

Another Adventure

On our way to Israel to visit our daughter and help her out with an ill grandchild, our youngest at only 6 months, we encountered an adventure that we will be able to tell our grandchild about. The idea of an overnight Red Eye flight did not cause me any great excitement to begin with. The bad weather over the northern latitudes which the flight takes in order to cut off some miles, was not any great thrill due to air turbulence. Well, okay, travelers expect red eyes and turbulence every once in a while. It is part of the travel experience. Who really minds standing in long lines of irritable people at Kennedy Airport? The people who work there are not very nice, really could not care less about the travelers and process people like cattle. One is tempted to say that now we know how cattle feel, but at least we are not going to wind up on anyone's dinner plate.

After 10 hours of flying, we approached Israel at approximately 6:30 p.m. I enjoy watching the "pilot's view" on the video screen, since it reminds me of the old days flying a Cessna 152. Well, okay, a 787-9 is a little bit bigger and has an extra engine, but after all, flying is flying. As the great Betty Harlan used to say, "She wants to fly."

Watching intently as the airplane made its final approach to Lod Airport outside of Tel Aviv, I noticed that the pilot pulled up the nose, maintained the altitude, and made a 180 degree turn back out over the Mediterranean. Just a few seconds before my "Red Alert" indicated that there was a missile attack in Israel. Red Alert is an app that every Israeli has on their phone showing when and where an attack is taking place and giving people an opportunity to comment as well. This sort of information sharing has saved many Israeli lives.

The pilot, in the most calm voice that could possibly be imagined, explained that there was a Houthi missile attack ongoing and that as a result, we would be circling back out over the Mediterranean. The pilot then said, "There is nothing to worry about. This will delay us about 15 or 20 minutes." There was no panic and the planes to Israel these days are filled not with tourists, but rather with travelers who have some specific reason to be going to or

coming from Israel. Most of the people on that plane, it could be surmised, were veteran travelers.

After circling for a short time, the pilot headed in and made a perfect landing in the early nighttime air.

Needless to say, we were exhausted when we arrived at our apartment in Be'er Yaakov. After getting a few groceries, and checking in with our daughter, we hit the sack. However, we did not go to bed before unpacking. The Rieders family does not travel lightly and would never dare to go to bed leaving perfectly folded clothes in suitcases.

It was a wonderful sleep until 3:00 a.m. when the sirens went off. I thought that in Be'er Yaakov, which I like to call the Jersey Shore of Israel, that the sirens would not be very loud, but they were. I immediately awakened my wife and suggested to Kim that we go into the saferoom. Her response was something along the lines of, "I am not going to let the blankety blank Houthis disturb my sleep." She rolled over and went back to sleep. I did the same. The next morning, we were mildly chastised by our daughter who said that we need to learn to follow "the rules." She pointed out that a missile or even falling shrapnel can cause a lot of damage and no one knows where it is going to wind up. Even a missile brought down by Israel's anti-missile system can be very dangerous.

Upon awakening, we were greeted with a magnificent day, probably 72 degrees and mostly sunny. A little bit later in the morning we heard from family in Cogan Station that the thermometer was well under 19 degrees Fahrenheit. Well, at least they have the warmth here. Perhaps some day they will have peace as well.

When you approach this country from the air and see the "pilot's view," it is easy to see what a small tract of land the Jewish people live on. The Bible did not need a vast expanse of territory to teach its principals to the western world. Looking left from the pilot's window, it is easy to see Beirut and Damascus, and right are the cities in Egypt. Looking just a little bit ahead, Jordan looms large. All of these nations have, at one time or another, waged war against Israel seeking the extermination of the Jewish people in the Holy Land. Today, Israel has a cold peace with Egypt and Jordan, but at least there is no hot war going

on. Unfortunately, the Egyptians have not done a very good job of keeping terrorists out of Gaza, whose main entrances the Egyptians control.

Jordan is ruled by a dictatorship, a king, who is a member of a minority sect. There are many in Jordan who thirst for the king's blood and would gladly slit his throat. Jordan is at risk for being turned into another terrorist enclave. The Iranians, until Israel stood up to them, did a good job of radicalizing the Middle East especially Yemen, Gaza, Syria, and Lebanon. Iran will only be discouraged from its ultimate plans of destruction, once the west develops some chutzpah.

Anyway, that is the first installment of our travels to the magnificent nation which is Israel.

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