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From time to time THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of critical issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Mailing No. 7.

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The following address was delivered by Mr. Johnson at the Opening Session of the Jerusalem Conference on International Terrorism on July 2, 1979. It examines the ways in which terrorism — defined at the Conference as the "deliberate, systematic murder and maiming of innocent civilians for political ends" — is a moral evil, which infects all elements of our society and ultimately may threaten the very survival of our civilisation.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF TERRORISM
By Paul Johnson

Before describing what I believe to be the correct approach to the problem of terrorism, let me indicate what I am certain is the wrong one. The wrong approach is to see terrorism as one of many symptoms of a deep-seated malaise in our society, part of a pattern of violence which includes juvenile delinquency, rising crime rates, student riots, vandalism and football hooliganism, which is blamed on the shadow of the H-bomb, western materialism, TV and cinema violence, rising divorce rates, inadequate welfare services and poverty, and which usually ends in the meaningless and defeatist conclusion that society itself is to blame and — to quote the caricature psychiatrist, 'We are all guilty'.

Such a loose, illogical and unscientific line of thought will get us nowhere. The truth is, international terrorism is not part of a generalised problem. It is a specific and identifiable problem on its own; and because it is specific and identifiable — because it can be isolated from the context which breeds it — it is a remediable problem. That is the first thing we must get clear.

When I say it is remediable, do not for one moment think I underestimate the size and danger of the terrorist phenomenon. On the contrary, I take the view that it is almost impossible to exaggerate the threat which terrorism holds for our civilisation. It is a threat which is in many respects more serious than the risk of nuclear war, or the population explosion, or global pollution, or the exhaustion of the earth's resources. I believe these dangers to our civilisation can be, have been, or are being, contained. I believe the threat of terrorism is not being contained — that it is, on the contrary, increasing steadily. I believe that one central reason why it is such a formidable threat is that very few people in the civilised world — governments and parliaments, TV and newspapers, and the public generally — take terrorism seriously enough.

Most people have only a very superficial knowledge of history. They tend, therefore, to underestimate the fragility of a civilisation. They do not appreciate that civilisations fall as well as rise. They can be, and have been, destroyed by malign forces. There have been at least three Dark Ages in our recoverable history. One occurred in the 3rd millenium BC, and, among other things, smashed the great civilisation of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, the civilisation which built the Pyramids. Another occurred towards the end of the 2nd millenium BC, and destroyed Mycenaean Greece, Minoan Crete, the Hittite Empire and much else. We are more familiar with the third, which destroyed the Roman Empire in the West in the 5th century AD. It took Europe 800 years to recover, in terms of organisation, technical skills and living standards, from that disaster. Now these great catastrophes had many and varying causes. But there was a common factor in all. They tended to occur when the spread of metals technology and the availability of raw materials enabled the forces of barbarism to equal or surpass the civilised powers in the quality and quantity of their weapons. For in the last resort, civilisations stand or fall not on covenants, but on swords.

Edward Gibbon, at the end of his great book on the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, asked: 'The savage nations of the globe are the common enemies of civilised society, and we may well inquire with anxious curiosity whether Europe is still threatened with a repetition of those calamities which formerly oppressed the

arms and institutions of Rome.' Writing in the 1780s, on the threshold of the Industrial Revolution, Gibbon thought he could answer his own question with a reasonably confident negative. He rightly estimated the strength of the civilised world to be increasing, and he believed that the scientific and rational principles on which that strength was based were becoming more firmly established with every year that passed.

Civilisation Threatened Anew

Now, nearly 200 years later, we cannot be so sure. The principles of objective science and human reason, the notion of the rule of law, the paramountcy of politics over force, are everywhere under growing and purposeful challenge, and the forces of savagery and violence which constitute this challenge are becoming steadily bolder, more numerous and, above all, better armed. I will not dwell on the huge and alarming disparity between the armed forces of Soviet barbarism, and those of the civilised world. More to our purpose here is that arms available to terrorists, the skills with which they use them and, not least, the organisational techniques with which these weapons and skills are deployed, are all improving at a fast and accelerating rate — a rate much faster than the countermeasures available to civilised society.

Let me give only one example, from Northern Ireland. In the month of April, 1979, the Provisional IRA and the left-wing Marxist terrorist group, INLA, succeeded in killing 4 police officers and 8 soldiers. They suffered no casualties themselves. The last terrorist to be killed by the Security Forces was as long ago as November, 1978. This is due to two reasons. The first is the replacement of the old amateurish IRA structure by what the BBC Defence correspondent calls 'a modern clandestine force, organised and well-equipped, with a classic cellular structure which is strong and almost impossible to penetrate or break.' The second is that the range and quality of weapons now used by terrorists in Ireland are becoming very formidable indeed. On 17 March, 1979, the Provisional IRA detonated a controlled device which contained well over half a ton of high explosive. They are using some very sophisticated radio-controlled devices in growing quantities, a range of heavy weapons including mortars firing 100lb-bombs, and,

in the case of the INLA advanced bombs of the type which killed Airey Neave. On the night of 6–7 March, 1979 they were able to plant 49 bombs in 22 towns throughout Northern Ireland, which, again according to the BBC, 'must have meant staff work of a very high standard'.

These menacing improvements in weaponry and organisation have been brought about by the international availability of terrorist support, supply and training services, and made possible, of course, by the relative freedom with which the terrorists can operate across the Northern Ireland border, within the Irish Republic. As a result, the terrorists have unquestionably strengthened their military position in relation to the Security Forces. In this theatre, at least, barbarism is winning ground from civilisation. And it is winning ground precisely because it can turn to an international infrastructure. Terrorism is not a purely national phenomenon, which can be conquered at a national level. It is an international offensive — an open and declared war against civilisation itself — which can only be defeated by an international alliance of the civilised powers.

When I say that terrorism is war against civilisation, I may be met by the objection that terrorists are often idealists pursuing worthy ultimate aims — national or regional independence, and so forth. I do not accept this argument. I cannot agree that a terrorist can ever be an idealist, or that the objects sought can ever justify terrorism. The impact of terrorism, not merely on individual nations, but on humanity as a whole, is intrinsically evil, necessarily evil and wholly evil, and it is so for a number of demonstrable reasons. Let me outline to you what I call the Seven Deadly Sins of Terrorism.

Idealisation of Violence

First, terrorism is the deliberate and cold-blooded exaltation of violence over other forms of public activity. The modern terrorist does not employ violence as a necessary evil, but as a desirable form of activity. There is a definite intellectual background to the present wave of terrorism. It springs not only from the Leninist and Trotskyist justification of violence, but from the post-war philosophy of violence derived from Nietzsche through Heidegger,

and enormously popularised by Sartre, his colleagues and disciple: No one since the war has influenced young people more tha Sartre, and no one has done more to legitimise violence on th Left. It was Sartre who adopted the linguistic technique, commo in German philosophy, of identifying certain political situations a the equivalent of violence, thus justifying violent correctives o responses. In 1962 he said, 'For me the essential problem is t reject the theory according to which the Left ought not to answe violence with violence.' Note his words: not 'a' problem, but 'th *essential*' problem.

Some of those influenced by Sartre have gone much further – notably Franz Fanon. His most influential work, *Les Damnés de l Terre*, which has a preface by Sartre, has probably played a bigge part in spreading terrorism in the Third World than any othe tract. Violence is presented as liberation, a fundamental Sartrea theme. For a black man, writes Sartre in his preface, 'to shoo down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy a oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time.' Thus th terrorist is born again, free. Fanon preached that violence is necessary form of social and moral regeneration for the oppressed 'Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violenc organised and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for th masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them.' Th notion of 'organised and educated violence', conducted by elites, is of course, the formula for terrorism. Fanon goes further: 'At th level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees th oppressed from his inferiority complex and from his despair an inaction.'

It is precisely this line of thought — that violence is positive an creative — which enables the terrorists to perform the horrifyin acts for which they are responsible. Of course the same argumen — almost word for word — was used by Hitler, who repeate endlessly, 'Virtue lies in blood.' *Hence the first deadly sin o terrorism is the moral justification of murder not merely as a mean to an end, but for its own sake.*

Rejection of Morality

The second is the deliberate suppression of the moral instincts in

man. Terrorist organisers have found that it is not enough to give their recruits intellectual justifications for murder: the instinctive humanity in us all has to be systematically blunted, or else it rejects such sophistry. In the Russia of the 1880s, the Narodnaya Volya terror group favoured what they termed "motiveless terror" and regarded any murder as a "progressive action." Both the Arab and the Irish terror groups of the 1970s have drifted in this direction. Once indiscriminate terror is adopted, the group rapidly suffers moral disintegration — indeed, the abandonment of any system of moral criteria becomes an essential element in its training. The point is brilliantly made in Dostoievsky's great anti-terrorist novel, *The Possessed*, by the diabolical Stavrogin, who argues that the terror-group can only be united by fear and moral depravity: 'Persuade four members of the circle to murder a fifth', he says, 'on the excuse that he is an informer, and you will at once tie them all up in one knot by the blood you have shed. They will be your slaves.' This technique is undoubtedly used in the various Arab terrorist groups. In these groups, too, women recruits are subjected to repeated rapes and are forced to take part in communal acts of sexual depravity, to anaesthetize moral reflexes and to prepare them for the gross travestying of their natures which their future work entails. The theory is based on the assumption that neither man nor woman can be an effective terrorist so long as he or she retains the moral elements of a human personality. One might say, then, that the second deadly sin of terrorism is a threat not merely to civilisation, but to humanity as such.

Renunciation of Politics

The third, following directly from the first two, is the rejection of politics as the normal means by which communities resolve conflicts. To terrorists, violence is not a political weapon, to be used *in extremis*; it is a substitute for the entire political process. The Arab terrorists, the IRA, the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany, the Red Army in Japan and elsewhere, have never shown any desire to engage in the political process. The notion that violence is a technique of last resort, to be adopted only when all other attempts to attain justice have failed, is rejected by them. In doing

so, they reject the mainstream of western thinking, based, like most of our political grammar, on the social-contract theories of the 17th century. Hobbes and Locke rightly treated violence as the antithesis of politics. a form of action characteristic of the archaic realm of the state of nature. They saw politics as an attempt to create a tool to avoid barbarism and make civilisation possible: politics makes violence not only unnecessary but unnatural to civilised man. Politics is an essential part of the basic machinery of civilisation, and in rejecting politics, terrorism seeks to make civilisation unworkable.

Promotion of Totalitarianism

Terrorism, however, is not neutral in the political battle. It does not, in the long run, tend towards anarchy: it tends towards totalitarianism. *The fourth deadly sin of terrorism is that it actively, systematically and necessarily assists the spread of the totalitarian state.* The countries which finance and maintain the international infrastructure of terrorism — which give terrorists refuge and havens, training camps and bases, money, arms and diplomatic support, as a matter of deliberate state policy — are, without exception, totalitarian states. The governments of all these states rule by military and police force. The notion, then, that terrorism is opposed to the 'repressive forces' in society is false — indeed, it is the reverse of the truth. International terrorism, and the various terrorist movements it services, is entirely dependent on the continuing good will and the active support of police-states. The terrorist is sustained by the totalitarian tank, the torture-chamber, the lash and the secret policeman. The terrorist is the beneficiary of the Gulag Archipelago and all it stands for.

Subversion of Progress

Which brings me to the fifth deadly sin. Terrorism poses no threat to the totalitarian state. That kind of state can always sustain itself by judicial murder, preventative arrest, torture of prisoners and suspects, and complete censorship of terrorist activities. It does not have to abide by the rule or law or any other considerations of humanity or morals. Terrorism can only get a foothold in a state like the Shah's Iran, where the executive is under some kind of

restraint, legal, democratic and moral. The Shah's regime was overthrown — and terrorists played a huge part in that overthrow — not because it was too ruthless, but because it was not ruthless enough. And the effect of such terrorist victories is not the expansion but the contraction of freedom and law. Iran is now a totalitarian state, where the rule of law no longer exists, and a state from which the terrorists can operate with safety and active assistance. *Hence, the fifth deadly sin is that terrorism distinguishes between lawful and totalitarian states in favour of the latter.* It can destroy a democracy, as it destroyed the Lebanon, but it cannot destroy a totalitarian state. All it can do is to transform a nation struggling towards progress and legality into a nightmare of oppression and violence.

Exploitation of Freedom

And that leads us to another significant generalisation about terrorism. Its ultimate base is in the totalitarian world — that is where its money, training, arms and protection come from. But at the same time, it can only operate effectively in the freedom of a liberal civilisation. *The sixth deadly sin of terrorism is that it exploits the apparatus of freedom in liberal societies and thereby endangers it.* In meeting the threat of terrorism, a free society must arm itself. But that very process of arming itself against the danger within threatens the freedoms and decencies and standards which make it civilised. Terrorism, then — and it is this we must get across to the intelligent young people who may be tempted to sympathise with it — is a direct and continuous threat to all the protective devices of a free society. It is a threat to the freedom of the press and the freedom of TV to report without restraints. It is a threat to the rule of law, which is necessarily damaged by emergency legislation and special powers. It is a threat to *habeas corpus.* It is a threat to the continuous process of humanising the legal code. It is a threat to the civilising of our prisons. It is a threat to any system designed to curb excesses by the police, the prisons authorities or any other restraining force in society.

Enervation of Democracy

Yet the seventh deadly sin of terrorism operates, paradoxically, in

the reverse direction, and is yet more destructive. A free society which reacts to terrorism by invoking authoritarian methods of repressing it necessarily damages itself, as I have argued. But an even graver danger — and a much more common one today — is of free societies, in their anxiety to avoid the authoritarian extreme, *failing* to arm themselves against the terrorist threat, and so abdicating their responsibility to uphold the law. The terrorists succeed when they provoke oppression. But they succeed far better when they are met with appeasement. *The seventh and deadliest sin of terrorism is that it saps the will of a civilised society to defend itself.* We have seen it happen. We do see it happen today. We find governments negotiating with terrorists — negotiations aimed not at destroying or disarming the terrorists, for such negotiations may sometimes be necessary — but negotiations whose natural and inevitable result is to concede part of the terrorists' demands. We find governments providing ransom money to terrorists — we find governments permitting private individuals to provide ransom money, even assisting the process whereby it reaches the terrorists. We find governments releasing convicted criminals in response to terrorist demands. We find governments according terrorists the status, rights and advantages and, above all, legitimacy, of negotiating partners. We find governments according terrorist convicts the official and privileged status of political prisoners, always and everywhere a blunder and a surrender of the first magnitude. We find governments surrendering to demands — an invariable and well-organised part of terrorist strategy — for official inquiries, or international inquiries, into alleged ill-treatment of terrorist suspects or convicts. We find newspapers and TV networks — often, indeed, state TV networks — placing democratic governments, and their officials and servants, and the terrorists, on a level of moral equality. We find governments failing, time and again, in their duty to persuade the public — and this is the real heart of the matter — that terrorists are not misguided politicians: they are, first, last and all the time, *criminals* — extraordinary criminals, indeed, in that they are exceptionally dangerous to us all and pose a unique threat not merely to the individuals they murder without compunction, but to the whole fabric of society — but criminals just the same.

In short, the seventh, and deadliest, sin of terrorism is its attempt to induce civilisation to commit suicide.

Arresting the Tide

I have indicated seven distinct ways in which terrorism threatens civilised society. But the point, above all, which I wish to stress is that terrorism is not a static threat — it is an increasing one. Not only is the international infrastructure of terrorism becoming better organised and more efficient, but the terrorists' own sights have been raised. By helping to destroy the legal government of Iran, they have secured a new base and access to formidable sources of finance and arms. They are now a factor in the struggle for control of the oil supplies of the Middle East. Who can doubt, after their success in Iran, that the terrorists will be emboldened to attempt the subversion of the even wealthier state of Saudi Arabia? This state is already a major contributor — perhaps the biggest — to terrorist funds; but that is no guarantee of immunity to attack. On the contrary. We cannot rule out the possibility that terrorists may one day secure direct access to Saudi wealth, through a revolutionary government they will help to install. Other oil-states on the Gulf are even more vulnerable targets. We must, therefore, expect and prepare for yet further improvements in the types of weapons terrorists deploy. Indeed, without wishing to seem alarmist, we cannot rule out the possibility that terrorists will obtain access to nuclear devices, or even to their production process.

Terrorism, in short, is no longer a marginal problem for the civilised world, something to be contained and lived with, a mere nuisance. It is a real, important and growing threat to the peace and stability of all legitimate states — that is, all those states which live under the rule of law. It is an international threat — therein lies its power. That power can only be destroyed or emasculated when there is international recognition of its gravity, and international action, by the united forces of civilisation, to bring it under control.

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A COMMON DENOMINATOR

IF you do some reading in the excellent books that keep coming out on the welfare of the planet and its inhabitants, and what must be done to preserve it, sooner or later the basic issue of "fit" will arise. How does what *I* need or ought to do fit with what *we* ought to do? The books invite an exercise of what Rousseau called the "general will"—what intelligent and public-spirited people decide is best for all—but "I" am only one person, one with involvements and responsibilities and goals that, with even the best of intentions, don't match up very well with what the world, or my country, or my city—with what "we"—ought to do. What can "I" do about this?

The question was precipitated by inspection of *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity* (Freeman, 1977, paper, $7.95) by William Ophuls, certainly one of the most useful of such books. Its point is brought to a head in something quoted by the author from Francis Carney, a man who has obviously spent time in the Los Angeles area. He writes:

> Every person who lives in this basin knows that for twenty-five years he has been living through a disaster. We have all watched it happen, have participated in it with full knowledge just as men and women went knowingly and willingly into the "dark Satanic mills." The smog is the result of ten million individual pursuits of private gratification. But there is absolutely nothing that any individual can do to stop its spread. Each Angeleno is totally powerless to end what he hates. An individual act of renunciation is now nearly impossible, and, in any case, would be meaningless unless everyone else did the same thing. But he has no way of getting everyone else to do it. He does not even have any way to talk about such a course. He does not know how or where he would do it or what language he would use.

The absolutes of this expression need qualifying, but the point holds for most cases. Take for example one man who lives in the region, who has made up his mind to work for the prevention of smog because it is gradually killing the treees in the mountain forests around the Los Angeles basin. He has evolved effective language for talking about the damage done by smog to both trees and people, but he drives an automobile to his speaking dates and meetings with like-minded and prospectively like-minded people. He has to. He also plants trees—smog-resistant trees—and shows and trains other people how to do it, and where. Not just cars, but trucks and other equipment are needed for this beneficent work.

Well, we can all *imagine* a distribution of population and a decentralization of industry which would dispense with cars almost entirely, and with better combustion or clean-burning fuel for necessary transport, the pollution problem would be solved. We can imagine it, but can we actually get it? Perhaps, but not soon. William Ophuls would explain that this sort of gradual, self-directed reform takes a long time, while pollution of various sorts is every day getting worse. He generalizes the situation as the "problem of the commons":

> Men seeking gain naturally desire to increase the size of their herds. Since the commons is finite, the day must come when the total number of cattle reaches the carrying capacity; the addition of more cattle will cause the pasture to deteriorate and eventually destroy the resource on which the herdsmen depend. Yet, even knowing this to be the case, it is still in the rational self-interest of each herdsman to keep adding animals to his herd. Each reasons that his personal gain from adding animals outweighs his proportionate share of the damage done to the commons, for the damage is done to the commons as a whole and is thus partitioned among all the users. Worse, even if he is inclined to self-restraint, an individual herdsman justifiably fears that others may not be. They will increase their herds and gain thereby, while he will have to suffer equally the resulting damage. Competitive over-exploitation of the commons is the inevitable result.

It is usually pointed out that when the commons is unlimited—or apparently so—no problem exists. The discovery of America, for example, solved it for Europeans when they came here and spread out across the continent, exploiting natural resources it did not seem possible to use up. During the period of that great expansion nobody paid much attention to the claim of Thomas Malthus—that population growth always outruns food supply—except to ridicule it. Today no one ridicules Malthus. He used to be wrong but now he is right. In our own time, with our extensive technological methods of agricultural production, wholly dependent upon fossil fuels, energy is the critical factor in food supply, and energy is running out.

Without energy, the most brilliant of technological fixes cannot be made to work. Mr. Ophuls says:

> Industrial civilization has used cheap and abundant energy not only to subsidize agriculture, mining, and other forms of production, but also to substitute for (that is, reduce the scarcity of) the basic economic factors of land, labor, and capital. Energy has thus been the modern industrial world's all-purpose antidote to the poison of scarcity. But energy is itself becoming ecologically scarce and, if for no other reason than its potential long-term effects on the global heat

balance, this antidote must eventually lose all its efficacy. Without cheap, safe, and abundant energy, most of the proposed technological solutions to the problems of growth simply evaporate. . . .

The era of cheap and abundant energy is decisively over. But energy is the linchpin of industrial civilization; as it becomes scarcer and more expensive, so must everything else. We have therefore come almost to the end of the industrial road characterized by ever grander high-energy solutions to the problems caused by previous growth. Without the energy to back them up, such "solutions" have become merely fantastic. The only genuine solution is to begin a transition to a low-energy (yet high technology) post-industrial civilization that depends primarily on flow resources like solar energy for the routine maintenance of life within the overall limitations on energy use that are built into the biosphere.

Needless to say, most of the political and economic proprietors of our world are still planning on technological solutions. That is where the wealth of nations has been invested, and commercial and technological enterprise has shaped the socially controlling patterns of production, trade, and distribution in terms of the drives of material self-interest. People have to conform more or less to those patterns, no matter what they think is the right thing to do, simply in order to work at jobs and provide for their families. The grip of the past remains compelling, even for those who no longer believe in its credo. Meanwhile, a great many still believe in it, and others passively acquiesce. How, then, can the needed changes be brought about?

For his solution, Mr.Ophuls goes back to Plato's Republic and his Guardians, the disciplined educators and rulers who understand what has to be done. Reform, he says, is not enough.

At best, reforms can postpone the inevitable for a few decades at the probable cost of increasing the severity of the eventual day of reckoning. In brief, liberal democracy as we know it—that is, our theory or "paradigm" of politics—is doomed by ecological scarcity; we need a completely new political philosophy and set of political institutions. Moreover, it appears that the basic principles of modern industrial civilization are also incompatible with ecological scarcity, and that the whole ideology of modernity growing out of the Enlightenment, especially such central tenets as individualism, may no longer be viable. . . . However, our predicament is not hopeless. We can adapt ourselves to ecological scarcity and preserve most of what is worth preserving in our current political and civilizational order. But we must not delay. Events are pressing on us, and our options are being rapidly and sharply eroded; already we confront an array of potentially tragic choices.

The prescription is clear. We must adopt in theory and move in fact toward a steady-state economic society:

Given a basic willingness to restrain individual self-seeking and legislate social temperance, social devices acceptable to reasonable men and suited to a government of laws could readily be found to serve as the "hedges" that will keep us on the path of the steady state. . . . The solution to the tragedy of the commons in the present circumstances requires a willingness to accept less, perhaps much less, than we now get from the commons. No technical devices will save us. In order to be able mutually to agree on the restraints we wish to apply to ourselves, we must give up the exercise of the rights we now enjoy, and bind ourselves to perform public duties in the common interest. The only alternative to this kind of self-coercion is the coercion of nature, or perhaps of an iron regime that will compel our consent to living with less.

This is what "we" have to do. The full measure of the change required is given in a passage at the end of a chapter headed "Learning To Live with Scarcity":

Throughout most of recorded history, the human race has existed in rough equilibrium with its resource base. Growth occurred, if at all, at an infinitesimal pace; even the population of relatively dynamic Europe grew at much less than 1 per cent per annum between 600 and 1600 A.D. But then, very suddenly, the Industrial Revolution rocketed the scale of economic activity upward. With the arrival of ecological scarcity, the rocket cannot continue to rise. The first policy option is an immediate and direct transition to a steady-state civilization relatively affluent in material terms (however frugal it might seem to many now living in the richest countries). If this option is not taken, overshoot must occasion a fall to a significantly lower steady-state level than could have been achieved by carefully planned and timely action (II), or even to a level tantamount to a reversion to the traditional pre-modern agrarian way of life (III), so that the entire Industrial Revolution from start to finish will appear as a brief and anomalous spike in humanity's otherwise flat ecological trace, a transitory epoch of a few centuries' duration in which it seemed momentarily possible to abolish scarcity.

In short, we stand at a genuine civilizational crossroads. Ecological scarcity is not completely new in history, but the crisis we confront is largely unprecedented. That is, it is not a simple repetition of the classic Malthusian apocalypse on a larger scale, in which nothing has changed but the numbers of people, the ruthlessness of the checks, and therefore the greater potential for misery once the day of reckoning comes. The wars, plagues and famines that have toppled previous civilizations are overshadowed by horrible checks Malthus never dreamed of, like large-scale ecological ruin or global radiation poisoning, for these checks are threats to the very existence of the species. On the other hand, we also possess technical resources that previous civilizations did not when they encountered the challenges of ecological scarcity. Thus in our case a successful response is possible: we can create a reasonably affluent post-industrial, steady-state civilization and avoid a traumatic fall into a version of pre-industrial civilization. This imposing task devolves upon the current generation. But there is no time to lose.

The various subdivisions of the task are given in detail in the books which Mr. Ophuls recommends. We know, in effect, what to do. Yet "we" also can easily enough see why the author harks back to Plato's Guardians. They, or rulers or administrators like them, will be needed because most of the people in the world are devotedly pursuing personal objectives which they regard as vitally important, while the rich and the prosperous find it sensible and good to go on doing things in the way that made them rich and prosperous.

How will all these people be made or moved to change? The author says that they don't have much choice. They will have to take instruction either from wise ecological policy-makers or from the harsh measures that Nature will impose. These are the only options.

He proposes, therefore, a "politics of transformation":

As in the revolutionary era of the past, inspirational leadership will be needed to steer us clear of anarchy and chaos during the transition. The critical question, therefore, is whether such leadership will be provided, on the one hand, by a man on horseback or Big Brother's Ministry of Propaganda or, on the other, by a Gandhi or a group of Jeffersonian "natural aristocrats" resembling the men who founded the American Republic. Unfortunately, the breadth

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(Continued)

> of mind and nobility of character typical of the latter are not commonly found these days, for our institutions are designed to turn out experts and other brilliant mediocrities whose distinguishing characteristic is what Thorstein Veblen called a "trained incapacity" to see beyond their professional blinkers. . . . Next to the sheer lack of time in the face of onrushing events, the paucity of genuine leaders is probably our most serious obstacle to a better and more humane future.

We come back, then, to our original question: What sort of "fit" with this urgent program can there be in the lives of individuals—people who are spotted all across the spectrum of the status quo? We can't all be ecological designers who give most of their time to figuring out what "mankind" must do, and yet, if they are right—and here we are stipulating that they are—finding some kind of fit with what they say has ultimate importance. The best fit, of course, will be a matter of individual discovery and initiative—like the work of the man who plants trees, or the man who combines farming with education, and turns agriculture into a curriculum for social philosophy, or the numerous women doing pioneering work in food production, innovative publishing, and alternative education. But there needs also to be something like a common denominator—an essential ingredient of what both "society" and individuals must do to bring the changes about.

Mr. Ophuls suggests, indirectly, what this ingredient or factor may be. While he says at the beginning that he is not going to write a great deal about "values"—he will leave them to the last, since "philosophical, ethical, and spiritual arguments seem to appeal only to the converted" —there is an underlying theme which surfaces now and then throughout the book. It has articulate expression in the last chapter:

> Finally, the steady-state society will undoubtedly be characterized by genuine morality, as opposed to a purely instrumental set of ethics. It seems unlikely, for example, that a real commitment to stewardship could arise out of enlightened self-interest; it will require a change of heart. But the same could be said about many of the other developments outlined above. Indeed, the crisis of ecological scarcity can be viewed as primarily a moral crisis in which the ugliness and destruction outside in our environment simply mirror the spiritual wasteland within; the sickness of the earth reflects the sickness of the soul of modern industrial man, whose whole life is given over to gain, to the disease of endless getting and spending that can never satisfy his deeper aspirations and must eventually end in cultural, spiritual, and physical death. If this assessment is correct, then the new morality of the steady state must involve a movement from matter toward spirit, not simply in the sense that material pursuits and values will inevitably be de-emphasized, and restrained by self-interested necessity, but also in the sense that there will be a recovery or rediscovery of virtue and sanctity. We shall learn again that canons higher than self-interest and individual wants are necessary for men to live in productive harmony with themselves and others. Thus the steady-state society, like virtually all other human civilizations except modern industrialism, will almost certainly have a religious basis—whether it is Aristotelean political and civic excellence, Christian virtue, Confucian rectitude, Buddhist compassion, Amerindian love for the land, or something similar, old or new.

While something of this feeling is suffused throughout the book, Mr. Ophuls is true to his determination to write for an audience of pragmatic Americans; as he says:

> Hard-headed scientists, technologists, bureaucrats, and businessmen—that is, the men who make the basic decisions determining our futures—do not as a rule pay much attention to such arguments [the appeal to values]. If one is to argue constructively with the men who incarnate our cultural and political norms, one must argue the case in their own terms. This requires a fundamentally empirical and a scientific or agnostic approach, putting aside the question of values, at least temporarily, to find instead what is possible, given the natural laws that govern our planet.

The writer says this—and offers plenty of tough-minded reasoning—yet there is also that other requirement on which everything depends: *a change of heart!* How is this to be arranged?

It isn't, of course. Changes of heart are not a proper objective for anyone except in the case of oneself, and in addition they are genetically mysterious. Yet it has been a change of heart that has given its humanizing influence to the work of the new generation of social thinkers and essayists, and which led E. F. Schumacher to subtitle his famous book, "Economics as if People Mattered."

A change of heart is surely the common denominator that links "I" with "we." The contradictions in our lives will be with us for a long time; they have to be worn out, their divisive effects exhausted; and for all that long time we'll need to make the best of bad and even compromising situations, by reason of a change of heart. In a concluding paragraph William Ophuls suggests where he has found inspiration:

> In looking out at this ecological ruin we have made of the earth, we see what manner of men we have become. Worse, the degraded environment impoverishes us spiritually so that we are likely to cause further ecological ruin. But the point has been reached where such a vicious circle can no longer continue without serious consequences for humankind. The earth is teaching us a moral lesson: the individual virtues that have always been necessary for ethical and spiritual reasons have now become imperative for practical ones. These virtues were pithily summarized in the fifth century B.C. by the Taoist sage Lao Tzu:
>
> Nature sustains itself through three precious principles,
> which one does well to embrace and follow.
> These are gentleness, frugality, and humility.
>
> Implicit in gentleness, frugality, and humility are simplicity and closeness to nature. *Walden*, the famous symbolic critique by Henry Thoreau of an American society rapidly headed in the opposite direction, is an extended sermon on the necessity of natural simplicity as the only way to avoid living the quietly desperate life of those weighed down by striving for power, possessions, and position.

Another kind of science grows out of such inspiration, and we are getting more and more of it.

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science

Has America lost faith in the experts?

By Alan McGowan

Immediately after the accident at Three Mile Island nuclear plant, stories began appearing in the press (Time, Newsweek, others) calling into question the credibility of the scientific community and telling us that Americans had lost their faith in the experts.

For a nation founded on the brilliant technological use of abundant resources, such developing cynicism was hard to take. Even if it were only the opinion of the columnists, such a deepening dissatisfaction could have a profound effect on our technological enterprise, even now struggling to keep up with its competitors in the industrialized world.

As if to provide an exclamation point, a DC-10 crashed, killing 271 persons, apparently the result of a faulty maintenance procedure; for a while, the structure of the airplane itself was called into question. Even now, there is wonder at a device so sophisticated that a seemingly innocuous change (removing the rearmost of three bolts first, rather than the specified, reverse order) could lead to such a tragedy.

And then Chicken Little was right, after all, as Skylab came hurtling down from the heavens, and the scientists who had put men on the moon could give us no indication of where, and only broad ranges of when, the tons of debris were going to strike. As it turned out, no one was reported hurt, but it also did not land over water (as NASA's feeble effort attempted).

What's going on? After the glowing promises of the technological age, are we doomed forever to drive in Pintos? Are all of our technological marvels coming unraveled, producing more harm than good? Are the promises of the technological priesthood not to be believed under any circumstances?

Of course not. Most polls show the scientific community retaining its high standing relative to other groups (authority of all kinds is in question, but the scientific community least of all). If anything, we have gained a more realistic perception of the costs and benefits of our technological society, and have realized that technology can only be a tool – albeit essential – in the solution of social problems.

However, there are important lessons to be learned from this experience, both by the scientific and technological community and by politicians and other leaders. Complacency is as unwarranted as is desperation.

Science and technology are intimately connected, both in the minds of the public and in the productive enterprise. Funding for most scientific research (as opposed to technological development) comes from public funds; it is supported *not* as a cultural activity, as are the arts (where little of practical, economic value is expected), but in the expectation that such support will lead to real technical advance and substantive economic improvement. Sen. William Proxmire, with his Golden Fleece awards, represents an extreme viewpoint, perhaps, but belief in the basic philosophy underlying the awards is shared by his colleagues in the Congress and the people who elected them.

Therefore, even though technology is the *application* of what is learned in the scientific community, when technology fails, or appears to, the spotlight turned on technology also illuminates the scientific enterprise. And if a shadow falls on one, the other is darkened as well.

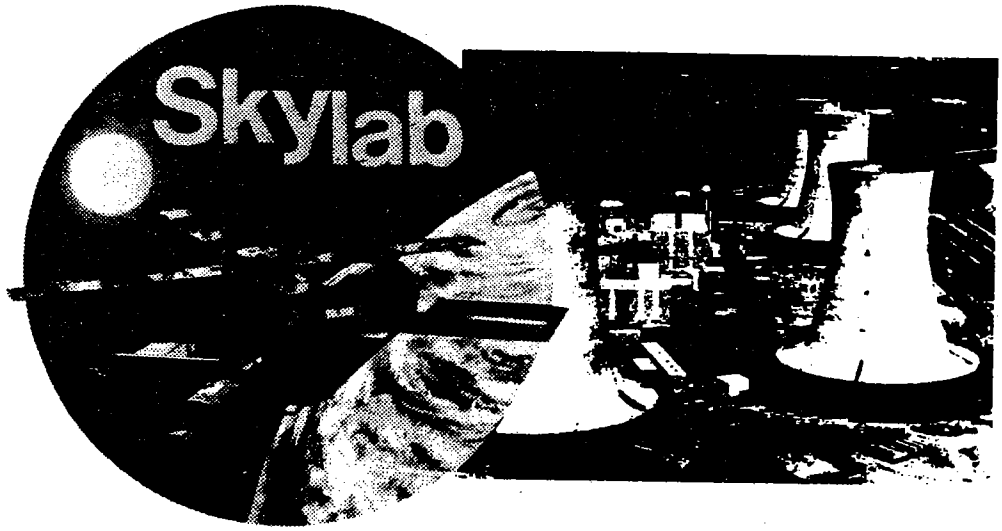
However, the public is smarter than many scientists and engineers think. Many never believed the claims of some that all would be solved by technology. People don't believe in magic.

They do believe in technology, perhaps even a bit more than they should. For although there was an obvious tendency in some cases for policy to flow from technology – the automobile is the best example – there are many other cases where technology was developed specifically as a result of public policy. The space program, with the decision – socially and politically motivated – to put a man on the moon, is the best example. There are many others.

And that belief in technology is important, perhaps more important than it ever has been before. For it is true that technology will provide us only the tools to solve our social problems, not solve them alone. Dealing with those issues, however, without the benefit of technology, will be like trying to prepare a meal without the benefit of fire. Only a tool, perhaps, but critically important.

Consider, for example, the energy crisis. It is now widely recognized that the era of cheap energy, however important and beneficial it was, is over. The changes that are apt to take place are fundamental. For example, people are apt to do much less physical traveling, and will instead "visit" via sophisticated videophones. The printed page may well be replaced

OVER



Skylab by NASA; Three Mile Island by UPI

Technical marvels coming unraveled

in large part by home computer retrieval of relevant information, with printing of only selected pieces. This, of course, would save the energy embedded in the printing of large numbers of pages, only a portion of which are actually read. And these examples are only the tip of the iceberg.

These technologies will not be without their real problems. They must be subjected to the most rigorous examination possible. Some that we can now imagine should not be deployed if they cannot be used in a safe and benign manner and cannot answer the criticisms made against them. But this necessary criticism must not be used to discredit technological development per se. To accomplish this necessary technical advancement, coupled with the fundamentally necessary critical comments from social, as well as technological, critics, will require some changes in the scientific and technological communities as well as in the lay public.

To begin with, the scientific community should avoid being defensive. Most criticisms of developing technology are, in fact, constructive and well meaning. Many criticisms even from the most vociferous of critics lead to real improvements. A positive attitude toward constructive criticism will do much to restore whatever confidence has been lost in the technological enterprise.

Avoidance of overzealous selling is an important part of any effort to retain the credibility of science and technology. Most technologies have lived up to reasonable expectations, but have not lived up to the unreasonable expectations that were often part of their introduction. Responsible assessments of new technologies, which include frank disclosure of the possible risks from both their critics and promoters, are extremely important.

Perhaps the most important need is for scientists to take seriously the necessity of talking to the public in clear language, free of jargon, and with data-based arguments. It is unreasonable to expect any one scientist to be completely objective and neutral – indeed, there is benefit in showing that scientists, too, are human – but at least their point of view should be backed up with clear reasoning and facts. Opinion should be labeled "opinion," not "scientific fact," and some humility toward opposing views should be shown, recognizing that in fact science proceeds because of its discussions in public, subject to criticism by the entire scientific community.

The lay public for its part must understand that science and technology cannot solve all of our ills, but can only be part of the solution. A necessary part, yes, but one that must be fitted into our very complex social and political world.

As well, scientists and engineers must be allowed to make mistakes. The truly creative ones take many risks. They must be supported in taking those risks and, therefore, be allowed to fail. Not every proposed answer will work, and some must be tried at some length before they are pronounced not sufficient. The public has a right to demand, of course, that this be done in the safest and most environmentally benign manner possible.

If the attitude described above were to prevail, science and technology could contribute not only to solving problems in the United States and providing the foundation for dramatic social and political progress, but it would enable us to provide badly needed leadership in a troubled world. If, however, an attitude of constant bickering persists, anarchy will prevail and progress will be nil. The choice is ours to make.

Alan McGowan is president of the Scientists' Institute for Public Information.

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Why Was the West Unprepared?

By Chaim Herzog

The recent and current events in Iran and in Saudi Arabia have tended to focus interest on the serious implications for the Western world inherent in them. But there is an aspect to these developments which has gone unnoticed and which must be a source of concern for the future.

The obvious question which must pose itself is why was the free world caught so unprepared by a series of events which could have been anticipated, given a balanced appreciation of developments in the world of Islam in general and in the Arab world in particular.

An analysis of this situation reveals an alarming tendency on the part of intelligence organizations, foreign ministries and editorial boards to follow a line of least resistance, to adopt unquestioningly preconceived concepts and to adhere to them even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

Until a year ago, that is, until the events in Iran moved into their final dramatic scenario with the abdication of the Shah, a political discussion on the Middle East invariably focused on the Israel-Arab conflict. Iran, if mentioned, was described as the bulwark of the West in the Middle East. Well-informed political observers pointed to the inherent stability in the Persian Gulf with the mighty new power of Iran on one shore of the Gulf and the stable, reliable Saudi Arabia on the other shore of the Gulf. Why, even General John Hackett's excellent book on "The Third World War" assigned a major role in the Middle East to the forces of Iran ranged on the side of the NATO forces struggling in Europe.

The Central Conflict

At every level of evaluation and commentary, the Israel-Arab conflict has invariably been seen as the central conflict in the Middle East, a conflict the solution to which would bring peace, prosperity and calm to the area. In few analyses which were published in some of the most important organs of public opinion in the world today can one detect even a hint as to the developments which have shocked the free world and taken it by complete surprise.

True, voices have been raised, as in Princeton Professor Bernard Lewis's article in Commentary magazine in 1975, in which he warned about the stirrings in the world of Islam, or by Professor Yehezkel Dror of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who in his book "Crazy States—A Counter-Conventional Strategic Problem," which was published in 1973, wrote, "American citizens and property in areas which United States activities and strength are evident, may become useful bargaining counters in the hands of the 'Crazy State' in order to achieve its ends. Thus blackmail based on the taking of American citizens as hostages for the purposes of ransom . . . is a clear example of such a possibility."

By and large, however, such warnings went unheeded.

It seems to me in retrospect that public opinion in the world has to a great degree been misled by an overemphasis of the Israel-Arab conflict in the context of all that is happening in the Middle East. This is not to suggest in any way that the Israel-Arab conflict is not an important one. Of course it is, and merits a determined effort towards its resolution. But it has drawn over the years an obsessive interest to the exclusion of far more important issues in the Middle East.

Thus, in May 1978, simultaneous disturbances in 38 cities in Iran, with all the sinister implications of such a development in an area in which there was so very much at stake for the United States and the free world, continued for many days before they even merited mention on the front pages of many important newspapers of the world. At the same time, those newspapers were directing the attention of their readers to the addition of some 20 families to a remote Jewish settlement in the West Bank, which in no way represented anything of importance in the context of the defense or the position of the West in the Middle East.

It seems to me in retrospect that public opinion in the world has to a great degree been misled by an overemphasis of the Israel-Arab conflict in the context of all that is happening in the Middle East.

What is occurring in the Middle East has nothing to do with the Israel-Arab conflict. The world faces the dangers inherent in the impact of the twentieth century, coupled with untold wealth, on medieval societies. The Israel-Arab conflict is not, in my view, the central problem in the Middle East as far as world peace is concerned. Those who point to it as such are willfully misleading public and indeed world opinion, and ignoring a situation fraught with danger for the free world.

Observe the developments reflecting this situation in recent years. Two revolutions in Afghanistan, with an ongoing civil war. Unrest, instability and the disappearance of any semblance of democracy in Pakistan. The revolution in Iran, with that country being dragged back into the Middle Ages. The recent coup and the savage events following it in Iraq. The war in Lebanon which has torn a country apart. Years of war in the Dhofar province of Oman, in which the forces of the Sultan and his allies have been ranged against forces mounted from Communist-dominated South Yemen. The war between North Yemen and South Yemen. The war in the Horn of Africa which was initially mounted by a member of the Arab League, Somalia. The Libyan invasion of Chad. The unrest in Syria, which bodes ill for the future of President Assad's regime. The tension along the Libyan-Egyptian border. The war in the Western Sahara between Morocco and Algeria. The recent bloody events in Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

It is clear that if the Israel-Arab conflict is resolved, by whatever means it may be resolved, the main centers of bloodshed, warfare and instability in the Middle East and in the Arab world will persist.

In the past 18 months alone, four Arab presidents were removed, one assassinated in Yemen, one executed by the assassins in South Yemen, one removed by a coup in Mauretania and one recently by a coup in Iraq. Thirteen of the current heads of Arab states, over 50% of them, have succeeded immediate predecessors who were violently removed from office, in most cases from this life. In the past 15 years there have been 12 fierce bitter wars in which Arabs were pitted against Arabs in bloody internecine strife. When and by whom were the correct conclusions drawn in the West from these facts?

Indeed, the Western world dare not ignore the developments in the Middle East and in the world of Islam caused by the rise of extreme fanatical orthodoxy, and the inherent instability in that world. Especially when this unstable world, prey to dictators, mad leaders, and would-be saviours, has access to modern technology and is above all in the process of acquiring nuclear capability, which is being supplied by France to Pakistan and to Iraq. Herein seems to lie the greatest danger being posed today to the free world.

Perhaps the classic example of the tendency of governments and of the media in the free countries to ignore realities and to indulge in wishful thinking is the approach to Saudi Arabia. This country has been portrayed as the strong, reliable ally of the West in the Middle East, moderate and reliable. But anybody who has analyzed the basic facts about Saudi Arabia knows that this is far from the truth.

Inherent Instability

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One did not have to wait for the take-over of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by a group of fanatics in order to be aware of the fact that there is a certain inherent instability in Saudi Arabia today. One-third of the population of Saudi Arabia, which is estimated at six million, is composed of foreigners, of which 1.5 million are Yemenis and some 200,000 are Palestinians. There are more foreigners serving in the Saudi Arabian defense establishment than there are Saudi Arabian soldiers. The Saudi Arabian armed forces are divided basically in two between the Saudi Arabian army and the gendarmerie, whose principal task seems to be to keep a wary eye on each other.

How can it be that developments in the Middle East came upon the free world as a complete surprise, and found the United States government in a position where it does not even have the necessary bases and facilities in the Middle East today to deal with a situation which might have been envisaged had the signs available for all to see been read correctly?

The concerned citizen cannot ignore the part played by the media which should have been monitoring the developments in the sensitive areas of the world, and reading the situation on the ground, and whose columnists should have been placing a rather confusing picture into correct perspective, instead of relying on handouts from embassies and foreign ministers. The media make great play frequently about the right of the public to know. But developments in the Middle East raise the question of the effectiveness of the media in ensuring the right of the people to know.

Chaim Herzog, formerly Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, is a Tel Aviv lawyer.

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