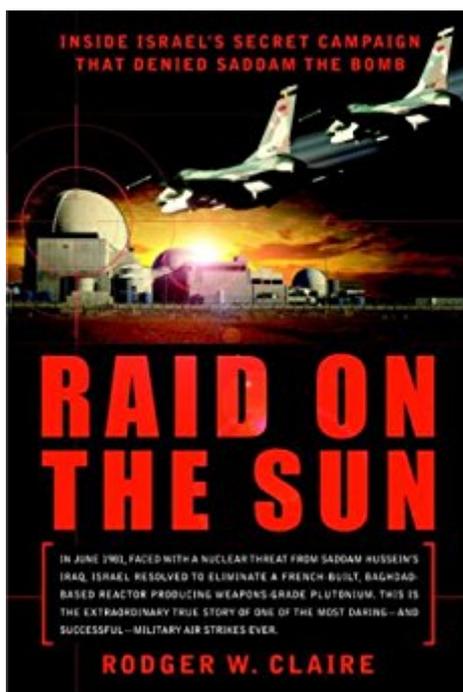


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# Raid On The Sun: Inside Israel's Secret Campaign That Denied Saddam The Bomb



## Synopsis

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 a hot spot 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I saw Rodger Claire's *Raid On The Sun* I was excited to read it. As an F-16 pilot since the 80s, the raid on the Iraqi nuke plant had long been a subject of legend in the F-16 community and I was eager to get the real story and Mr. Claire had access to the pilots and senior leaders to get all the facts straight. It was a good read, and any fan of recent military history will enjoy it. I enjoyed getting filled in on the many details surrounding the establishment of Iraq's nuclear program, the planning involved in the raid, and of course the actual play-by-play of the mission itself. However, I can't give it a high rating because of problems I had with Mr. Claire's details involving the F-16, which I obviously paid close attention to, and which were so often just plain wrong. They were all minor and wouldn't make a difference to the average reader, but to me they cast a shadow on the rest of the book. Things like "threw on the afterburners" (there's only one) the "thrusters" (nozzle?) hearing sounds of AAA and radio chatter of the gunners on the ground in their cockpit video recorders (what?!) saying the F-16 canopy is glass (it's plastic) "shoved the stick into afterburner" (the afterburner is controlled with the throttle) the reasons for flying in tactical formation (completely wrong), saying the HUD was newly-invented for the F-16 (not), American F-16s used "Stingers" (a surface to air missile) and so much more.... I kept thinking, if he can't get this easy stuff right, what about the important details? Why didn't the author have an actual F-16 pilot proofread his work before publication? Goodness knows there are enough of us out there and most would probably have done it for free!

The good - A great story of politics, planning and airmanship. One can wonder where we would have been in 1991 had the raid not occurred. Claire does a good job of providing the background for the raid. Remarkably similar to what is happening today in Iran and North Korea. The bad - Unforgivably poor editing, a little overdose of hero worship and a lot of technical stuff that appears

questionable, as others have noted. Sadly most of these problems could have been eliminated through a review by a couple of individuals with knowledge of nuclear engineering and tactical flying. The dialogue between the pilots and their leaders seems a little overdone. It seems illogical that if the pilots are truly fuel critical as they came off the target that a few pages later they would be Mach 1+ across the desert given the rate at which an F-16 converts fuel into sound at sonic speeds. Perhaps there were some of the escorts, but the clarification needed to be made. With the "bad" noted the book remains highly recommended. Perhaps the author will edit the next edition with a little greater care. My guess is that some young pilots of several nationalities are looking at this book as the year 2006 begins, not for the thrills but to see if there are applicable lessons to be learned. Certainly the Iranians and N Koreans learned some critical lessons which lead them to build multiple facilities deep underground and as far inland as possible, while at the same time adding weapons designed to keep US carriers as far offshore as possible. The book also serves as a reminder of the volatility of the world as more dictatorships, and perhaps non-national groups, obtain nuclear weapons, either through internal development or exchange with other rogue nations.

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