

Columnist can type even with foot in mouth

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No question about it — Roy Mechum is a genius. With his remarkable sense of timing, he is the only journalist — if I may fairly apply this word to his endless columns about the Middle East — who can sit at a typewriter with his foot in his mouth.

The newest of his regular demonstrations of this unique skill is his June 29 column with the wishful-thinking caption, "No Jewish State." In it he suggests that Egypt's missile program is caused by Israel and fear of Israel nuclear power that he says, without question, Israel alone in that area has, and that in that area Israel also has a "monopoly" on such weapons.

No question about it, he has oft and long proclaimed his expertise on that troubled area, in particular as an Egyptologist. He knows and understands the Muslim world so well that if his "red-headed Quaker lady" were to put camel chips on his table he would immediately recognize them as Egyptian ambrosia.

Happy that only five Palestinians had died in the previous week, bringing the eight-month total, including Israeli, to 230, he criticizes everyone else in the press: "It is no longer news in this country when a mere handful dies, as long as they are Arabs."

Now, if I wanted to needle him, I'd remind him that these years to lament the millions of Muslim casualties caused by Muslims in the period. Particularly by the mass-murderer/terrorist Abu Nidal, who, to this day, his columns regard as an authentic Palestinian George Washington.

Instead, I merely note that recently more than 230 Palestinians were killed by Palestinians in eight days without his deeming it necessary to bring this news to his readers.

Also, a renowned lexicographer, he tells us that if anyone shoots somebody about to throw a firebomb, it is not the bomber but one who would stop the bombing who is a "vigilante."

There is "the absence of a foreign threat for all Israelis," he says, and "only in the minds of propagandists . . . are all Islamic nations a solid bloc?" How could they be a "solid bloc" against Israel when only one of the 20-some has yet to agree to peace with Israel after 40 years? They are no "solid bloc" when they refuse to recognize the state of Israel either, are they?

He espouses Israel's "swapping" land for peace, the current fairy tale of those who will not face the reality that the Arabs have always rejected this without even discussing it and that all but one maintain a state of war with Israel. He also does not report what the papers he reads did report, that the PLO, its Arafat faction in particular, had just rejected exactly this proposal by another of its many warring factions as soon as it got international attention.

That foot stays firmly in place when he shifts to political matters: "the dream of a Jewish homeland (that) aroused humanity's support in the wake of the Holocaust," "Humanity" includes the vast Muslim world, all of which then and all but one of which today

oppose any "Jewish homeland," and along with the PLO, which includes this in its charter, are dedicated to wiping Israel out. Why else refuse to agree to a peace in "a solid bloc?"

The day before this column appeared the U.S. and Israel reached an agreement, page one headlined in the *Washington Post*: "U.S., Israel To Develop New Missile; Reagan, Rabin Seek To Blunt Arab Threat" (my emphasis).

This agreement is "for developing a defensive missile to combat a growing Arab missile and chemical weapons threat in the Middle East" that President Reagan described as "omnious" and, because of the Arab "proliferation of ballistic missiles and chemical weapons" deliverable by them, threaten to "change the military situation" there, "making any future war far more costly, difficult to control and dangerous."

The president held that defending against Arab missiles is essential to U.S. national security.

Now if Ronald Reagan knew as much as Roy Mechum, that Israel has a missile "monopoly" in that part of the world, he could have saved the \$218 million U.S. share of the cost of this joint project to develop a defensive missile to neutralize all those, according to our journalistic genius, non-existing missiles the Arabs do not have.

Nope, no question, Roy Mechum is a real genius. Wherever his feet may at any time be.

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