

# UNDER COVER

## The Common Defense

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*Abba Eban, Chairman of the Israeli Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, and formerly his country's Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the United Nations, recently delivered the Fourth Annual Morgenthau Memorial Lecture on Ethics and Foreign Policy. This series honors political scientist Hans J. Morgenthau, author of the seminal work Politics Among Nations and long-time Chairman of the Worldview Editorial Board. The remarks below are drawn from Mr. Eban's response to questions from the audience following his address.*

Terrorism can be attacked on two levels: prevention and solution.

Prevention is a question of vigilance. Normally, after every successful terrorist attack, it is possible to note and to isolate a lack of vigilance. Free countries, by their nature, by their lack of suspicion, by their tendency to attribute to others their own demeanor of tranquillity, are not always the best guardians of the peace against terrorism.

As foreign minister, I made a visit to a totalitarian country—a Communist country—surrounded by many guards, whom I had brought from Israel. My hosts laughed and said: "What did you bring them here for? In this country nothing happens that the government doesn't want to happen." All I could say was that I didn't quite know what the government wanted to happen.

The solution of the problem of terrorism does not exist except within a political framework. In other words, you can restrain, you can discipline, you can evade by your military superiority, but, as has recently been shown, you do not solve, because it is the curse of terrorism that it transcends and evades military superiority. For example, what is the use of nuclear power, with its missiles and tanks and sophisticated aircraft, against two people in a jungle with a few mortars?

Take Israel. Nobody could doubt its superiority in every one of the components whereby military strength is measured. But a few purveyors of violence connected with a terrorist organization of one kind or the other can, as it were, neutralize a sophisticated superiority of armaments and inflict damages which cannot be corrected by F-16s and by submarines and by missiles.

Therefore, vigilance. The *solution* is really dependent in the long run on political agreements. But even with political agreements there will be a measure of terrorism. The main defense is prevention. I think some countries have already shown that, while terrorism cannot be abolished, by vigilant measures of prevention and by alertness terrorism can be prevented from taking on those proportions in which it has major political, decisive influence.

... I must tell you there is an international interest in what the United States does in Latin America, and I would like to enunciate it from an individual point of view.

You have to decide what your interests are, in what mea-

sure you will assert them, and to what limit you will defend them. It's quite possible for critics to find fault with this or that method of defending your interests. But it seems to me that any country which has an interest in alliance with the United States should have an interest in the U.S. presenting a spectacle of clarity, lucidity, and sometimes assertiveness. Many of us would say: "If the United States will not defend its interest at its own backyard, why should we believe its assertions that it will help us defend our interests thousands of miles away?"

Therefore, I do not fully understand the contentiousness of some of your, and our, European allies who state to the United States: "If it comes to the defense of Europe, please be assertive, please be very clear, and please maintain your presence. Don't stand for any nonsense. But when it comes to defending your interests in your own backyard, don't be so assertive and don't be so obdurate."

That, I'm afraid, is the tendency of international discourse. One's sense of vulnerability is dictated by geography. I remember one of your presidents saying to me in the early 1960s: "I'm less worried than you are, Mr. Ambassador, about Soviet missiles in Egypt." I said: "I'm less worried than you are, Mr. President, about Soviet missiles in Cuba." Everything depends on the proximity of danger; everything depends on perspective.

But without judging whether this or that method is or is not valid, I would say that all countries which depend to some extent for their security upon the deterrent and intimidatory power of the United States would not welcome any spectacle of weakness anywhere, least of all in those areas where you have a right under the doctrine of spheres of influence.

Now, nobody complains if the Soviet Union says that it has a special influence in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and that it is not going to allow forces hostile to the Soviet Union to triumph there. You all say, "Well, that's part of the realistic international scene."

Why not demand reciprocity? If a sphere of influence doctrine is valid for one nuclear power, why should it not be valid for the other, especially when on the Western side it is not exactly expansionism that is at work?

Therefore, I must say that we, and most free democracies, have an interest in the United States being very vigilant and sometimes assertive in trying to influence its immediate environment in favor of stability and against subversion.

... Although claims that the United Nations would be a panacea for the world's ills were exaggerated and the organization has fallen victim to unnecessary disillusion, one of its virtues, or qualities, is that it does define the international system. It does, as it were, by membership award the identity of a nation; and membership in the United Nations is still the only valid and widely accepted credential for nationhood. Therefore, for a country to surrender those credentials—especially for us, the only country that has fought for them—because we hear some harsh words, I think would be folly.

I would even recommend to a great power such as the United States not to carry its rancor to the point of wanting to leave. It is possible to hear unpleasant things about oneself without tearing up one's own identity card.

**ABBA EBAN**