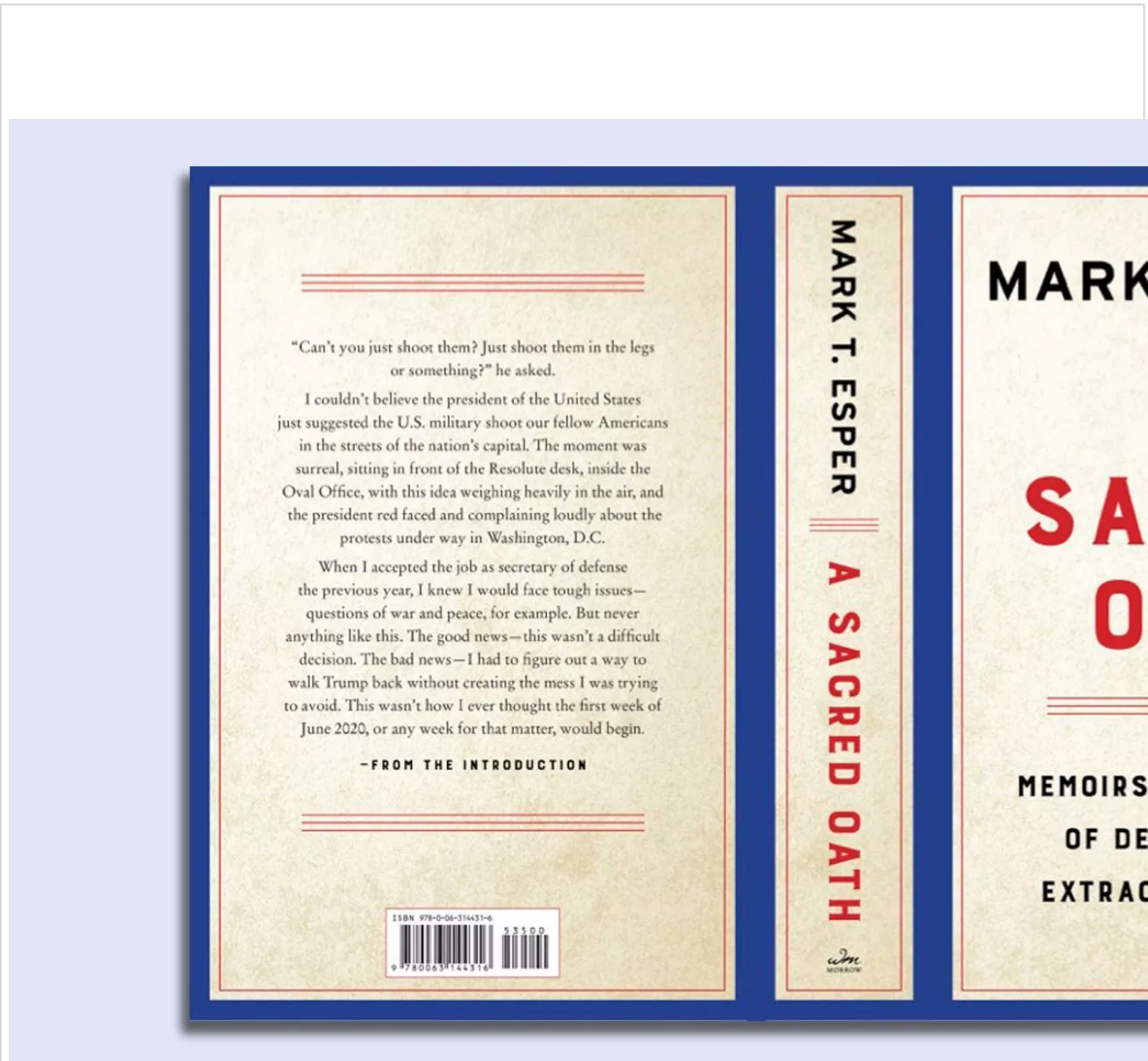


New book says Netanyahu urged Trump to strike Iran



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Washington, May 12 (RHC)-- A book by former Pentagon chief Mark Esper has revealed that Israel's ex-prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked Donald Trump to strike Iran but the former U.S. president did not dare to start a war with the Islamic Republic.

Esper's heavily redacted book, "A Sacred Oath: Memoirs of a Secretary of Defense during Extraordinary Times," suggests Netanyahu called on Trump to take military action against the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program.

"The president often had others in the room, and foreign leaders like Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, telling him [REDACTED]," the book reads.

"Netanyahu would say this to me when I met with him, so I was confident he was telling Trump the same thing," the former Trump official said. "In my view, that seemed like a big bet to take, especially when there wasn't a pressing need to take it anytime soon," the book adds.

While the quote has been redacted to make it unclear as to whether Netanyahu indeed suggested to Trump that the US militarily attack Iran's nuclear program, Esper's book comes at the same time as another upcoming book by journalists Susan Glasser and Peter Baker that makes the same claim.

According to the journalists, Netanyahu implored the Trump administration to attack Iran from the moment it was clear that the election results had gone against Trump.

The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz quoted the book as saying that Trump seemed firm in his commitment not to enter a war with Iran.

Esper is suing the Pentagon for redactions, because "significant text is being improperly withheld from publication ... under the guise of classification," the Middle East Eye reported.

Last week, Esper's book revealed that Trump ordered the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, former commander of Iran's Quds Force, in early 2020 to boost his re-election chances.

The desire to do so was linked to political gain, according to the book, with Esper believing that Trump's team wanted news that could be used to aid his 2020 re-election bid.

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