in Southern Lebanon inadvertently led to a war with the Shi'ite population which, initially, had not regarded the Israelis as enemies. Of course, low intensity conflict takes many forms, and the distinctions between them are not always clear-cut. Ernest Evans makes a concentrated effort to define, and provide examples of, the various forms of low-intensity conflict, and discusses their impact on international policies. His article points clearly to the danger that low-intensity conflicts can escalate to major wars, and thus reinforces the argument that small wars need to be contained and if possible, to be terminated before they spread. With this in mind Jerrold Post explores the prospects for nuclear terrorism. His examination of the psychological motivations and constraints of terrorists leads him to observe that, so far, such groups have concluded that nuclear terrorism would not advance their cause. Having said that, however, he points out that there are plausible circumstances in which constraints could fail. His chilling scenarios make sobering food for thought.

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