

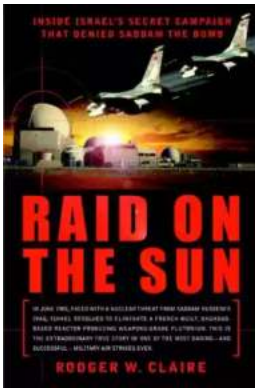
Raid On The Sun: The Daring Israeli Operation that Changed the Course of History



The year was 1981. The Middle East was a hotbed of political tensions and the threat of nuclear warfare loomed heavily in the air. This was the backdrop against which Israel executed one of the most audacious military operations in history - the Raid On The Sun, also known as Operation Opera.

The Genesis of the Operation

The fundamental premise driving the Raid On The Sun was Israel's determination to prevent Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, from acquiring the capability to produce nuclear weapons. Intelligence agencies had gathered concrete evidence suggesting that Iraq was constructing a nuclear reactor near Baghdad, with assistance from French technicians.



Raid on the Sun: Inside Israel's Secret Campaign that Denied Saddam the Bomb

by Gordon Kerr (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was faced with a grave decision. Should he allow Iraq to become a nuclear power, potentially threatening Israel's existence, or should he take decisive action to neutralize this threat?

After assessing the risks and weighing the consequences, Begin authorized the Israeli Air Force to devise and execute a plan that would cripple Iraq's nuclear ambitions.

Planning the Attack

Brigadier General Amos Yadlin, then a young pilot, was tasked with leading the attack. The Israeli Air Force carried out meticulous reconnaissance missions to gather intelligence on the target, providing Yadlin and his team with vital information for planning the operation.

It was discovered that the Osirak nuclear reactor located in the outskirts of Baghdad was heavily fortified, making a direct strike challenging. The operation

required surgical precision, as any collateral damage could have escalated into a full-blown conflict in the Middle East.

They needed something unconventional, a plan that would catch the Iraqi defense forces off guard. The Israeli Air Force began developing a daring strategy that involved flying low-level under the radar, crossing hostile territories, and executing a perfectly timed surgical strike on the reactor.

The Daring Raid

On June 7, 1981, the Israeli Air Force carried out the Raid On The Sun with extraordinary precision. As the sun rose over the horizon, eight F-16 fighter jets escorted by six F-15 jets took off from an Israeli base. Their target: the Osirak reactor in Iraq.

The Israeli pilots flew at an extremely low altitude to evade enemy radar and reached Iraqi airspace undetected. In an impressive display of skill and courage, they bombed the nuclear reactor, destroying it completely. The pilots then returned safely to Israel, having successfully completed their mission.

Unleashing a New Era

The Raid On The Sun had a profound impact on the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. It sent shockwaves across the region, demonstrating Israel's unwavering commitment to its security. The operation not only delayed Iraq's nuclear program significantly but also served as a powerful deterrent against other nations seeking to acquire nuclear weapons.

Although the raid drew international criticism and condemnation, Israel defended its actions by emphasizing the imminent danger posed by Iraq and its nuclear

ambitions. The operation also strained diplomatic relations with France, as the nuclear reactor was constructed with French technology.

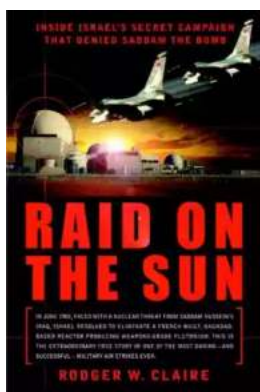
Legacy and Lessons

The Raid On The Sun remains a testament to Israel's determination to protect its nation from existential threats. It showcased their military prowess, technological superiority, and unwavering commitment to preserving their security.

The operation also taught the world valuable lessons about the risks associated with nuclear proliferation and the lengths to which nations might go to neutralize these dangers.

Today, as tensions continue to simmer in the Middle East and the threat of nuclear warfare persists, the Raid On The Sun serves as a constant reminder of the delicate balance between national security and the global quest for peace.

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The first authorized inside account of one of the most daring—and successful—military operations in recent history

From the earliest days of his dictatorship, Saddam Hussein had vowed to destroy Israel. So when France sold Iraq a top-of-the-line nuclear reactor in 1975, the Israelis were justifiably concerned—especially when they discovered that Iraqi scientists had already formulated a secret program to extract weapons-grade plutonium from the reactor, a first critical step in creating an atomic bomb. The reactor formed the heart of a huge nuclear plant situated twelve miles from Baghdad, 1,100 kilometers from Tel Aviv. By 1981, the reactor was on the verge of becoming “hot,” and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin knew he would have to confront its deadly potential. He turned to Israeli Air Force commander General David Ivry to secretly plan a daring surgical strike on the reactor—a never-before-contemplated mission that would prove to be one of the most remarkable military operations of all time.

Written with the full and exclusive cooperation of the Israeli Air Force high command, General Ivry (ret.), and all of the eight mission pilots (including Ilan Ramon, who became Israel’s first astronaut and perished tragically in the shuttle Columbia disaster), *Raid on the Sun* tells the extraordinary story of how Israel plotted the unthinkable: defying its U.S. and European allies to eliminate Iraq’s nuclear threat. In the tradition of *Black Hawk Down*, journalist Rodger Claire re-creates a gripping tale of personal sacrifice and survival, of young pilots who trained in the United States on the then-new, radically sophisticated F-16 fighter bombers, then faced a nearly insurmountable challenge: how to fly the 1,000-plus-kilometer mission to Baghdad and back on one tank of fuel. He recounts Israeli intelligence’s incredible “black ops” to sabotage construction on the French reactor and eliminate Iraqi nuclear scientists, and he gives the reader a pilot’s-eye view of the action on June 7, 1981, when the planes roared off a runway on

the Sinai Peninsula for the first successful destruction of a nuclear reactor in history.



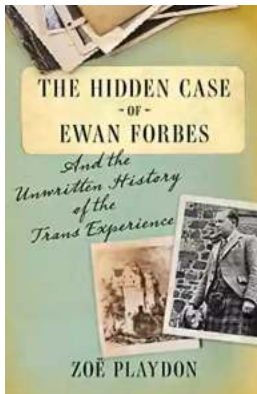
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