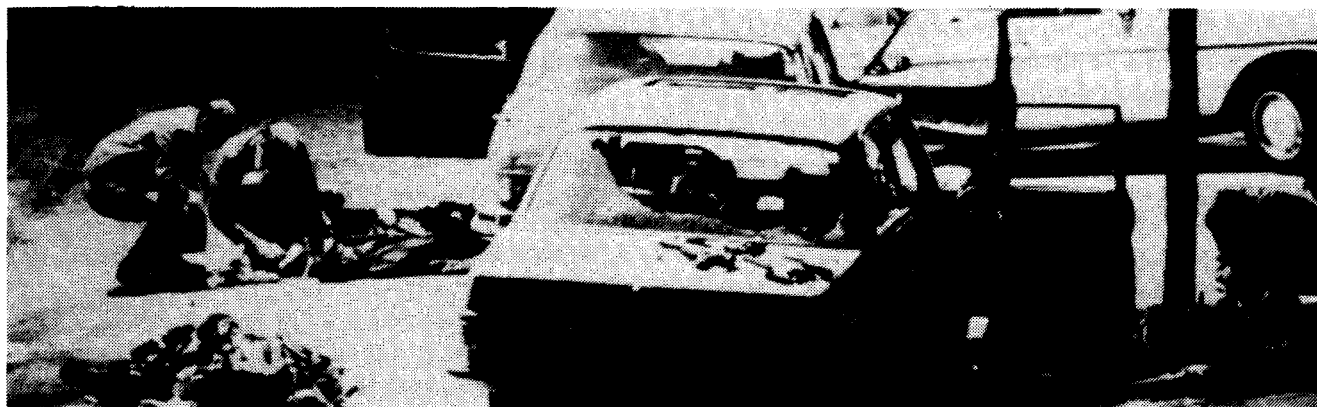


U.N. interview



'Today's terrorism is tomorrow's heroism'

A lot of journalists and political analysts have drawn the obvious comparisons between the embassy takeovers in Teheran and Bogota: the fact that embassies were invaded, the hostage taking, the human rights questions, the possibility, even probability, of violence. But after all the dust settles, one fact will remain, unmentioned by these hostage-watchers: A giant step will have been taken toward reformulating international law along lines antagonistic to national sovereignty.

From the highest levels, the strategic planners behind the events in Teheran and Bogota set up the crisis situations to show that national laws and the current international code of laws are inadequate. New situations require new laws, a new approach, a "One World" approach, superseding national sovereignty.

As *EIR* has shown in its coverage of the Iran crisis, the human rights question has been manipulated to justify the formation of a tribunal to hear everything from charges against the Shah of Iran to claims that the United States has committed the crime of "ethnocide" against the Iranian people—the crime of introducing technology to develop backward countries.

The tribunal is the work of the United Nations and its Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, leading figures in the "One World" conspiracy. And the United Nations is very directly involved in establishing a codified international law through the Foundation for the Establishment of an International Court and International Law Commission, a nongovernmental U.N. organization. In an interview made available to *EIR*, the foundation's Robert Woetzel is quite optimistic about the outcome of the hostage crises vis á vis international law and legitimizing terrorism. Woetzel is the senior professor of international law and politics at the Jesuit Boston College. He and the foundation, based in Newton, Massachusetts, work closely with Waldheim and are the authors of all inter-

national law put forward by the United Nations.

This strategic thinking has begun to filter into the national government policy-making circles, particularly since the Colombia crisis. Sources within the Colombian Foreign Ministry are saying that something must be done to lift the extraterritorial status of embassies. "It is an anomaly of international law, because you are both responsible and not responsible," said one.

Bolivian officials in Colombia are raising similar objections. Either the host government is responsible or the country occupying the embassy is responsible for everything involving that particular embassy, the argument goes.

Some of these strategists are less sanguine than Woetzel about the effectiveness of the hostage tactic. "It's utopian" they say. But they have no disagreement over what they want to see in the decade of the 1980s: a One World order where national sovereignty is a thing of the past and the International Monetary Fund is dictating economic policy.

The following is the interview with Robert Woetzel.

Q: I am interested in hearing your solutions to the current problem of terrorist takeovers of embassies. I have spoken with a number of people who have a clear picture of the terrorist situation and at Georgetown they believe that there are at least 30 embassies around the world which are going to be hit with terrorist takeovers, but no one can come up with any answers.

A: We have handled these types of matters informally. Let me say first of all that the Foundation is under Article 71 of the charter of the U.N., and we work with the United Nations therefore, and this is our special preserve. The solutions that Secretary General Waldheim has been seeking in Iran and that we have been recommending for

some time now are directed toward a practical quid pro quo. In other words, what is involved essentially is demands by guerrilla forces or partisan groups; and these demands have to be met with certain expectations from the governments, or the incumbents, so to speak, because today's terrorism is tomorrow's heroism. There's kind of a balance. As you recall, there are posters still out circulating for the arrest of Mr. Begin, for example, the minister of Israel for similar acts of terrorism. And if he weren't a head of state he would be subject to arrest . . . so the situation is one where you have to be realistic. And the situation in Colombia, as well as Iran, require two things. First of all, an agreement on principals of how to treat each other.

If you're going to treat the other side, that is, for example, so-called freedom fighters or guerrillas, as ordinary criminals, and execute them or blind them like the victims of the Iranian revolution which have just been shown to the commission of inquiry, then you can expect the embassy takeovers. There is a definite link between, for example, patterns of torture by incumbents and takeovers of embassies. . . .

So you need an agreement on a code of offenses—code of offenses against peace and security of mankind, it's called—which will include torture and other such actions, and also hostage taking and kidnappings. We do have a hostage convention that the West Germans introduced and which was passed by the General Assembly, but it is not effective because you need an effective quid pro quo. That's where we come in. We have drafted a code which is now a high priority item for the next General Assembly according to Resolution 33-97.

The next step is . . . because we don't have a central law giver so we begin with practical steps first and only with principles later. The commission of inquiry, for example, that has been appointed in Iran, we worked out the details of such a commission two years ago, and it's on the basis of our draft that they made an agreement. So the commission of inquiry and then after that of course we will have to have follow-up. The Americans wonder why they don't release the hostages; well of course not. At this stage, of course, they could as a good will gesture, but it would be misunderstood here. In other words, there has to be implementation of the findings of the commission first. You can't release your leverage.

This tactic, incidently, of the guerrillas was established since Americans are so pro-Israeli, by no one else but Begin. There's a book by J. Bowyer Bell, an associate of Brzezinski from Columbia, and he calls it the "strategy of leverage." So that with very little force you can bring the big powers to heel. *That's what's at stake in Colombia*, the strategy of leverage. In other words, the big powers have to come to an agreement that they will treat the guerrilla forces according to international law.

The additional protocols to the Geneva convention from 1936 state that guerrillas also have rights under international law. You cannot torture them and treat them like outlaws.

Q: This all sounds very good, but will the sovereign countries go along with the U.N. resolutions? Is there going to be some way to back up the U.N. resolutions so that the nations go along with it?

A: Well, there are two levels here. The unofficial one in Colombia, actually. The guerrillas did kidnap at one point a Sears executive. I know Sears Roebuck, I have a good friend, the vice-president of Sears in Chicago, Dr. Clarence Mann. He will probably not be willing to talk to you because it is confidential information from their point of view, although I know it. So the thing is, they worked out an agreement with the guerrillas: their transnational corporation, Sears, would not do certain things in return for which they would not be kidnapped. And their man was released.

I don't think there is any other way except what Begin calls the strategy of leverage, to convince governments that they will have to respect the rights of guerrillas according to the additional protocols of the Geneva convention.

Q: Then you're saying that this kind of situation will continue until the guerrillas get their rights?

A: Right. I think if you ask Mr. Begin, who is now the prime minister, if he were still a guerrilla, would he continue the bombing of the King David Hotel, he would say definitely. In other words, there is no other way of convincing governments. So that it takes some time, this strategy of leverage, which catches innocents as well as guilty parties; and the guerrillas are trying to make an effort, incidentally, to distinguish between innocent and guilty. For example, they did release in Colombia a woman who they felt was totally innocent . . . in Iran they tried to distinguish between blacks and others who were possibly not guilty according to their definition of American internal affairs.

Q: What about the government? Won't they lose their authority if they give in to the guerrillas?

A: Yes. There are two ways of reacting. One is in accordance with Begin's strategy of leverage—which is they will overreact . . . That overreaction plays into the hands of the guerrillas. They are willing to pay that price . . . The other way is to back down completely and to do what the Germans did in the case where they gave that airliner to the guerrillas and ended it in Mogadishu. That will diminish the respect principles.

The only way is the way that we outlined in the code

of offenses that must be agreed to by all concerned, including the guerrilla movement. There are certain characteristics which the Geneva convention laid down for recognized guerrilla movements. They have to have a chain of command, they have to carry their weapons openly in combat, they have to wear recognizable insignia, they have to abide by the laws of war. This is the most important in a way ... If they are not willing to do that they forfeit a haven anywhere, according to the hostage convention that has just passed the General Assembly. Most countries in our time, our age will give special credence to the just war of liberation movements. Like in another time, there was a just war doctrine, there is one in our age. And in our time, liberation movements that are recognized and fulfill the obligations of the international law are granted the right of just war.

Q: So you are defining the difference between a terrorist and a guerrilla?

A: That's right ... now these situations like Colombia and Iran occur because guerrilla movements, and insurgents and belligerents, they're called in international law, are not treated properly. So they are trying to gain leverage, one way or the other they know they will win.

Q: The government is in a no-win situation?

A: Unless they say to the guerrillas, like Sears Co., which is way ahead of the government: You abide by the principles of the Geneva convention and we will treat you like prisoners of war decently and properly and not as criminals. Sears did this on another level. You know what I mean, they would not assist the government, they would not support it economically. I know some of the clauses in that agreement. It's a secret agreement between them and nothing has happened to any Sears executive since then. The transnational corporations are moving ahead on their own.

Q: Will this type of thing continue into the future indefinitely?

A: Until the code of offenses is ratified. And a commission of inquiry, either a standing commission or ad hoc commissions, either is acceptable, are institutionalized. And tribunals are instituted for the trials of not just guerrillas, but also of officials...

Things have moved rather rapidly in Iran. For example, the commission of inquiry is in place. The terms of reference have been agreed on although they are confidential. They follow the recommendations we have made in fact...

Now last December the United Nations voted for the code of offenses, 116 for, 23 abstentions, and none against. The 23 abstentions led by guess whom? The United States. So the United States and countries allied

with the U.S. are going to have to continue to expect that. Until they agree to a code of offenses, and mechanisms of implementation. They [U.S.] now say they want a code of offenses linked to mechanisms of implementation. You must understand that this is technical; the socialist countries cannot accept this, because they cannot allow capitalist judges to sit over socialists. So they are willing to go along with ad hoc mechanisms, that is, case-by-case, like in Iran ... but not permanent, like Nuremberg, the tribunal that would follow the commission. That's why the hostages cannot be released immediately. There has to be some follow-up. David Rockefeller will simply throw the report of the commission into the file 13 ... there has to be some kind of implementation. But ad hoc is fine, it wouldn't have to be permanent.

Q: Are the socialist bloc countries cooperating with this?

A: Yes, with ad hoc mechanisms, but one proviso. They think that logically, and they're right, in my opinion. My vice president is Soviet, incidentally, and we have 30 countries working with us and we got the 116 together and we're meeting again on April 13 here. We all believe that, of course, before you implement you must know what you want to implement. So therefore, a code should come before mechanisms ... Now, in Iran, they did this through secret agreements. ... so the Americans and their allies, the 23, are at this time opposed to any form of international order in this area. They would rather take their chances with the political. In other words, they can brand the guerrillas in Colombia as terrorists, or the Ayatollah as a terrorist and thereby hope to achieve international recognition of their causes at this stage.

However, Mr. Carter has moved considerably from that position by recognition of the commission of inquiry. And the American position will have to yield in the coming General Assembly to the sense of things. In June, there is a test when it is going on the agenda. If the American delegate objects that it be made a high priority item, you can get two more embassies taken, at least. In other words, what you do here, we do to you: there is their answer. So don't think you're immune because you're sitting in Chase Manhattan Bank. We can catch you somewhere else.

This is an international mood, it is an international strategy of these movements. Some are more effective than others, like the American underground is terribly ineffective, as Bowyer Bell correctly points out. But eventually it will come here too.

Q: You think so?

A: If the right wing can assassinate Orlando Letelier a few feet from the White House, the left can respond in kind.

What happens next at the embassy?

Although the situation at the seized Dominican Embassy in Bogota is highly volatile and unpredictable, the built-in inflexibility of both the M-19 terrorists and the Colombian government makes a bloodbath there an increasingly likely outcome. It is widely reported that Pope John Paul II, with very strong political influence-potential in a Catholic nation like Colombia, is conducting an initiative that is reportedly designed to force a more flexible position on the government. Essentially President Turbay is faced with the immediate prospect of a coup d'etat if he concedes anything to the terrorists. Those domestic constraints are the fundamental problem, say specialists. The consensus of Colombia experts consulted by EIR is that serious violence is in fact probable, as exemplified by the following excerpts from an interview conducted with a sympathetic academic specialist who asked to remain anonymous.

My basic feeling is that there is a certain inflexibility in both positions. The M-19 is not going to pack up and leave without gaining at least a good part of its demands. The Colombian government cannot concede. There will probably be pro-forma negotiations for two weeks, a week, something like that. The first time the M-19 gets fed up with this and kills someone, it's entirely possible the Colombian government will assault the place, like Entebbe, or the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala... It'll be a bloodbath if that occurs. I don't see any way out. It's a question of *when* it is going to occur, not *if* it is going to occur... The Colombian government has no room for negotiations or anything; the domestic political constraints are too severe...

Within a week or two it's going to become increasingly clear that the Colombian government is inflexible; that the M-19 is increasingly unwilling to concede any more than it already has conceded, in terms of releasing women and that kind of thing. And they are going to reach a bottom line, and at that point it is going to be incumbent on the M-19 to either accept safe passage out of the country without hostages, or start assassinating the ambassadors, one by one...

I believe they will start killing hostages. The M-19 would be severely weakened by this—to stand up and say their piece, and then back out, rather than carrying through to the bloody end. It would be the final blow

to the M-19... These are committed, highly trained, very well organized individuals. The nature of this operation was superb from a planning point of view. And they're not about to give up.

They have already demonstrated their relentlessness if you like, in the assassination of Raquel Mercado. They announced for weeks that they would kill the guy if the Colombian government didn't negotiate, and they did. And they ended up tying him to a post in downtown Bogota, dead as a door nail, right after the elections... They are not going to give up. They haven't in the past, and they're not going to again. And if all of them get killed, they'll at least go out in a blaze of glory.

“This could happen in at least 30 countries”

The people responsible for creating international terrorism have been gloating, of late, over the success of their Iranian destabilization. And they have been “predicting” that embassy takeovers and other forms of terrorism will spread like wildfire as a result. The following interview with Kissinger-intimate Roger Fontaine, the head of the Latin America section of the Jesuit Georgetown University Center for Strategic International Studies, was made available to EIR by an independent journalist.

I said when the Iranian thing was taken over by the militant students, that if the United States did not act promptly, swiftly and with a lot of force, there were at least 30 countries in the world where this would happen again. Colombia was one of them. The reason is, because there are just a lot of countries that are weak enough and polarized enough with militant groups ... who are desperate and dangerous enough to do this sort of thing. ... We've seen takeovers in El Salvador, takeovers in Guatemala, now in Colombia. I think there are at least five other countries in the region where there are people in place that could do a similar thing. And I'm not going to name them, because I don't want to give them any ideas. Not that I don't think they already have them.

A colleague of Fontaine's at a nearby university was a bit more specific:

I would expect a rash (of embassy takeovers) in Latin America, not just in Colombia, but in many other areas—in Ecuador, in Venezuela, in many others part of Latin America. Because ... there's been a continuing guerrilla movement that has not been completely stamped out. They've never tried this kind of thing. In a way they've raised the ante, and it's proved effective.