



# **One Family's Response to Terrorism: A Daughter's Memoir (Contemporary Issues in the Middle East)**

*Susan Kerr van de Ven*

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On January 18, 1984, Malcolm Kerr, president of the American University of Beirut and a respected scholar of Middle East politics, was shot in the back of the head as he stepped out of an elevator on his way to work. At the time, the chaos of Lebanon's civil war made it impossible to investigate who had carried out the killing and why. Seventeen years later, armed with new information concerning the assassination and supported by the Anti-Terrorism Act passed by Congress in 1996, his family came to a painful consensus that nonviolent justice through the rule of law was a duty they could not ignore. Disturbing revelations emerged as the author explored U.S. government intelligence, U.S. district court records, Malcolm Kerr's unpublished papers, and the recollections of journalists, diplomats, academics, and former Hizballah hostages who lived through the violence in Lebanon in the 1980s. The family's team of lawyers built a clear case against the Islamic Republic of Iran, culminating in a trial before a judge of the U.S. District Court. "One Family's Response to Terrorism: A Daughter's Memoir" is a stunning portrait of the intimate way in which violence pulls lives apart, of an American family caught on the stage of Middle East politics and of the moral choices required in seeking justice.

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