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Dear Rabbi Lamm,

I have recently taken a few weeks off from work on novel #3 to do a political paperback on the Middle East. It will be out soon, and I will ask the publisher to send you a copy.

It will be published by New American Library as one of the "Broadside" series. It will have the ominous title, The Coming Destruction of Israel. I have <sup>had</sup> much hesitation about permitting such a title to be used, even though the suggestion was originally mine. I have <sup>been</sup> concerned about its possible demoralizing effects, and ~~about~~ about the possibility of the phrase gaining a currency independent of the book's content. Moreover, we perhaps all have a slight superstitious tendency to feel that to utter a phrase makes its realization more possible. However, the publishers have discussed the title at great length, and want it. I also have come to the conclusion that it is time to face the reality that Russia is determined to destroy Israel, and that the United States is not yet committed to the necessary counter-steps: My alarm over the danger to Israel has been growing for some time. You remember my editorial letter, of which I sent you a copy, 15 months ago. Russia's pursuit of the policy I then outlined, and American indecision in the face of it, has since then made the price of reversal much higher, and it is by no means clear that the Administration will pay that price. I think few Americans, Jewish or Gentile, clearly comprehend the magnitude of the peril that now threatens the continued existence of Israel and the lives of her people.

I do not believe, heaven forbid, that the worst is inevitable. But I must conclude that it is very possible, and that the improved statements that have come recently from the President and from Mr. Sisco have not altered the basic realities, as yet. My hope is that I will be proven the world's worst prophet. My hope is that my gloomy forecasts will help to prevent their own fulfilment, like Jonah's prophecy against Nineveh.

I don't think I am by nature a pessimist. My estimate of the likelihood that Torah Judaism will survive and grow is, I think, a far more optimistic one than most of my contemporaries would probably give. And yet I think it is a realistic estimate. But I cannot realistically be optimistic about Israel's chances of surviving the forces now being readied against her, nor about the reliability of American policy.

I am not alone, I am sure, in viewing the prospects so darkly. Joseph Alsop was one of the few in 1967 who predicted correctly that there would be a war, that Israel would have to fight alone, and that she would win. Today, though he is as pro-Israel as ever, his prediction is quite different.

Like Jonah, I fled from this task for a long time. I postponed it month after month, with various rationalizations. This past spring I tried to persuade Norman Mailer to do it instead. My rationalization was that an article by him would attract far more attention and have more influence than anything under my name. I knew of his New Left bias, but I also knew his family and his early background and thought he could be won over by facts, which I supplied amply. It was to no avail.

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I also wrote to Herman Wouk, again with the rationalization that his name is far more influential than mine. His response was of course very different from Mailer's. He responded in a friendly way, that he was giving much time to promoting Israel bonds, that he could not believe the Administration would not awaken in time, and that my letter had nevertheless shaken him somewhat. Clearly, he was doing all he could in terms of the situation as it was given to him to see it.

It was no excuse for my own silence, however, and finally, two months ago, I sent an outline to my agent, half hoping that he would find no takers. The agent found a responsive editor at New American Library on the very day he received my letter. I then spent three weeks writing a short book, and another week or two checking some of my facts at the publisher's request. The publisher also is moving at great speed, because of the gravity of the situation, and I will not even see proofs. The monetary compensation will scarcely cover my expenses, but it is hardly a subject on which I could want to profit.

Of course a book will not change matters, even if it circulates widely. One can only hope that those elements in the State Department and in the Pentagon who see the situation clearly will finally prevail over those who do not. Meanwhile each must do what he can.

The book is pretty much first draft, full of instances of bad writing and careless style. However, its purpose is not to advance my reputation as an artist. Besides, I had waited until the last moment to undertake it, so the fault is my own.

It deals with the nature of Jewish and Arab claims and Jewish and Arab motivation in the Mideast situation, in order to dispose of the current propaganda which sees the "refugee" as the injured party, etc. It also analyzes the Russian motives and the American response. Finally it surveys the military facts and draws some inevitable conclusions. I will not detail it here more than that as you will soon have the book itself.

The Israeli consul-general in Boston has just read the manuscript, which I lent him. His praise for it has been very high, and he hopes it will have the widest possible circulation. The title understandably upset him, so much so that I phoned New York to ask whether we could change it, but I was told that books are already in manufacture. The consul-general says the title may create resistance to its bloc purchase by Jewish organizations, and I am afraid I must agree with him. However, he hopes to get the Israeli diplomatic corps behind the book in such a way as to overcome this resistance. Last night, regretting my choice of title, I spoke at length to an Israeli friend here in Sharon who has himself been busy as an amateur propagandist, and who had read the manuscript earlier. He told me that he too, like the consul-general, had been upset by the title, but had not mentioned it to me because he believes the gravity of the situation calls for it. He is not so pessimistic as I, and does not believe that Israel can be destroyed, but he thinks the danger is such that it is essential that my view be given wide currency. He points out that there is so much written now about the Middle East that much of it goes unread, and that much is worthless or mere rehash; and that to gain attention amid so much competing journalism such a title is required. He, like the consul-general, hopes to see it get the widest possible circulation.

Let me close this letter on a happy note, which it sorely needs. I explained to Stanley Richman why he had not found you in at your office, but that was after his final return from New York for the season. Our synagogue has hired him to lead the teen-agers service(s) during the holidays next fall. I am of course very pleased by the choice, since I know Stanley's competence and enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

Myron Kaufmann