

3/11/93 They're here

A decade after the Reagan administration knowingly fostered the lie that assassins and terrorists were coming to America, they're here.

Let's put last month's explosion at New York's World Trade Center in proportion. Its considerable damage and six known deaths must be considered part and parcel of an international dilemma stretching back to the eastern Mediterranean. Nor am I passing judgment here on the arrested young men. The names and individual faces of the actual perpetrators scarcely matter. Remember, over 60 callers sought credit right after the blast.

Certainly, among various groups and organizations, there was genuine regret that someone else had the idea first. However, logic, as well as the known evidence, works in favor of the FBI's case.

The Bible's source of perpetual "wars and the rumors of wars" has spilled over again. Forget the Iranian connection; it's a sideshow. Not until the Holy Land is forced to settle down, can the world expect peace. The day will not come soon.

This week dawned with two more Israelis dead before an Arab-owned vehicle. Within the same 24 hours, yet one more Palestinian with a knife wreaked bloody havoc, close by where a Jewish woman was found stabbed in her truck last Friday.

In a plea guaranteed to bring joy to the National Rifle Association's Middle East counterpart, the outgoing head of Israel's national police urged citizens to arm themselves. "I don't suggest people go around with hunting guns, but pistols that can be tucked into a belt don't have to be left behind in the safe or a drawer," he said.

The script proposed by the departing and embittered official would impose the last century's "west of the Pecos" American mentality on the region east of the Suez.

In fairness to the latest ruckus, it should be recognized some Israelis needed no nudge: With the law and firepower on their side, they have already racked up their own horrors. Particularly among settlers on lands occupied after the 1967 war, the sentiment has long festered, the only good Arab is either dead or deported.

Like Gen. Custer's cavalry, the once-proud Israeli Defence Force has been turned to the basic function of punishing and killing women and children: Various intelligence agencies are charged with minding

full-grown men, with ever decreasing efficiency.

Gone forever is the once popular bromide that held America's only trustworthy Middle East ally could be counted upon to "handle" the Arabs. All the United States had to furnish was the wherewithal.

The event that makes the present situation bitterly frustrating soon celebrates its 14th anniversary. On March 26, 1979, Jimmy Carter, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat signed the Camp David accords at the White House, followed by hugs and kisses all around. The historic

moment had been pre-blessed by the Nobel Peace Prize the year before.

Supposedly once the area's most populous nation had been bought - and paid for by American dollars - all the lesser parties and factions would fall in line, including the Palestinians.

After all, with Egypt on the sidelines, no coalition could be concocted that might challenge Israel's military "mini-superpower." The so-called front line states (Syria, Iraq and Libya) were expected to fold their opposition, taking the Holy Land's indigenous people with them.

Once isolated, the argument ran, Palestinians would, like good Muslims, surrender themselves to what might be interpreted as God's will, following Sadat's example. Because neither he nor his impoverished people had any other choice, the Egyptian president was persuaded not to stomp out of Camp David's talks.

Sadat signed the accords, when spring's first lilacs blessed Washington, but with fatalism not joy. The act directly resulted in his death by public execution: He was found guilty of unfulfilled expectations, the same "crime" that has caused the latest round of killing.

Make no mistake: Direct connection exists between months of failed peace talks and the growing violence, including the World Trade Center bombing. It should be noted that on the same day a lesser device killed four people in a coffee house on Cairo's biggest square across from the city's venerable Hilton hotel. While no proof has come to hand, I tend to believe the recent morning massacre at CIA headquarters was also related.

The 200th anniversary yawns soon

of the "opening" of the world of Islam to the modern era in the form of Napoleon's 1797 invasion. The all-decisive Battle of the Pyramids wound up with French soldiers looting the bodies of the fallen Egyptians.

Before fleeing to Paris, abandoning his army, the noble Corsican firmly established the pattern for all who followed: forcing "backward" Muslims to submit solely because of superior power.

What we are witnessing in Teheran, Algiers, Cairo, Gaza and other hot spots is the birth of a new and violent philosophy, rooted in complete despair that Islamic people can expect any good from trusting industrialized nations.

Old leaders, like Syria's Assad, Iraq's Hussein and Egypt's Mubarak, have been reduced to hollow figures, dependent completely on bayonets and bribes for their continuance in office.

Where does this nation stand? Not only among Muslims, the United States has convicted itself by failing to insist on complete integrity in dealing with the forlorn Palestinians. I very much fear, the World Trade towers will prove only the first payment on a long overdue moral debt, costing more innocent blood.