

CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT: FOR VCGO, ONLY

Moonless Midnight: The Covert Evacuation From A War Zone®¹

By Jeff Fishman & Asaf Yona

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[CloakiQ, Inc. is a private Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism consulting firm.

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David Stern (L) & Jeff Fishman (R).
Itamar Rapid Response training
(Judea & Samaria January 2024)

Asaf Yona. (Undisclosed Israel)

Forward – By JS*.

The Mediterranean has always been more than a sea. It is a stage upon which civilizations have risen, flourished and fallen: each leaving behind their respective monuments of faith, culture, and ambition. For millennia its shores have been shaped by trade, conquest and religion producing a region that enchants and captivates travelers of every kind by history, cuisine or natural beauty. The Mediterranean is also a sanctuary of faith. Vatican City crowns Rome as the heart of Catholicism, while Jerusalem remains sacred to three great religions and home to the Mosque of Omar, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Western Wall. Voyages to the Holy Land often combine Israel and Egypt with Eastern Mediterranean ports, drawing pilgrims and seekers alike to places where scripture, history, and myth converge. Yet this sea of beauty is also shadowed by hazard. Earthquakes and storms have long shaken its coasts. Its narrow straits remain crowded with vessels, vulnerable to mishap. But perhaps most pressing today are political dangers. Today's HAMAS conflict has spilled beyond its borders, stirring unrest across the Eastern Mediterranean, Europe and the United States. Heightened tensions have sparked protests in regional capitals, disrupted travel routes, and raised security alerts at ports in Israel, Egypt, and neighboring States. Cruise lines have altered itineraries,

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flights have been cancelled or rerouted, and travelers must weigh the risks of visiting areas where violence erupts with little warning.

It was into this maelstrom of danger that CloakiQ, Inc. stepped without hesitation. CloakiQ is a private intelligence and counter-terrorism consulting firm not known to many with a specialty of working with US Houses of Worship; that prefers to work behind the scenes and with which I have worked (www.cloakiq.com). The Operation CloakiQ mounted will be taught for years and represents the newest, updated Counter-Terrorism tactics, partnerships and strategies.

The mission's singular focus was the immediate evacuation of young American girls facing the very real threat of capture, imprisonment, and likely sexual violence at the hands of the terrorist group HAMAS, if they survived Iran's Missile attacks. Such an operation demanded more than courage. It required seamless, multi-national coordination, weaving together the efforts of foreign governments, their military and intelligence arms; as well as CloakiQ's own private operators. Success depended not only on precision, but on speed and the ability to plan an Operation that anticipated actions / reactions so as to avoid or prevent kinetic engagement that endangered the evacuees. There was no time for drawn-out deliberation. Red Tape was cut by CloakiQ's years of proactive scenario planning, constant intelligence updates, contingency rehearsals and experience gained from nearly two years of training Rapid Response Teams in Judea and Samaria that made it possible to conceive the plan within minutes. Within the hour, multiple options were developed in parallel, and the operation was set in motion resulting in a complex orchestration of risk, skill, and urgency against the ticking clock of terror.

Human nature in crisis often defaults to hesitation or outright paralysis, as fear magnifies risk and clouds judgment. CloakiQ's pre-planning, coordination, rehearsed contingencies and Rapid Response experience allowed operators to anticipate and neutralize reactions among evacuees and families. One incident nearly compromised the operation when a young evacuee resisted team directives after her father instructed her to disobey. The lapse nearly cost her life and jeopardized the entire exfiltration. Emotional resistance, though understandable, had to be anticipated and managed to safeguard both evacuees and operators.

Complications mounted: deteriorating weather, inevitable equipment malfunctions, hostile interference, and rapidly vanishing safe routes. Yet the CloakiQ team adapted, recalibrated in real time, and pressed forward. The result: the successful evacuation of an undisclosed number of young American females to secure harbor and joyful reunion with families without loss of life. It was as if CloakiQ were never there and the Operation never happened. Mission Accomplished!

*(*JS is a former CIA Intelligence Officer, Station Chief & Tradecraft Instructor; and a keynote speaker on Leadership, Intelligence and Security)*

DRAFT Article TEASER:

The United States established a deadline for Iran to dismantle its nuclear program, but there was no indication that Iran would comply. In response, the U.S. covertly transitioned to Def Con 1 (war posture) and initiated airborne command and control operations. Intelligence assessments with high confidence indicated that an Iranian missile response would likely follow any B-2 bomber strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. The anticipated signal of an imminent B-2 operation would be the closure of Israeli ports.

As borders closed and maritime conditions became increasingly dangerous, reports indicated that Hamas was seeking additional hostages, intensifying the instability

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preceding a potential Iran–Israel conflict. During this period, CloakiQ received an urgent request for the extraction of VVIP U.S. citizens, teenage girls, at high risk due to several circumstances; including among others, a lack of bomb shelter in the event of an Iranian missile attack and of being stranded in a rapidly deteriorating war zone. With all safe land exits blocked as both civilian and military transport air travel was suspended, the urgency increased. The window for safe evacuation was rapidly narrowing due to the impending B-2 mission and likely Iranian retaliation.

This extraction request represented an extremely high-risk operation with no margin for error, aligning precisely with the capabilities of our team. As a private counter-terrorism special operations company, we facilitated the expedited planning and execution of a covert exfiltration by coordinating with multiple governments and military entities. Due to the sensitive nature of the mission, only a limited number of officials were informed. In short, we cut through red tape.

Under secure and covert conditions, the VVIP individuals were discreetly transported to a vessel prepared at an undisclosed port. Emphasizing the urgency of their evacuation, mid-trip the VVIP individuals were forced to exit their specialized transport vehicle and lay on the road when their route came under missile attack.

Once at their undisclosed port, a combination of equipment failure and unwitting human interference delayed their departure. As they waited, the seas grew more dangerous. After the right words were spoken into the right ears, the vessel departed unnoticed via a route designed to avoid detection, navigating tumultuous seas. The transit route cut-off all communications. Parents held their breath for over thirteen hours. Upon reaching foreign territory at dawn, the individuals were safely delivered.

This operation was one that only a select group of individuals possessed the capability or willingness to execute. For those who were rescued, the event felt almost unreal; remarkably akin to a serene night cruise beneath the stars. The highest compliment that could be given any covert emergency exfil team came from one of the evacuees when she thanked CloakiQ by saying ‘it was the best night of her life, a moonless midnight luxury cruise beneath the stars’. For CloakiQ and our team, this experience underscored that professionalism, diligence, strategic preparation, and discretion enable success even in the most adverse conditions.

This represents just one facet of CloakiQ’s specialized expertise.