On the Radio – The War in the North
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- **When I arrived in Israel just 4 weeks ago, Taxi Cabs played Music not the news**
    - I remember noting an interesting phenomenon that I had not experienced in all my previous visits. When I got into a taxi cab music was playing on the radio instead of the news. I noted this because Israelis listen to the news incessantly. It is almost the national pastime, indeed standing in the street or sipping coffee at a café the dull bass tone of the news chime can be heard in stereo surround sound as every radio with in ear shot announces the top of the hour and the news to follow.

- **Four weeks ago, no one was listening to the news**.

- **Two weeks ago just before our congregational trip left Israel**, a week after the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit and the reoccupation of part of Gaza, **still only a few Israelis were listening to the news.** I would get calls on my cell from my family to make sure I was ok, CNN was reporting this or that in Gaza, but something is always happening in Gaza and 2 weeks ago, the country was concerned but life went on. They were sure to catch the news at night or the morning news programs, but during the day, the taxis played music.

- **I received a note from a friend today, it read: "The Taxis have the news on."**
    - If you want to know the pulse of Israel ask a taxi driver, say to him **"Mah Yehyeh?" (What will be?)** it will be the last 2 words you say no matter how long the ride, but you will get your answer, you will get the pulse of the country, and the pulse of the country today is fast and serious.

My friend explained that beyond listening to the news every Israeli is on there cell phone checking in with each other, reporting on loved ones that are serving in the north, or who have evacuated the north and are now living in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem with family and friends.

- A colleague reported "We went for a walk and everyone, it seemed, **had a cell phone** and was engaged in a heated conversation. One young man walked by saying into his cell, "My mother said she has not asked me for anything in the last five years, but now she is!" **It was clear that someone's mother wanted her son to come home!"**

- **Taxi drivers from the north have moved down to the middle** and the south and are lost in a maze of unfamiliar streets. **There is displacement and mass exodus on the Israel side of the border as well.**

- Rabbi Goor tells me that one of his teachers at the Hartman Institute came into class the other day and began by reminding them that **all Israeli men are in the reserves until a certain age** and can be called upon at any time. He then reported the following conversation with his commanding officer.

Commander: "Call all of the other Junior Officers in our battalion and tell them to get ready."

Teacher: "Ready for what?"

Commander: "Have you been watching television?"

Teacher: "Yes, all the time."

Commander: "Tell them, that soon they will be on the other side of the screen, so prepare for that!"

The teacher was clearly shaken, but he began the class by saying: "Nu Hevre, we have much to do today. I am not sure if I will be here for our next class on Tuesday!"

- The language has changed
    - Israelis don't talk of disengagement or the peace process – the focus right now is of a nation at war – getting once and for all out from under the hail of rockets that have rained down on them **not since last week but since 2000 when they pulled out of the north and since last year when they pulled out of Gaza.**

    - Imagine if Mexico and Canada were shelling us a few times a week, blowing up a house here, a wharehouse there, rockets and bombs landing without warning in school yards and parks. Imagine if each country tolerated within its midst a military force it did not control that waged war from within its borders without its consent. What would the US response be, what would the world expect of Canada and Mexico? You are not a sovereign nation if you do not control your own borders

Israel is a nation at war and it is a nation tired of war. In June of last year before Sharon's collapse, before he assumed and them was elected Prime Minster Ehud Olmert said to a gathering of Middle East policy makers and journalists from around the world:

"We are tired of fighting, we are tired of being courageous, we are tired of winning, we are tired of defeating our enemies, we want that we will be able to live in an entirely different environment of relations with our enemies. We want them to be our friends, our partners, our good neighbors,"

Before 9/11 Hezbollah had killed more Americans in its terror attacks than any other terror organization, it was number one on the US Terror list, it is the very

definition of state sponsored terrorism, sponsored by Syria and Iran, harbored by Lebanon, for one purpose to wage constant war and attacks on Israel.

The media talks of their schools and clinics that they set up in southern Lebanon as though Hezbollah was the rotary club or the shriners. They are if both were armed with 15,000 missiles from Iran.

This is the true war on terror, and Israel is fighting it alone and on behalf of the rest of the world, as we have been for decades.

And the world stands by and watches the courageous little state fight its battles and its enemies. Israel with its brave and heroic soldiers, who lay tephillin in the morning, and drop leaflets on neighborhoods saying the bombs are coming in an hour, you better leave is the world's true policeman.

If we succeed they will call us a bully and say our response was **disproportionate** (while quietly they will thank Jesus and some will thank Allah that we took care of the threat, for it is there threat too.) Everyone fear Iran, now uncheck by Iraq, and so they fear Syria Irans only ally, and so we all fight Hezbollah, Syria's arm and Iran's pawn.

and if we fail?

We can't fail, Israel can never fail to do so means the hope of 2,000 years fails, and so we have to win, every time, spending dollars and lives to secure a tiny postage stamp of land, that the world would sooner divide up even further, then stand as one and come to OUR defense for a change.

The equivocating and moral relevancy debate is raging, only the US defends our actions, yet the whole world should join us in this fight, for the border of Israel truly is the front line in the war on terror.

On this Shabbat, we will read the story of how when Moses and the children of Israel reached the boundaries of the promised land, that there were two and a half tribes who preferred to settle outside of Israel where the land was fertile. Moses allowed them to build homes for their families, but they also had to fight for the people and the land of Israel.

- This Shabbat, the portion is crying out to the Jewish community outside of Israel to do what the two and a half tribes did thousands of years ago. Leave our homes and god fight for the nation. To cross over the Jordan, to cross over from relative safety and risk for Israel, stand up for Israel fight for Israel. We must do everything we can to help Israel at this time: politically, economically and spiritually.

- Join the rally on Sundya at 4pm at 6505 the Federation Building

- Send money – yes it is time again to send money to Israel to fight a war

- Answer public polls

- Call your congressman, call your non-Jewish friends, make the case, make the argument – **cross over the and join our people in a fight for the right to be L'hiyot am chofshi b'artzenu – a free people in our own land.**

This evening, I know Israelis in synagogues will be praying for many things and many friends and loved ones. Let us pray with them at this critical hour. I know, too, that Israelis will be praying for peace as well. Through it all, this is what every Israeli wants. We should not be afraid to do the same.