

PRESS & TELEVISION

Morris, a freelance writer, argues otherwise.

Examining nearly three months of coverage by the three major television networks, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and other leading newspapers, Morris argues that journalists reported "for the most part fairly and accurately and sometimes brilliantly."

While critics argue that the U.S. media credited exaggerated estimates of civilian losses from dubious sources, Morris says his own careful examination of the record shows this to be untrue. NBC reported on June 6 that civilian casualties were "unknown"; CBS's June 7 broadcast said only that "casualty lists climbed." In the few cases where a network or newspaper did cite inflated figures, Morris contends, they were qualified or quickly corrected. In one widely criticized story, for example, *Post* reporter David B. Ottaway did cite high estimates of the casualties, but stressed that they "seem guesswork at best."

Complaints that the news media ignored the complex history of Lebanon's internal divisions and the favorable reaction of many Lebanese to the Israelis' arrival are also dismissed by Morris. Between late May and July, the *Times* and the *Post* alone published some 20 stories on such issues, with nearly the same number appearing on television.

The two newspapers did print sharp op-ed page attacks on the Israeli invasion by such columnists as Anthony Lewis and Mary McGrory. But these were offset, according to Morris, by the columns of William F. Buckley, Jr., William Safire, and Evans and Novak. In their own editorials, the papers accepted the invasion as a "tragic inevitability" (*Post*) and part of a "tragic spiral" (*Times*). On television, NBC's John Chancellor's remarks in early August about "imperial Israel" spurred loud protests. But Chancellor's views were balanced, Morris says, by two earlier news reports on the views of Israeli soldiers.

American journalists in Lebanon came under criticism, in part because they refused to settle for the bulletins provided by Israeli authorities—a legacy of their experience with U.S. officialdom in Vietnam. And as the Israeli bombardment of Beirut continued, they developed a sympathy for the civilian victims whose risks they shared. Morris believes such influences improved the reporting. Indeed, he argues, given the circumstances, "readers and viewers could have asked for little more."

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*The Bishops
and the Bomb*

"Christianity and Deterrence" by R. P. Bär, in the *Atlantic Community Quarterly* (Fall 1982), 1616 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Roman Catholic bishops in several Western countries, including the United States, are edging towards declaring even the possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence immoral. But Bär, auxiliary bishop of Rotterdam, argues that they would exceed their authority and contra-

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vene long-standing Catholic thinking on the subject.

"In the case of nuclear armaments," he notes, "it is very difficult to find cogent arguments in support of any single viewpoint in the Holy Scriptures." No statements by the bishops would be binding on individual Catholics. And while the Vatican could make such a pronouncement, it has avoided doing so.

One reason, says Bär, is that "although the word of God has implications for Christians in their political activities, [the Church] stands above, and in fact outside, politics." While the Vatican has stressed its desire for peace, it has addressed "all regimes without exception, thus avoiding any encouragement of unilateral initiatives." The "Christian peace movements," Bär contends, have plainly political objectives that would, in effect, require unilateral Western disarmament.

Their position is based on an appeal to conscience. But in traditional Christian thought, conscience is not merely emotional conviction, says Bär, but "the ability to understand the general rules on good and evil and to assess one's own deeds on the basis of this understanding." Conscience, the 1962-65 Vatican Council II declared, "frequently errs from invincible ignorance."

Indeed, Bär accuses the antinuclear activists of sinking into a "Utopian reverie." The church is not pacifist because it recognizes that it must exist in the real world; man was expelled from Paradise. It has "always known that an absolute 'no' to armaments and warfare is impossible, because right must be defended and oppression combated."

Why Calvin Courtied Women

"Calvin's Letters to Women: The Courting of Ladies in High Places" by Charmarie Jenkins Blaisdell, in *Sixteenth Century Journal* (No. 3, 1982), Center for Reformation Research, Northeast Missouri State University, LB 115, Kirksville, Mo. 63501.

During the last 22 years of his life, Protestant religious reformer John Calvin (1509-64) did most of his proselytizing through letters from his home in Geneva. According to Blaisdell, a Northeastern University historian, his correspondence shows that he was as eager to convert women as he was to win over men.

Protestantism was as much a political as a religious movement. Calvin realized that success depended on gaining the support of western Europe's powerful nobility. And aristocratic women frequently took the lead in championing new causes. Calvin courted some of the most important women in 16th-century France, such as Renée de France, daughter of Louis XII.

The chief theme of Calvin's letters is to "take a firm stand and serve God." For many women, unequivocal support for Calvinism was dangerous. They feared not only official persecution but the wrath of Roman Catholic husbands. Yet Calvin did not offer them the solace and