

Preemption: A Knife That Cuts Both Ways

Alan Dershowitz

An amazing amount of history; undogmatic

The issue is, of course, the U.S. involvement with Israel, in Iraq, and with radical Islam in general. We Americans have attempted to distill them down to simple essences such as "Bush Lied, People Died" and "These Colors Don't Run."

These issues require a historical context, which Dershowitz richly provides, in the history of the Jewish people and the Israeli nation, and in both American and world jurisprudence.

In the end, the questions for America are whether or not preemptive action was justified in Iraq, would be justified to head off a nuclear Iran or North Korea. Also in question is whether Israel is justified in its ongoing preventative/preemptive strikes against terrorists.

Dershowitz examines the rationale behind the traditional role of justice as punishing crimes once committed: society is able to absorb a first strike by an evil-doer, and said evil-doer is likely to be deterred by the threat of punishment. In our current state, however, the evil-doers do not mind death, but rather they seek it. Furthermore, they will be armed with the most awful weapons they can acquire. What then?

A good and scholarly examination of weighty questions.