

INTRODUCTION

ALONE, IN THE LION'S DEN

On November 12, 2011, a tremendous explosion destroyed a secret missile base close to Tehran, killing seventeen Revolutionary Guards and reducing dozens of missiles to a heap of charred iron. General Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, the “father” of the Shehab long-range missiles, and the man in charge of Iran’s missile program, was killed in the explosion. But the secret target of the bombing was not Moghaddam. It was a solid-fuel rocket engine, able to carry a nuclear missile more than six thousand miles across the globe, from Iran’s underground silos to the U.S. mainland.

The new missile planned by Iran’s leaders was to bring America’s major cities to their knees and transform Iran into a dominant world power. The November explosion delayed the project by several months.

Even though the target of the new long-range missile was America, the explosions that destroyed the Iranian base were probably set by the Israeli Secret Service, Mossad. Since its inception more than sixty years ago, Mossad has served fearlessly and secretly against the dangers threatening Israel and the West. And more so than ever before, Mossad’s intelligence gathering and operations affect American security abroad and at home.

Right now, according to foreign sources, Mossad is challenging the blunt, explicit promise of the Iranian leadership to obliterate Israel from the map. Waging a stubborn shadow war against Iran by sabotaging nuclear facilities, assassinating scientists, supplying plants with faulty equipment and raw materials via bogus companies, organizing desertions of high-ranking military officers and major figures in nuclear research, introducing ferocious viruses into Iran's computer systems, Mossad allegedly is fighting the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran, and what that would mean for the United States and the rest of the world. While Mossad has delayed the Iranian nuclear bomb by several years, their covert battle is reaching its peak, before last-resort measures—a military strike—are employed.

In the fight against terrorism, Mossad has been capturing and eliminating scores of major terrorists in their strongholds in Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, and Tunis, and in their battle stations in Paris, Rome, Athens, and Cyprus since the 1970s. On February 12, 2008, according to the Western media, Mossad agents ambushed and killed Imad Mughniyeh, the military leader of Hezbollah, in Damascus. Mughniyeh was a sworn enemy of Israel, but he was also number one on the FBI's Most Wanted list. He had planned and executed the massacre of 241 U.S. Marines in Beirut. He had left behind a bloody trail strewn with hundreds of Americans, Israelis, French, and Argentineans. Right now, Islamic Jihad and Al Qaeda leaders are being hunted throughout the Middle East.

And yet, when Mossad warned the West that the Arab Spring could turn into an Arab Winter, no one seemed to listen. Throughout 2011, the West celebrated what they believed was the dawning of a new era of democracy, freedom, and human rights in the Middle East. Hoping to obtain the approval of the Egyptians, the West pressured President Mubarak, its strongest ally in the Arab world, to step down. But the first crowds that swept Tahrir Square in Cairo burned the American flag; then they stormed the Israeli embassy, demanded the end of the peace treaty with Israel, and arrested American NGO activists. Free elections in Egypt have brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power, and today, Egypt wavers on the brink of anarchy and economic catastrophe. A fundamentalist Islamic regime is taking

root in Tunisia, with Libya likely to follow. Yemen is in turmoil. In Syria, President Assad is massacring his own people. The moderate nations like Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates of the Persian Gulf feel betrayed by their Western allies. And the hopes for human rights, women's rights, and democratic laws and rule that inspired these landmark revolutions have been swept away by fanatic religious parties, better organized and better connected with the masses.

This Arab Winter has turned the Middle East into a time bomb, threatening the Israeli people and its allies in the Western world. As history unfolds, Mossad's tasks will become riskier but also more vital to the West. Mossad appears to be the best defense against the Iranian nuclear threat, against terrorism, against whatever may evolve from the mayhem in the Middle East. Most important, Mossad is the last salvo short of open war.

The unnamed warriors of Mossad are its lifeblood, men and women who risk their lives, live away from their families under assumed identities, carry out daring operations in enemy countries where the slightest mistake can bring their arrest, torture, or death. During the Cold War, the worst fate for a secret agent captured in the West or the Communist bloc was to be exchanged for another agent on some cold, foggy bridge in Berlin. Russian or American, British or East German, the agent always knew he was not alone, there was always someone who would bring him back from the cold. But for the lonely warriors of Mossad, there are no exchanges and foggy bridges; they pay with their lives for their audacity.

In this book, we bring to light the greatest missions and the most courageous heroes of Mossad, as well as the mistakes and failures that more than once tarnished the agency's image and shook its very foundations. These missions shaped Israel's fate and, in many ways, the fate of the world. And yet, for Mossad agents, what they all share is a deep, idealistic love of their country, a total devotion to its existence and survival, a readiness to assume the most dramatic risks and face the ultimate dangers. For the sake of Israel.