IN THIS ISSUE

"May you live in interesting times." That ancient Chinese curse has been visited upon Western Sovietologists with a vengeance since Gorbechev's ascent to power in 1985. Almost daily, there are indications of changes both significant and subtle that appear to be altering the face and structure of the Soviet Union in ways that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. These indicators surface through a variety of sources, some quite unusual. In this issue Patrick Armstrong examines one of these: the "manifesto" of the "Movement for Socialist Renewal." He offers some hypotheses as to its provenance, and analyzes its content and message in light of recent developments in the Soviet political system. He wisely offers no certain prediction of things to come, but it is clear that "Moscow-gazing" can only become more interesting in the months and years ahead.

Political tradition has cloaked the British intelligence services behind a veil of secrecy that appears almost anachronistic to North Amercians now accustomed to a regular diet of indiscretions, leaks, and exposés. However, recent events, notably the "Spycatcher" controversy, have rent the veil to a limited degree and have raised the question of accountability. Kenneth Robertson explores the British experience of accountable intelligence, placing the issue within its particular national context, and focused attention on the role, function and limitations of the Security Commission. He also critiques some proposals for reform, and concludes with a strong case for better internal management of Britain's intelligence community.

In recent years, Americans have been pre-occupied with international terrorism, while political terrorism inside the United States has been on the decline, the activities of right-wing groups notwithstanding. Although the domestic terrorist threat has never been severe, a number of states have enacted legislation to deal with it. Brent Smith analyzes these "terroristic threat" statutes, how they are being construed and used. His research indicates that, in fact, they have not been applied to convict genuine political terrorists who, instead, have been convicted in federal courts under long-standing criminal laws. He concludes that state legislation has had little relevance to the issue of terrorism, but that it does open the door to abuse of power and restriction of democratic rights.

The excess of Third World security forces and, particularly, the activities of semi-official "death squads" have often been attributed to the assistance and guidance they received from the United States. Even

allowing for inaccurate reporting, hyperbole and political propaganda, the problem is a genuine one. Taking the Office of Public Safety program as a case study, Robert Bruce sets out to answer a simple, but important question: "Can U.S. training change the repressive behaviour of Third World police?" The answer, he concludes, based on the OPS experience, is not very reassuring. Both the curriculum, and the domestic political and social milieu of the trainees, mitigated against instilling respect for human rights. At best, OPS training may have reinforced individual and institutional tendencies toward repressive behavior. Bruce's article stands as a stark reminder of the need for clear understanding of limits on the impact of foreign assistance and of the human costs of misguided programs.

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All subscriptions purchased or renewed after 1 January 1989 will be subject to an increased price: $18.00 (Canada and U.S.) or £9.00 (Overseas). Individual copies will cost $5.00 or £2.50 each.

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David Charters
Executive Editor

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