
Flight over Motherland, Iran

Wednesday, 20 June 2007

Arshid was very concerned about this part of the flight. Therefore, I made this segment of the Freedom Flight solo. Arshid took a commercial flight from Ankara to

Dubai and he was waiting for me at the airport.

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Since our flight around the world is about the freedom and inspiration of

Iran's young generation, Arshid was very concerned about the possibility of Iranian government to force land our aircraft, or even potentially shoot us down, once we are over their airspace. Additionally, if we have engine failure we would have to set our plane in Iranian territory. He tried diligently to convince me not to take such risk, but for our mission, overflying

Iran was the most important part of the Freedom Flight. After all, our message to young Iranian is nothing short of their ability to accomplish what appears to be impossible and do what they want to build a better future.

The flight over the Caspian Sea and soaring over the

Albourz

Mountain as the entry point to

Iran was a dream that finally came true. With the fear of uncertainty of what I could be facing and the sheer excitement of flying over my motherland, it was truly an out of body experience.

My flight plan was approved for flying over Tehran, Esfehan and

Shiraz . This flight was about 980 nautical miles and I had 25 knots of head wind that made the flight more challenging over high mountains of

Iran and limited fuel.

I climbed to my assigned flight level 190. Fifteen minutes into the flight over the Caspian Sea and still in Azerbaijan territory, Baku radar informed me that

Tehran will not accept this flight unless I climb to flight level 210. I accepted the altitude and climbed.

Soon after I entered the Iranian airspace Mehrabad control center told me that my flight over

Tehran was forbidden and I must take a different route. They vectored me around the west side of

Tehran . My original route would put me over the Liberty Square, but the re-routing prevented me to over fly the monument.

My flight over Esfahan and

Shiraz was according to my flight plan. Due to high terrain I lost radio communication for nearly 20 minutes. I finally established radio communication with

Shiraz .

As I was approaching

Shiraz I requested to over fly Persapolice . My request was denied and I was tolled that it was a restricted area. Once I was over

Shiraz airport, I started to communicate in my native language with the local air traffic controller. I told him about my flight around the world and soon I received overwhelming welcome and cheers from him and other pilots on the same frequency who where flying commuter aircrafts. For the next thirty minutes we used that frequency and talked about the flight. We shared thoughts and information about Freedom Flight. We exchanged names and it was very apparent that we made connection.Â

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The air traffic controller told me when I earlier requested to fly over Persapolice he did not know I was an Iranian, otherwise he would have granted my request. I told him it is not too late and I could turn around. He vectored me to the site. It was the moment of victory and I was overwhelmed with the feeling of pride flying over Persopolice that is the first sign of structural civilization and the symbol of

Persian Empire .

I finally crossed the southern boarder of Iran in to

Persian Gulf and entered Emirateâ€™s territory. It was a mix emotion of reaching safety, and leaving my motherland and few friends I made behind.Â

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After nearly 8 hours of flight, I finely arrived at

Dubai that has the most unbearable heat.

