



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

Rodger Claire

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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.

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

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From Reader Review Raid on the Sun: Inside Israel's Secret Campaign that Denied Saddam the Bomb for online ebook

David says

A wonderful account of an event that shaped the middle east to this day. And very few of us even know/knew about it. Read like a action novel and was a good history lesson.

Robert says

No particular fault with the book and I did learn a lot.

The background and lack (at least initially) of consensus among Israeli military and civilian leaders was remarkable. Good use of IDF doctrine. Lots of leadership lessons.

Especially this stuff: good stuff is often crazy on many, many levels.

George says

Read about the air attack that destroyed a nuclear reactor just before it went "hot". Read Bullseye One Reactor first if you can.

"Six F-15s had taxied out of their camouflaged hangers at the end of the runway and were holding on the tarmac ... the support fighters that would shadow the attack group all the way to the target ... They would circle west of Aqaba and wait for the eight F-16s to reform, then follow them into Iraq. His (the F-15 squadron leader) job was to jam Iraqi radar over al-Tuwaitha with the F-15s' powerful ECMs (Electronic Counter Measures) and engage any MiGs that challenged the attack." (from pagea 111-112)

Ryan Schnier says

This account of the Israeli raid on the Osirak nuclear reactor was almost impossible to put down, especially after I reached about halfway through the book. It reads like a fictional thriller. The only reason I didn't give it five stars is because it could've used one last edit - it wasn't as professionally written as some other books and has some repetition/poor wording throughout.

Allison Tebo says

A book that only further cements my great respect for Israel and its people. An inspiring true story about an amazing group of brilliant and courageous people, in a mission that God blessed, protecting them and granting them success against their enemies.

Content: Details about Saddam Hussein's sadistic reign. Also details about how spies really operate – not in the honorable way portrayed on TV. There's a scene describing how Mossad agents use prostitutes to wile information about of their enemies, and then kill the prostitutes to tie up the loose ends. Overall thematic elements, there might have been some swearing. All of these things are dealt with briefly and with surprising restraint, but it's still present.

Rafi Bloch says

Amazing book about the harrowing and brave journey of 8 Israeli fighter pilots in blowing up a major Iraqi nuclear facility. The book chronicles the life of Saddam Hussein and his quest for world domination and nuclear prestige. It also discusses the history of Israel within the Middle East, and how this nation the size of New Jersey becomes a nuclear powerhouse and military intelligence not to be compared with any other nation. Israel succeeds in duping the world many times over, but the most successful campaign is the bombing of the Osirak facility outside of Baghdad. This book is a must for any Zionist!

Christopher says

What's always amazed me about this moment in history is that despite its pivotal role it was barely registered as a footnote.

In 2003 when we went back into Iraq part of the reason was Hussein's weapons of mass destruction program. When the absolute beyond a shadow of doubt proof wasn't found that satisfied even the most skeptical cynic (don't get me started on the mobile chemical labs to make "insecticide") the argument suddenly became that he never had a WMD program and that this was all just the actions of a cowboy president.

This book takes the trip back in time to when Iraq was attempting to build a nuclear reactor strictly for the function of creating plutonium to build atomic bombs. Given Israel's normal level of classification around such events this is an amazing read. The author had complete access to all the participants and was able to create a wild ride read. The attention to detail, secrecy and high level of rehearsal that went into this raid was mind boggling. The one funny thing that I learned was that Israel did with the F16 Fighting Falcon what its manufacturer, General Dynamics, said couldn't be done: a mission flown that far without refueling.

The book is a page turner even though you already know the outcome. As you start reading the details you can easily find yourself reading on to find out how they overcame the next obstacle. The interesting way that the book is laid out is that the chapters alternate between the preparation and the actual mission.

The other interesting point is that history seems to have come full circle as we now find ourselves confronting Iran over its nuclear program. Somehow this all seems like déjà vu.

I would recommend this book for anyone who likes to read books in the genre of military history such as *Blackhawk Down*.

Pete says

Behind the scenes account of the Israeli raid on the nuclear power plant Iraq was trying to build. It gives the reader an idea of how much effort and energy goes into pulling off a mission like this. It also details all of the other strategies (sabotage, assassination, etc.) Israel employed to derail this plan. Also many high profile Israeli officials had their start with this mission. It is well written, and compelling, even with knowing the ending.

Martin says

It's scarcely believable that the Israelis managed to pull off this operation. It's also odd that Israel allowed so much of this information to be declassified. It's also quite a neat trick of the writer to have elicited such fascinating emotions from those involved, in addition to incredible details that went into this (the operation and the book). The actual attack run elicits the same visceral response to the Rebel Fleet's attack run on the Death Star: positively heart-pounding.

Whitney says

A fascinating read about an incredible event in history. I do wish that it had gone more in depth about certain things but realize that there's only so much any book can talk about. If you enjoy military thrillers you'll love it. If you're a history buff you'll love it and want to get more books on similar topics.

Al says

This was an abridged audio version that, under 6 hrs, is perfect for listening during a single session (long drive, at work, etc). It chronicles the details of the 1981 Israeli Air Force raid that destroyed an Iraqi nuclear plant before it could go online. Saddam claimed it was for peaceful power generation, but also was a key part of their nuclear weapon research efforts.

It starts with a brief history of Saddam's history and rise to power, some Mossad covert operations to get information needed to ensure destroying it before going online, Israeli political support/opposition, and the raid itself. It's reads a lot like a Tom Clancy techno-thriller, but is based on actual events. When it gets to the details of the raid itself, it's very fast-paced. This would make a great film with all the intrigue, politics and action

Alvin says

A slick fast read. I especially enjoyed its exploration of the entire project beyond just the actual flight mission itself. It delves into the politics behind the mission, the attempts by the Mossad to slow the development of the reactor (particularly fascinating) and the intense training and mission planning experienced by the pilots and of course the actual flight itself.

Some have questioned its veracity - former F16 pilots for example quibble about some depictions. Overall I cannot fault the author and as a layperson don't find anything that stands out as unbelievable.

Aaron Kendal says

An excellent read detailing Iraq's nuclear development program and the Israeli mission to stop it, ending with the bombing of the Iraqi Osirak reactor in a surgical lag-distance strike. It also goes into the criticism and castigation of Israel after the raid and then the quiet thanks in the run up to the Gulf War for Israel preventing Iraq from becoming a nuclear power before it had invaded Kuwait.

A riveting tale of espionage, nuclear secrets, and a 990-mile clandestine flight over hostile territory to destroy the reactor with pinpoint precision forestalling the Iraqi nuclear weapons program.

Steven Hull says

The subtitle of the book is an accurate description of the content of *Raid On The Sun*. The author writes a comprehensive account of Saddam Hussein's effort to acquire a nuclear weapons capability and Israel's actions to thwart the effort. The book reads like an action packed novel at times. At other times it is presents historical narrative that gives context to the suspenseful sections. Overall it is well researched and well written.

The historical narrative includes information about the rise of the modern state of Israel and the security challenges that it constantly faces. It provides information about the youth and the rise of Saddam Hussein. We also are told of Hussein's brutal hold on power, his willingness to destroy domestic rivals, and his stark ambition to make Iraq a regional nuclear power.

Claire's description of Israel and Iraq's respective secret efforts to develop a nuclear capability is riveting. These efforts are marked by intrigue, danger, terror, and murder. In the case of France, we learn of her secret agreement to provide Hussein with a nuclear weapons making capability that included weapons grade plutonium and a modern reactor to produce its own weapons grade plutonium.

The ruthlessness of the Mossad is featured as well. In addition, Israel is able to illegally leverage U.S. intelligence assets and F-16 capabilities to conduct the raid. Throughout the book there is a steady stream of information about the planning and execution of the raid. Eight highly modified F-16s are used, piloted by Israel's best pilots. The description of the raid itself is excellent. Anyone interested in modern Middle Eastern military history will enjoy this book.

Eric says

Interesting account of the Israeli raid. Not the best non-fiction read, however.
