

Roy Meachum

No Jewish state



On its face, the Palestinian uprising has settled into another "dirty little war," remarkably different from its counterparts only to the degree that one side sustains virtually all the mortalities.

What began in Autumn's dying days as a spontaneous reaction to fear of reprisals in Gaza's overcrowded camps has become an organized, stubborn resistance that affects the entire Holy Land.

Last weekend — as the one before — produced no front-page stories from that bloody country. Five Palestinians cut down by the occupation force's fire-power brought little reaction among American editors. It is no longer news in this country when a mere handful die, as long as they are Arabs.

As the Palestinian *intifadah* (uprising) heads into its eighth month the official death count among Christian and Muslim Arabs has risen to over 230, including some Israeli citizens. From the nation's religious majority, there are claims for four fatalities.

Since last I wrote on this painful subject, security forces have curbed the use of their powerful U.S.-made tear gas. As a result, we have had no recent reports of deaths among infants and old people trapped in close rooms. Only one more baby lost an eye to a rubber bullet since my last column; none in the past two weeks. That is the good news.

Before cheering, it should be noted that the government has authorized armed Israeli citizens to shoot Arabs caught with firebombs, in essence legalizing vigilantism, which has been turned on boys with stones, and will not stop there.

From the outset, the occupation officials have proclaimed the uprising in its final gasps. Last month, in anticipation of the high tourist season, they unilaterally pronounced the *intifadah* as finished. To prove their point, in stages, they reopened West Bank classes. This week they shut down 40 schools again. Justifying the order in the name of state security, they locked out elementary and high school students. No Palestinian colleges were involved in this week's order; none has been reopened.

Authorities' worst fears have been realized: Israeli Arabs have made common cause with their brothers in the occupied territories. This has never happened before, not in the nation's 40-year history. Always, through the various conflicts, the native Christians

and Muslims remained aloof.

The dignity Palestinians have achieved by their willingness to die has inspired courage among men and women forced to live on the scraps of the Middle East's only "democracy." Not for Israeli Arabs are a number of government programs, including state-financed mortgages and business loans.

What makes this "conflict" different is the absence of a foreign threat for all Israelis — Muslims, Christians and Jews — to unite against.

Only in the minds of propagandists, Zionist and Arab, are all Islamic nations

a solid bloc. In fact, Lebanon's internecine warfare comes close to representing the existential relationship among Arab states.

As long as Egypt remains side-lined by the Camp David Accords, no anti-Israel coalition can hope to challenge the Middle East's only super-power with its nuclear arsenal in the Negev vaults.

The true danger to Middle East peace derives from the possibility that the uprising will last so long, provoking such repressions from the authorities, that Cairo may feel forced to abandon the accords. It would be a tragic mistake for Washington to consider the Egyptians "bought and paid for" by U.S. aid. They didn't stay bought by the Soviet Union, as Israel discovered in the 1973 October War.

Cairo's attempt to obtain "super-carbon" for its missile warheads may have been revealed by the Israeli Mossad in an attempt to keep its nation's monopoly for its weapons. We may never know. But the case demands special handling, lest it drive Egypt into the Arab radicals' camp. I make that statement with no intent to justify the deed.

My concern for Cairo's future status must be felt by this country's Israeli lobby which has maintained a studied silence since the super-carbon story broke.

But it could be the silence results from the stunning realization that Israel is no more representative of the world's Jews than Italy the world's Roman Catholics; maybe less so.

If anything, Israel's leaders, in their

attempts to wrap their violations of basic human rights in the Star of David, have proven anti-Semites' best friends. Nor are the violations limited to Arabs.

In its latest ploy, the Israeli government wants to deprive Soviet Jews the right to choose their future homes, insisting that all emigrants must become Israeli citizens. Last month a mere 9 percent of the Soviet Jewish emigrants moved to the "Jewish" state. To its credit, Washington is pressuring Moscow to allow its exiles a choice — a move Israel has declared "a hostile act."

In truth, this Israel has little to do with the dream of a Jewish homeland that aroused humanity's support in the wake of the Holocaust. The final link was broken, for me, when Abba Eban was dumped by his Labour Party, which means Mr. Eban will lose his Knesset seat after the next election. The former foreign minister survives as the last "giant" from Israel's early days.

Mr. Eban's "crime" was to criticize his government's repression of Palestinians and its refusal to consider swapping occupied territory for peace following the formula laid out in UN Resolution 242, which he authored. His silencing assures the further distancing of the nation from its founding principles. It also means more fresh blood will pour in the ancient Holy Land and on the hands of those who continue to defend the indefensible methods of the occupation government.