

Q. Do you think that Mitrone's work as a Public Safety advisor employed by the U.S. Government made his death a predictable occupational risk or is this a unique case?

A. Mitrone and the other A.I.D. Public Safety advisors were serving in a situation which in many ways resembles that of a war. I'm sure that this fact is realized by both sides in this confrontation. It's true that in Brazil and Uruguay the war is undeclared, but it has also never been formally declared in Vietnam.

Dan Mitrone was the seventh A.I.D. Public Safety advisor to be killed on duty. The six others were stationed in Vietnam. Another A.I.D. Public Safety advisor serving in Bolivia was seriously wounded and is now paralyzed from the waist down. Six other A.I.D. Public Safety advisors have also suffered serious wounds.

Q. Should the questions you raise concerning Dan Mitrone's death be considered as personal criticism of the man or are they directed toward the role of the A.I.D. Public Safety program in Latin America?

A. They should be considered as questions concerning the possibly dire implications and effects of the A.I.D. Public Safety program in Latin America. Mitrone was a part of this program. If the impartial investigation I have requested clears A.I.D., then it also clears Mitrone of possible complicity in torture under the guise of fostering internal security.

If the investigation, and I stress it must be both competent and impartial, finds that A.I.D. shares the blame for these alleged inhuman acts of torture with the police who allegedly performed them, Mitrone shares that guilt if only by association. I also stress that denials from A.I.D. officials or other compromised sources are meaningless. An impartial investigation is required. The focus of my questions is not the guilt or innocence of Mitrone, but an effort to force an investigation of the program for which he worked as it relates to the democratic principles of our nation.

Q. Do you feel it is proper for the director of an agency of the U.S. Catholic Conference to concern himself with political questions such as Mitrone's murder?

A. My questions were raised as a concerned U.S. citizen rather than in either of the above categories. However, I feel that it clearly has a moral character. Vatican II, *The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, contains a quote which I feel is most appropriate: "... whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body and mind, attempts to coerce the will

itself . . . all these things and others of their like are inhumanities indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator."

correspondence

MORE ON

"REFORM INTERVENTION"

Chevy Chase, Md.

Dear Sir: It is easy to get bored or even irritated with the increasing tendency in America of degrading the debate on serious foreign policy issues by imputing the motives of one who advances a different policy or approach. Mr. Robert Banville's letter (*worldview*, July-Aug.) commenting on my February article on "The Perils of Reform Intervention" is a case in point. He says that my article "seems disingenuous," i.e., according to the dictionary, "lacking in frankness, candor, or sincerity." I am puzzled as to how a perfect stranger can discern flaws in my motives.

Since I do not know Mr. Banville, I assume he is sincere, frank, and candid. At the same time his letter suggests that he is ill-informed and confused about actual U.S. foreign policy since 1945.

He seems to imply that America has deliberately employed a policy of "suppressing revolutions in allied nations by force," mentioning Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. It is interesting to note that since World War II the United States has provided economic and military assistance to about 85 legally sovereign states, many of them declared neutrals such as India and the Congo. The political complexion of the regimes in these states varies from Yugoslavia to Spain, from Ethiopia to Denmark. If our aid has helped to uphold "reactionary regimes" in a few instances, one can presume that it has helped to uphold more acceptable regimes in many more instances.

Further, in my study of U.S. military assistance, I have found no evidence that such aid has been used as a weapon to "suppress" desirable domestic reforms in the recipient country. On the contrary, I believe the net impact of the American diplomatic, economic, and military presence would encourage those indigenous forces seeking a viable and responsive government. The American Government and people have a clear preference for democratic and humane institutions at home and abroad, but experience and morality teach us that our capacity and right to impose these preferences abroad are seriously limited.

October 1970 19

Mr. Banville seems to reflect a disquietingly common confusion in the liberal left between "popular uprisings against an oppressive government" and Communist-sponsored subversion or uprisings against relatively good, non-Communist regimes. His letter does not clarify the relationship between these two distinct phenomena.

In short, Mr. Banville seems to accept the semi-revolutionary thesis that great powers should support violent revolutionary change within other states. His criticism of Washington is not that its policies have had an influence abroad, or that it has provided military assistance, but that the U.S. has been on the "wrong side." Many persons

who take this approach insist that the U.S. should have refrained from giving aid to the Saigon government, or, even better, that the U.S. should have supported the "right side," "the people," i.e., the Communists. This emphasis on domestic reform tends to distract us from the primary goals of foreign policy—peace and security.

The dialogue on these questions could be enriched by further discussion on the circumstances under which U.S. economic or military assistance should be given or withheld. There are guidelines for our policy-makers, but I am sure they could be clarified by thoughtful debate.

Ernest W. Lefever

Middle East Baedeker

Between the Rock and the Hard Place, by Paul Jacobs. Random House. 155 pp. \$4.95.

by Susan Woolfson

Your assignment, Mr. Jacobs, should you decide to accept it, is to convince a group of Palestinian Arab and Israeli intellectuals to meet with a number of their American counterparts—a conference of those who share a commitment to the Left, to socialist and humanist values—in the hopes of effecting even the smallest breakthrough toward peace in the Middle East.

Mission impossible? Yes, but that is hardly surprising news when one has been with Paul Jacobs in Israel and Lebanon late in the summer of 1969, privy to his impressions and forethoughts, conversations and afterthoughts, and even his wakings and his sleepings. Readers are led through the political minefields of the Middle East, including the spectrum of Israeli thought and the programs and theories of Palestinian liberation organizations, with time out for some reflections on the attitudes of the American New

Left. Over coffee, at a T.V. studio, on a terrace in Beirut, conversations and debates continue. A contact's mother, or a cab driver, illustrates a new point, reinforces an impression—our knowledge is acquired without effort. Although we lack a clear-cut definition of the author-narrator's own political views—these are alluded to but unstated—Jacobs is an active and concerned participant. And unconsoling.

What could possibly console with regard to the Middle East situation? For one, a partial view of the area's problems and "an answer" for settling the conflict. But Jacobs cannot condemn fully or embrace totally the programs and commitments of the parties he encounters, although he wrestles head-on with each. Perhaps more to the point than the book-jacket description of Jacobs as "a former trade-union organizer, a participant in liberal, radical and Jewish activities," he is a man of integrity and discernment, one who can take into account his own complicated feelings on the subject.

For example, writing of a meeting in Lebanon with members of Al Fatah:

The situation made me intensely uncomfortable, with no way to vent the irritation and edginess engendered by the dilemma of simultaneously being sympathetic to important parts of the Palestinian position while

accepting, for a multitude of reasons, the need for the continued existence of a Jewish state.

What tests are there for Jews like me, torn asunder as we are between sympathies for Palestinian Arabs who seek to achieve their own national identity in their own land and Israeli Jews who seek to preserve the national identity for which they have fought so bitterly in their own land, a land which is the same as that claimed by the Arabs?

What tests, indeed, "for Jews like [him]," and for other people of obvious goodwill? "Well," says Jacobs,

it is possible to construct theoretical models of a peaceful Middle East involving elaborate plans for compromises on both sides. . . . Such plans will avail nothing. The clash of interests goes too deep to be resolved peacefully today. The only hope rests with the young—the young Israelis and the young Arabs—who may find a way out of the individual and mutual dilemma. But much blood will run in the wadis before that happens, many of the best Israeli and Arab youth will die in fierce combat.

If efforts by third parties like the Center and Jacobs to bring together a group of Palestinian Arab and Israeli intellectuals are doomed to "self-destruct," what hope for the recent initiatives of the superpowers? Nothing in today's headlines contradicts the author's contention that the "clash of interests" of those with claims to the area "goes too deep to be resolved peacefully today."

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