"For almost four years now, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese raiders have been shooting up air fleets at Bien Hoa and other airports serving both civilian and military air traffic. The United States has lost men and far more planes than were demolished in Lebanon. Yet the U.N. Security Council has said nothing, and the question of excessive retaliation has never arisen."

"The only theoretical difference in these two situations is the fiction that a U.N.-policed truce makes Arab clandestine aggression something other than outright war. The Arabs themselves declare they are at war, while Israel keeps insisting it does not want war. Every terrorist activity by Al Fatah and other groups is justified on the ground that war exists. Governments, ruling figures and the terrorists say so. The Arabs are no more entitled than anyone else to have a thing both ways; but a double standard nevertheless exists with U.N. approval."

"The word for all this is hypocrisy. The U.N. decision on Israel was not only one-sided, but in accord with Soviet desires. In failing to censure the Arabs, it implied a tolerance of the aggression by Moscow's Middle East Clients. . . ."


". . . The largely pro-Israel bias of the American press and the enthusiasm, often stemming from very questionable motives, of many Americans for the astounding Israeli victory of June, 1967, have, in turn, produced the sentiment among some intellectuals that they must emphasize the Arab justifications and stress the more doubtful aspects of Zionist ideology and Israeli history. Their position, too, is understandable. Stand up for the underdog. It is essentially the outlook which made the French Catholic weekly Témoignage Chrétien rather simplistically pro-Arab: we must be with the 'poor of the earth.'"

"Supporting the underdog appears reasonable enough, but in the Middle East situation it is non-conclusive if not even obfuscatory. Who is the underdog? The poverty-stricken Palestinian refugees? The surrounded Israelis? Who is the underdog in the world? The Jews, who still suffer from recurrent anti-Semitism? The Arabs, who are scorned as backward and primitive—and treated like blacks are in America when they live abroad in countries like France?"

"The problem with this approach is that it puts a premium on being wronged. It encourages exaggeration and paranoia. It forgets that today's victims may be tomorrow's oppressors. It is forever on the pendulum, and ends by celebrating suffering rather than removing its causes."

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in the magazines . . .

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"Something similar must be said, although in a nuanced manner, for the historical approach to the Middle East question. Without understanding the history of the region and the conflict, there can be no understanding of the present crisis. Without an awareness of blindness shown by both sides in this clash, there can be no guarding against the righteousness which so often invests this debate.

"But history can be a dangerous agitator as well as a wise teacher. History is a chronicle of wrongs and the record of bloodshed; and may as easily lead to the justification of a little more as to its prevention. In the question of Athens-Beirut there were some who preferred to judge the matter from the point of view of legal justice: Who had committed the first injustice? Who deserved punishment and had the punishment been fitting? The same approach is often taken with the entire history of the Jewish-Arab struggle. Unfortunately, the mists are not yet as heavy over that history as they are over the past of other regions and other nations; the acts of force which accompanied the establishment of Israel are more visible, and spurs the desire for vengeance. We prefer another kind of justice, a justice which would judge Athens-Beirut from the point of view of how it contributed to pacifying the future, not settling the scores of the past; a justice which would look upon the whole Middle East crisis in the same way."

Editorial in Commonweal, January 24.

"... The tragedy is what these explosions of terrorism and retaliation have done to the prospects for peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. Peace efforts seemed to be leading toward some success. Both parties to this frustrating quarrel are on record since November 27, 1967, as accepting the terms for a settlement then proposed by the United Nations. It is time the international community demanded an end to what has been termed the subsequent 'sparring through Jarring' and to insist upon solid reasons from both Middle East antagonists why something more than lip service should not be given to the U.N. proposals. . . ."

Editorial in America, January 18.

"The awareness that Israel's existence cannot be maintained ultimately by military action alone does seem to be recognized by some of Israel's leaders. Indeed, there seems to be growing recognition, too, that it will only be on the basis of some kind of a guarantee by the great powers that Israel's survival as a state and her security can be maintained. This does not necessarily mean that a settlement must or should be imposed from the outside. But it does mean that Israel cannot go it alone militarily. Her survival finally depends upon the maintenance of world order that assures the integrity of nations. . . .

"The raid on Lebanon has been interpreted as over-response—as a direct attack upon the state of Lebanon—to terrorist activities that were launched from within the borders of that country. . . . But was it simply an over-response or was there an urgent message for the world community?

"Israel has evolved into a modern state while the Arab nations still constitute an almost medieval civilization. The Jews in Israel today do confront a holy crusade aimed at the elimination of their people and nation. The present terrorist activity, with its threats to her air-water links to the outside world and its disruption of her economy, is more threatening than all-out war; open and total conflict would arouse sympathy, concern and probably action.

"The reprisal was taken with great care in order to prevent the loss of life; the Jews of Israel and this country have a case when they suggest that the destruction of property has aroused greater condemnation than acts of Arab or Israeli forces that have taken lives.

"Her act, then, was a calculated and dramatic demand for the sort of national accountability that is the only means of survival for Israel. One may recognize the desperation in this cry without being committed to the defense of all the acts of Israel, past and present. It may be necessary now to urge upon many of our fellow countrymen a reconsideration of what actually is involved in the shape of the hostility between Arab and Israeli nations today.

"It would be unfortunate if we did not understand Israel's stance. No nation (in this instance, Lebanon) can be allowed to stand idly by while acts of aggression and terror are launched by bands of citizens from her territory. Without serious international concern and opposition to this, Israel will not survive. Acceptance of the principal of national accountability is her only hope."

Joseph Duffey in Christianity and Crisis, February 17.

"It was a poor Israeli return for this country's promise of fifty supersonic jet warplanes, to attack Lebanon, the other Middle East nation with which the U.S. has a special relationship. In 1957 President Eisenhower sent the Marines wading ashore to 'rescue' Lebanon from a real or imagined Left-wing takeover. Lebanese governments ever since have been pro-American, and not wildly anti-Israel. But the Arab terrorists who attacked an Israeli airliner at Athens, killing one Israeli passenger, have headquarters in Beirut. By destroying Lebanese airliners there (without any loss of life) the Israelis presumably hoped . . ."

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