



A Grim Threat *Ford AD* From Israel

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WE HAVE JUST seen a truly bewildering demonstration of the American political community to everything that matters. The world has in fact just heard its first serious threat of nuclear war. But all our huge local population of Neros went right on sawing away at their fiddles.

The threat was uttered by the Israelis, who will of course deny the threat's grim meaning. The backdrop was Israel's border with Syria, where there has been a sudden increase of tension because of the ominous Syrian troop movements.

The worry caused by the Syrian troop movements led Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to visit the northern border. The visit gave the prime minister the right kind of pretext to raise a problem that has been desperately worrying the Israelis. He therefore declared that if Israel's cities were ever attacked with Arab long range missiles, the policy of a city-for-a-city would be promptly adopted.

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TWO SETS OF facts are needed to understand Rabin, whose words were muted in tone, though so dire in real meaning.

First, the Soviets have given the Egyptians at least a battalion of their 360-mile, large-warhead, ground-to-ground SCUD missiles. The Israelis are convinced that the Syrians also have SCUDs.

It is also an established fact that besides sending the SCUDs to Egypt at the climax of the Yom Kippur war, the Soviets sent nuclear warheads on a freighter that reached Alexandria, but turned

back to its Black Sea port when the Yom Kippur war ended.

Add the additional SCUDs the Israelis believe are in Syria, plus a good many of the shorter range Soviet FROG missiles the Arabs also have. You can then see why the Israelis are now so worried about missile attacks on their cities.

As to the other set of facts, the Israelis may again deny them. But it is also quite certain that the Israeli armed forces have now built up a small supply of nuclear weapons made in a secret desert facility.

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IN WASHINGTON, meanwhile, the tendency to sweep all dangers under the rug is now stronger than ever. Hence a good many analysts in the intelligence community are refusing to believe the transparently obvious meaning of Rabin's words. They are the ones who keep assuring the Senate's numerous Neros that nothing is so awful as it looks.

It really is high time to stop this kind of nonsense, both inside and outside the U.S. government. It is time to face all sorts of hard facts, and above all the really fearful danger in the Middle East betokened by Prime Minister Rabin's veiled but undoubted nuclear threat.

Moreover, it is time for a few of our more ludicrous senators to ask the Israelis and the Arabs who has some chance of averting a Middle Eastern war. "Henry A. Kissinger," will be the answer the senators get if they ever do that much homework. But of course that answer will not divert them from the delights of attacking the secretary of state.