

Gideon Avrami is the CEO of Israel's largest mall. As such, he confronts many of the same issues the managers of American malls wrestle with. Addressing tenant concerns, vacancy rates and maintenance issues make up a significant portion of his day. However, the security concerns he confronts daily are unlike any our malls have experienced. Suicide bombers, car bombs and armed terrorists are as much a part of Avrami's business as the retail challenges he shares with his American counterparts.

At 500,000 square feet, the fashionable Jerusalem Mall looks like it was transplanted from some Southern California community. Only upon closer examination are the differences apparent. Security guards armed with submachine guns, metal detectors at the entrances and parking lot checkpoints underscore the Israeli experience with terrorism. These security measures notwithstanding, one's shopping experience in the Jerusalem Mall mirrors any I've had in the United States.

In early December, I had a chance to travel to Israel as part of the *Law Enforcement Exchange Program* of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, otherwise known simply as JINSA. JINSA's mission is to increase American understanding of the national security challenges Israel faces as a result of radical Islamic terrorism. Along with 10 other American law enforcement executives, I spent a week in Israel working with the Israeli National Police. We spent most of our time in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv working with the National Police, the Border Police, the Israeli Security Agency (Shin Bet) and a member of the Mossad (their version of the American CIA) to better understand their experiences, and, more importantly, to bring back critical knowledge on how local law enforcement can combat international terrorism. Almost daily, American news reports the tragedy of Middle Eastern terrorism. Since September 2000, radical Islamic terrorists have waged their "intefadah" ("the uprising") against Israel. As a result more than 1,000 Israelis have been killed in mostly suicide bombing. Needless to say, they take their security very seriously.

This was my second trip to Israel to work with the National Police. In 2000, I traveled there to speak to the commanders of the country's police force about community policing in Redlands. Then, as with my December trip, all costs but one hotel night in the U.S. were picked up by either the Israeli government or JINSA. This was some of the most cost-effective training any Redlands police officer has ever received.

During my 2000 trip I had an opportunity to learn how the National Police use closed circuit television to effectively combat terrorism and traditional crime. This resulted in the installation of surveillance cameras in several Redlands locations. Increasingly, this technology will be an important part of our crime control strategy. Similarly, on my most recent trip, I learned about the role businesses – both large and small – can play in combating terrorism.

Israel's security relies, in part, on the notion of security "rings." The most outer ring is the responsibility of the Israeli military and the Mossad as they attempt to control terrorism outside Israel. The next rings are the border (the responsibility of the Border Police) and inside Israel (the job of the National Police). The inner ring is the responsibility of the citizenry and the private sector. It is this last area of responsibility where Avrami and his employees play a crucial role in protecting the Israeli public.

There is a saying in Israel – “every citizen a soldier.” This means that the country’s security as it relates to terrorism is everyone’s responsibility. That also means that security is every company’s responsibility too. Of Avrami’s almost 200 employees, 170 of them are devoted exclusively to the security of the mall. Security planning is as much a part of Gideon Avrami’s business plan as the mall’s profitability. And in his experience are lessons we in Redlands – the police and the business community alike – can learn from.

I had great respect for the people of Israeli prior to this trip. I am even more impressed by their determination to secure their country and their public places. In my next column I will outline the lessons I learned from Avrami and others that I hope will make Redlands a safer place.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at 909.798.7661 or at chief@redlandspolice.org.