

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

MIKE EVANS

**THE
SAMSON OPTION**

A NOVEL



P.O. Box 30000, Phoenix, AZ 85046

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MOSSAD OPERATIONS CENTER ASHDOD, ISRAEL

EFRAIM HOFI TOOK A HANDKERCHIEF from his pocket and wiped his brow. “Are we certain the missile is down?” He spoke with his eyes fixed on a map that filled the screen at the end of the room.

“Yes,” Levanon replied. “Our radar system has confirmed the hit. And SIGINT indicates the missile stopped transmitting telemetry.”

“Did we get the trajectory data from the Americans?”

“It is downloading now.”

“Have you checked our own system?”

She nodded. “The missile was launched from a site in the Egyptian desert, but our system is unable to give an exact location.”

When the file finished loading, Levanon typed a command from the keyboard on her desk. A map appeared on her monitor. Moments later, a small red box appeared, superimposed over the map. Hofi leaned over her shoulder and pointed to the box. “That is the location?”

“The launch site is within that box.”

“How large is the area?”

“Less than twenty meters square. The actual site is that dot in the center of the box.”

“These are pinpoint coordinates?”

“The coordinates we have received from the American satellite

give us the exact location of the launch.”

“Put it on the screen.”

The map appeared on the wall screen. Hofi pointed to it as he turned to face the others in the room. “This is the location from which the missile was launched. Is there any other movement in the area?”

Yossi Avidan, an analyst, spoke up. “None, sir.”

“Have Egyptian forces gone on alert?”

“They went on alert at the same time we did.”

“But not before?”

Avidan shook his head. “Nothing unusual to that point.”

“And there has been no repositioning of their units?”

“Apparently they went on alert in response to the launch, just as we did.”

Hofi stepped near Avidan’s workstation. “You are certain of this?” Hofi’s eyes bore in. “Certain enough to risk the fate of the nation on your conclusion?”

“Yes,” Avidan nodded. “I know what I have seen. They are in a defensive position. Troops are in the barracks. A dozen planes are in the air, but they are confined to patrols over urban areas. The remainder of their air wing is on the tarmac. Engines cool. No activity reported.”

“Good.” Hofi nodded. He backed away from Avidan and turned toward the others once again. “Then we must ask ourselves, ‘Who did this?’ ”

From across the room, Uri Einstein answered, “There is only one country in the region with this capability.”

Hofi wheeled around to face him. “And who is that?”

“Iran.”

“And are you certain of this?” Hofi stepped close to Uri’s workstation. “Certain enough to order an attack on them? An all-out attack

with our own nuclear weapons? Assuring the deaths of millions?”

“Yes,” Uri nodded.

“So certain that you would unleash the Samson Option?”

“I am,” Uri nodded. “I am that certain.”

“Well.” Hofi backed away. His shoulders sagged and he dropped his gaze to the floor. “I am not as certain as either of you.” He folded his hands behind his back. “I am not certain enough about Egypt to let down our guard, and not so convinced of Iran’s culpability. We must have confirmation.”

“And how do you propose we get that?”

Hofi looked up at Uri and pointed toward his eyes. “With these,” he smiled as he turned to face Levanon at the center console. “Send two response teams to the launch site.”

Levanon hesitated. “The launch site?”

“That location,” Hofi shouted, pointing to the map on the screen. With three long strides he reached the wall and jabbed the coordinate box on the map with his finger. “That location right there.”

“That location is inside Egypt’s borders.” Levanon looked perplexed. “Should we not ask for permission?”

“Permission for what?”

“We will be sending a military unit across the border into Egyptian territory. Will they see that as an act of war?”

“We have been attacked by a missile launched from Egyptian soil.” Hofi’s voice was loud and abrasive. “Have they contacted us? Have they offered an explanation or assistance in determining who is behind it? The missile launch was an act of war. We are merely responding, and in the least aggressive means possible. We did not launch a counterstrike against Egypt. We are merely sending a small team to investigate the launch site. If Egypt was not involved, they have no reason to protest.” Hofi paused and took a deep breath. He lowered his voice. “Time is of the essence. Our teams must reach the

site before anyone has time to tamper with it. Send them at once. I will notify the prime minister. He can decide whether to tell the Egyptians what we have done.”