

### ***The View from Israel***

The sound of fighter jets over Rehovot is unmistakable. Most of them are so high and so fast that you can hear the sound but never see the plane. Occasionally, they are low flying and the silhouette of the F35 is clear to the naked eye.

At the Palmachim Beach, one of the most beautiful Mediterranean settings, a drone circles to the south repeatedly. What the drone operators are looking for, watching, or even thinking about is a mystery.

In both instances, the noise of the fighter jets and the loud buzz of the drone, Israelis seem to take no notice. No one even looks up at the sky to wonder what is going on. They know.

Israel is at war and now even the presidential candidates have acknowledged that the terrorist group Hamas does not want to see the war end. The followers of Hamas who perpetrated crimes against Jewish and non-Jewish women, children, and other civilians want nothing less than total victory over the Jewish state. How, one might ask, can the largely beaten and broken Hamas fail and refuse any peace initiative, no matter how favorable to them? It seems insane, doesn't it?

Hamas, and other terrorist groups, are all on the same suicide mission to destroy all that is good in western society. They believe that time and numbers are on their side. Every jihadist Muslim that dies represents a victory for the terrorists. The leadership, of course, hides from the inevitable day of reckoning when they too will die. The terrorists of the world will fight to their last follower.

Israelis understand, better than most, surrounded as they are by 500 million hostile people, that the terrorist jihadi groups rely upon death as a weapon, even if it means the death of their own people. The west has largely lost its footing and grasp of reality to the extent that many in the United States and Europe actually support terrorist groups like Hamas for reasons that are indecipherable to most of the rest of us.

Israelis, in the meantime, are doing their best to live their lives, raise their children, enjoy the Sabbath, go to the beach, and run their hospitals, colleges, and schools. This is a society where Black, White, and numerous other colors mix with little or no stress. Debates about diversity, equity, and inclusion are unnecessary in this country given the aggressive inclusion of all people in this marvelously robust democracy of 9 million people in a land mass smaller than New Jersey.

An Israeli made a comment to me while we watched the replay of the Biden/Trump debate: "Why do you Americans always talk about people's color, race, religion, and identification? Why do you talk about poor people, people who are working hard to better themselves, the criminal element and what is going on in society and culture in general? Why are you so focused on race?" An American answered the Israeli who posed that question by saying: "Well, those who belong to the various groups of identification in America, they are the ones that bring up race,

religion, color, and creed.” The Israeli man shot back: “I think we would all be better off if we talked about social and economic problems and bettering the environment for everyone, rather than focusing on nonsense like skin color.”

At a family event, celebrating the birth of a newborn grandson, I saw my old friend from Great Neck, Sam Emery. Sam is a doctor who had served in a combat unit at the beginning of the Gaza War. I wrote about his observations previously. He informed me that he has been called up from the hospital where he works to go back to Gaza as a combat soldier at the beginning of August. I could not help but notice that he looks older, more gray, and with a hint of being just tired, than the last time I saw him.

War is hell for everyone. Those in this country fighting for their survival, their way of life, and for the protection of a fragile but necessary democracy, seem to be willing to pay the very high price of freedom. In this way, Israelis and Americans have a lot in common.

There is a sharp contrast in this country; while at war, with deaths of brave soldiers almost every day, most people seem to go about their daily routine in an upbeat and positive way. The synagogues are crowded, as are the mosques and other religious places of congregation.

A man came up to me on the beach one day, who spoke no English. He was dark skinned (there I go again noting skin color), missing a couple of teeth, and had the tattoos of a sailor. The only English he spoke was, “Biden O Trump?” I laughed and I said to him, “Bibi O Benny?” His response was “Bibi, Bibi!” In Israel, there is no shortage of competent and aggressive leadership waiting in the wings.

The fellow on the beach then proceeded to ask me, in Hebrew, if there were any medusa in the water. I thought he was talking about the ritual objects hung on door posts containing words of the Bible in them. I just did not understand. A woman sitting on her blanket to my left told me that medusa was a jellyfish. I explained no, there were no jellyfish in the water.

All the jellyfish are in politics. They are just floating around waiting to sting the people they serve.

Next installment in the near future.

Enjoy your nice cool weather, while we bask in the high 80s/low 90s, clear and low humidity.

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