

IN THIS ISSUE

The three articles in this issue suggest several overlapping themes. First, the Iranian Islamic revolution provides both a centrepiece and a backcloth for two of the articles. Cyrus Vakili-Zad examines the leading role of the religious opposition in that revolution, and assesses its significance. William L. Waugh, Jr. looks at one specific aspect of the American response to the revolution: the decision to mount an operation to rescue the American diplomats held hostage in Iran. If there is a second theme which emerges from the two essays, it concerns the questions of leadership and organization in managing people and events in complex situations of social conflict. Vakili-Zad's article offers a compelling argument as to why the religiously-oriented Iranian opposition succeeded. Waugh provides an equally compelling explanation of the reasons for the failure of the American operation.

The third theme, which links Vakili-Zad's essay and that of Kenneth Bush (who writes on Sri Lanka) is the role of rival formal parties and distinct cultural groups in social conflicts. In order to comprehend how such conflicts originate and develop, it is essential to understand who the "players" are, their place in the wider community, and the beliefs and experiences which inform their view of the situation and motivate their actions therein. Both articles are highly informative in this regard.

Several of the book reviews provide yet another thematic grouping quite distinct from those of the articles: Soviet national security policy. As change continues to sweep the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the debate over the elements of that policy and Soviet ability to use its national security resources to influence or control change, both at home and abroad, takes on added, not diminished, relevance. If history provides any reliable guideposts to the future, then the books by Amy Knight, the Scotts, and Ghulam Wardak may be of particular value.

The opinions expressed in the articles, reviews and other contributions are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily represent those of the Centre for Conflict Studies or of the University of New Brunswick.

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For a list of the papers presented, see the Conference insert in the Spring 1989 issue of *Conflict Quarterly*.

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