

partly explained by the growing number of people who want to reclaim their moral principles by ending the nuclear terror. These readers can't be entirely satisfied with the book. Though Schell writes firmly and precisely as he delineates the nuclear problem, firmness and precision disappear as he wrestles with finding a way out. His passages plod toward some goal, become mired in abstractions, and usually arrive at a useless generality.

Schell's treatment of national sovereignty, which he regards as a major villain, illustrates the point. On page after page he tells us that it is the system of sovereign nations, extended into the age of nuclear weapons, that has brought us to the edge of extinction. Perhaps so, but daily headlines provide convincing evidence that this system isn't about to self-destruct. What is Schell's solution? "Just as we have chosen to live in the system of sovereign states, we can choose to live in some other system." For most of the world's people this remark is inaccurate, and it isn't very useful to anyone.

Fortunately, the diverse groups around the world that constitute the growing movement against nuclear weapons are capable of fashioning their own paths toward an elusive goal. The need is to incorporate more and more informed, committed people in that movement. *The Fate of the Earth* makes an important contribution here by its skillful unveiling of the political and moral bankruptcy that underlies entrenched nuclear policy. One can only hope it reaches many more readers.

THE CONDUCT OF JUST AND LIMITED WAR

by **William V. O'Brien**
(Praeger; 510 pp.; \$39.95)

Terry Nardin

One of the more encouraging developments of recent years is the revival of concern for the regulation of warfare. We see evidence of this concern in the conduct of belligerents, in public debate, in international and military law, and also in the writings of moralists, political theorists, and military strategists. Although there will always be vigorous disagreement about the principles that should guide the use of military force, a serious effort is again

being made to articulate such principles. Indeed, in view of the rapid accumulation of specialized studies on regulated warfare, there is an increasing need for general works that consider the relation of different traditions of thought. *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* is such a work.

O'Brien sets out to integrate the scholastic just war tradition and the secular tradition of positive international law. More ambitiously, he seeks to bridge the even wider gap separating these two traditions from that branch of strategic studies concerned with limited war. This latter effort derives from the sound premise that justice requires the controlled and discriminate application of military force: "there can be no just war without limited war policies and capabilities." It is not enough to define just war standards; one must also consider the conditions required for them to be effective. O'Brien devotes many pages to case studies illustrating the extent to which just war constraints have been observed during recent major wars in order that the moral, legal, and prudential standards of the past may be brought to bear on future wars, and in particular how the military forces of the United States should be equipped and trained to fight within the limits prescribed by the traditions of just and limited war.

In the course of these inquiries the author reaches a series of moral conclusions that many readers will not welcome. On the issue of Vietnam, for example, he is a revisionist. Although O'Brien grants that the American forces relied on disproportionate and often indiscriminate firepower, he concludes that these violations of the rules of war were not so grave as to make the Vietnam war an unjust war. He gives considerable weight to the judgment that the intervention was a justified attempt at resisting international aggression, comparable to American resistance to the Communist invasion of South Korea, but he asserts this judgment with scarcely any supporting argument. Looking for even more trouble, O'Brien goes on to defend Nixon's Christmas bombing campaign against North Vietnam and the invasion of Cambodia.

Others will be put off by the author's treatment of nuclear deterrence and nuclear war, rejecting as naive his rather sanguine view of the efficacy of deterrence and his cautious defense of the moral acceptability, in certain cir-

cumstances, of limited nuclear war. Although no new arguments are presented, he restates the familiar case for "flexible response"—the development of a capability on the part of the United States and its allies to wage limited counterforce, theatre, and tactical nuclear wars. O'Brien's discussion of the only limited nuclear war to have occurred so far, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is also unsatisfactory. It merely repeats the old justifications without even considering, much less rebutting, some of the most powerful objections that are offered against dropping the bomb. Here, as in the case of the Vietnam debate, one senses that the author has given up trying to persuade those who do not share his basic assumptions.

It is unfortunate that O'Brien has felt compelled to push his moral investigation of past events to such firm and, I think, unwarranted conclusions. The book's simplistic conception of moral reasoning as the "application" of general "prescriptions" to particular performances is equally unsatisfactory. Yet these defects are perhaps of little moment, given the author's main intention. The book is, and should be read as, an effort to demonstrate the mutual relevance of the just war and limited war traditions and to get American political and military leaders to pay more attention to the accumulated wisdom embodied in them. What these traditions teach has less to do with the correctness of particular verdicts than with the overriding importance of restrained, principled conduct in war. O'Brien is entitled to his version of the past. His readers—some of them presumably those officials to whom the book is addressed and upon whose fateful decisions we all depend—must draw their own conclusions for the future. WV

THE HOUSE AND FOREIGN POLICY by Charles W. Whalen, Jr.

(University of North Carolina Press;
193 pp.; \$18.95/\$9.95)

Robert F. Drinan

The author of this thoughtful study was a Republican congressman from Ohio in the years 1967 to 1979. Immediately after leaving the Congress he became a Democrat. He confesses in this volume