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Options for Land Swaps with Syria in the Framework of Future Accords

Draft

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The document reflects the views of the authors alone

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Background

In recent months, the Syrians – including President Bashar Assad himself – have repeatedly signaled that Syria is committed to peace as a strategic choice and is prepared to begin negotiating "without any preconditions." According to some of the Syrian spokespersons, peace would be based on the Arab League's plan of 2002, which requires an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders (including a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights), the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 194 regarding the Arab refugees. Other Syrian spokespersons are signaling that Syria is likely to be flexible in regard to the timetable for withdrawal from the Golan (suggesting, for example, that Syria could lease the Golan to Israel for decades), that evacuated territory could be defined in flexible ways, and that Syria would try to restrain Hezbollah and the Palestinian organizations that operate from its territory.

In an interview in October 2006, Bashar Assad said that 80% of the problems between Israel and Syria have already been resolved, with only minor issues remaining to be settled. According to Assad, the talks with Israel would therefore require no more than six months. And the entire process, including implementation of the agreement, would take no longer than two years. This, according to Assad, assumes that Israel is sincere in the process because, he warns, the last percent is sometimes liable to abort the whole process. The Syrian information minister has emphasized that Syria is the key to the process in the region and not the obstacle to peace, as they claim in Israel and in the United States. At the same time, Assad and Syrian spokespersons warn-threaten that if Israel does not withdraw from the Golan Heights, a war is liable to erupt.

It is certainly possible that the signals from Damascus stem from a sense of Syrian distress, resulting from a number of factors: deep concern over the Bush administration's orientation (with French support) toward regime change in Syria; the American and international backing for Israel during the second Lebanon War and the continued trend toward keeping Syria out of Lebanon; the transformation of Hezbollah from a tool in the hands of Syria to an independent force that has the power to entangle Syria in a battle

with Israel; and the price it is paying as an ally of Iran, including the growing fear in the Arab world from Iran's growing strength. On the other hand, Bashar Assad might only be seeking to exploit for his benefit the calls arising from within Israel regarding the need for an accord with Syria.

Perhaps these signals only express Damascus' desire to extract itself from diplomatic distress and do not reflect a strategic decision to reach peace with Israel, to pay the political price this step entails (and, even more so, to accede to demands that it turn its back on Hezbollah and Iran). However, if Bashar Assad has indeed decided to reach a permanent accord with Israel, perhaps he believes that such an accord, in which he retrieves the Golan for Syria, would strengthen his standing at home, in the Arab world, and in the international community, as well as bolster the Syrian economy, and would thus compensate for the political and strategic price the accord entails.

Those in Israel who advocate initiating a diplomatic process with Syria at the current time cite the strategic advantages an accord with Syria is likely to produce: neutralization of the Syrian missile threat against Israel, the cutoff of Syrian aid to Hezbollah and a cutoff of Iranian aid to Hezbollah via Syria; a halt to Syrian support for Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, two terror organizations which now find refuge in Damascus; lifting the Syrian veto from an Israel-Palestinian accord; and weakening the influence of Iran in the region.

Those who oppose a diplomatic process with Syria at this time warn that initiating a process would not produce these achievements and, moreover, would not lead to a strategic turning point in Syria's relations with Iran. On the contrary, they argue that the process would only tie Israel's hands vis-à-vis Syria and those under its patronage. In addition, the argument is made that Israel's readiness to conduct negotiations with Syria would be tantamount to extending a lifeline to the Syrian regime and would be frowned upon by the American administration. According to this argument, it is likely that the Syrian regime, after attaining legitimization and the easing of pressure by entering

negotiations, would balk at reaching a permanent accord that includes the aforementioned terms.

As part of the calls in Israel for renewing the channel of rapprochement with Syria, Israel's options for territorial exchanges are being reexamined. In this context, the idea of land swaps is again being examined as a means of expanding the room to maneuver and the chances of reaching an accord. A discussion of these territorial alternatives is presented here.

Land swaps as an operative impetus

The mechanism of land swaps has already been used many times in the past, both in the various plans for an accord between Israel and the Arab states, and outside of the Arab-Israeli context:

Land swaps in Arab-Israeli peace plans

The mechanism or idea of land swaps has already gained official diplomatic standing in practice in various Arab-Israeli accords during the past decade:

- Under the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, consensual land swaps were implemented
- In the Israeli-Palestinian context, there are many different formulas for land swaps (on both sides of the Green Line)
 - ✓ The final status plan Israel presented at Camp David, as well as the subsequent Clinton principles, included the concept of "land swaps" as a means of reaching a territorial accord between Israel and the Palestinians.
 - ✓ President Bush's letter to prime minister Sharon on April 14, 2005 stated: "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 ... It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these

realities." This rule, which was expressed in the Israeli-Palestinian context, is also applicable to the Golan Heights.

- ✓ Henry Kissinger, the American secretary of state in the 1970s who orchestrated the diplomatic accords following the Yom Kippur War, lent support for the concept of land swaps as a key for resolving demographic problems in a recently published article, in which he called for land and population swaps between Israel and the Palestinians.
- ✓ In plans that have actually been presented, such as the Geneva Initiative and the People's Voice, the mechanism of land swaps (populated territory for unpopulated territory) plays a substantial role.
- ✓ Additional ideas for land swaps (populated land for uninhabited land) in the Sharon and Samaria region ("the Triangle") have been raised by people from academia and from political life, and the subject has even been examined by prime ministers. None of them summarily rejected the idea.
- Quite comprehensive ideas for land swaps on a trilateral basis between Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians have been examined informally by Israeli, American and Egyptian civil servants.

Land swaps outside of the Arab-Israeli context

Outside of the Arab-Israeli context, border changes have been implemented in the past between various states in the Middle East. Thus, colonial borders have been adjusted and changed for various reasons: economic needs, the convenience of residents or as a result of military pressure. This includes: Jordan with Saudi Arabia, as well as between Iraq and Iran (the Algiers Agreement of 1975, whose unilateral cancellation by Saddam Hussein in fact sparked the first Gulf War.) In 2004, Jordan and Syria reached an accord to resolve a dispute that began as a result of the Syrian incursion into Jordan in 1970. In the framework of this agreement, Syria withdrew from an area of about 120 square kilometers that it had captured and where it had even settled some its citizens. While this was not a land swap, it indicates that it is possible to consensually revise border lines.

The disputed line between Israel and Syria is different than the aforementioned examples; it is an international border that was originally a demarcation line between two mandatory powers (Britain and France) and became an armistice line on July 20, 1949 (including demilitarized zones). Subsequently, after the Six Day War, it became a cease-fire line. This line was again revised after the interim agreement with Syria on April 30, 1974, following the Yom Kippur War.

The logical basis for land swaps is that it enables each state to maintain the same scope of land (in square kilometers) but in different parcelization. This possibility derives from the fact that a given parcel of land is valued differently by state A and its neighbor, state B. This different valuation of a specific territory by different states is what enables deals that include reciprocity and a measure of "give and take" in the same coinage.

The natural key for such swap deals is 1:1 (in square kilometers). This formula naturally appears to be the fairest and most equal. But there have been instances – and this also arises in the Israeli-Palestinian context – in which the sides have recognized the need to use an asymmetrical key, acknowledging the different value of each piece of land for each side. In the land swaps between Jordan and Saudi Arabia in 1965, Jordan traded about 10,400 square kilometers of desert land for about 7,800 square kilometers that include some 10 square kilometers of coastline for the Aqaba port – expressing the different weight of the valuation of the swapped territories. Nonetheless, the tendency is to see the 1:1 formula as the most natural and desirable. Otherwise, it is possible to compensate for the quantitative asymmetry with qualitative or external elements (for example, monetary compensation or economic rights). Another way to compensate for asymmetry is to include definitions of territories that go beyond the conventional concepts of sovereignty: joint development zones, free trade regions, joint ecological zones, and so on. In this way, it is possible to expand the sides' maneuvering room for reaching an accord.

The main difficulty in land swaps is in finding contiguous territory along the border of the neighboring state that could be used for the swap. Naturally, such territory should

preferably be uninhabited and it is essential that it be of marginal strategic importance for the side that is handing over the land. One of the important ways to overcome this difficulty is to involve a third party in the accord – that is, to make it a trilateral accord instead of a bilateral one. In such an accord, the inventory of territory available for swapping is not only limited to the land along the border of the state with which the accord is sought, but also the land along the border between the two states, but spreads over three borders (between A and B, between B and C and between C and A). In fact, trilateral land swaps are likely to create new and enhanced possibilities for maneuvering.

This paradigm has been raised in proposals for Egyptian-Palestinian-Israeli land swaps as a solution for the demographic problems entailed in a bilateral Israeli-Palestinian accord. The plans presented here for Syria-Israel-Jordan, Syria-Israel-Lebanon and Syria-Israel-Lebanon-Jordan are based on this paradigm.

Various alternatives for land swaps between Israel and Syria

Syria is consistent in its demand that an agreement with Israel be based on Israel withdrawing to the 1967 borders. This demand has constituted a significant stumbling block that has stymied progress in the various stages of negotiations conducted over the years between Israel and Syria. And this is no coincidence. An Israeli withdrawal to the Israeli-Syrian border of 1967 would be very difficult for Israel because it would harm the interests of Israel and entail a loss of strategically important assets: the control over the ranges and cliffs in the western Golan; the control over Israel's principal sources of water – the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee; the Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights; and the loss of territory that has been under Israeli control for longer than it was under the control of Syria as an independent state.

There are those like Professor Gideon Biger¹ who claim that it is possible to implement limited border revisions on a 1:1 scale based on the 1967 lines, but it is difficult to see how an agreement on this basis would avoid harming the vital interests of Israel. An

¹ Prof. Gideon Biger, Tel Aviv University, in an unpublished document.

accord that truly responds to Israel's strategic needs must be based on Israel maintaining a hold in the Golan and should include the following components (Map 1):

- Continued Israeli control over about 250 square kilometers in the western Golan Heights. The new border line to be demarcated will be referred to here as "the Heights border."
- Land swaps: In exchange for land that would remain in Israel's hands, Syria would receive territorial compensation on the same scale from another country (see the proposals below).
- Leasing agreements: There is a possibility that the part of the Golan Heights east of "the Heights border," which is now under Israeli control and sovereignty, would be leased to Israel for a period of 99 years. If it is not possible to reach such leasing arrangements, then in the framework of a comprehensive accord, Israel would need to evacuate the settlements to the east of "the Heights border."
- The Hermon region: (It was agreed in the past that this region would be internationalized in order to maintain an Israeli presence at the early warning facilities). This region, with the assistance of international investment, would become a joint development and vacation site for Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

"The Heights border" would shape the reality on the ground in the following way:

- It would leave in place about 10,000 (some two-thirds of the 16,000) Jewish residents of the Golan Heights in the following settlements: Katzrin, Mevo Hama, Kfar Haruv, Afik, Bnei Yehuda, Givat Yoav, Ramot, Had-Nes, Kidmat-Tzvi, Kela, She'al, Bruchim, Geshur and Ma'ale Gamla.
- It is liable to require, on the other hand, the evacuation of settlements in the eastern and northern Golan in the event that a leasing accord is not achieved for the territory east of "the Heights border." These settlements include: Avnei Eitan, Eliad, Nov, Hispin, Ramat Hamagshimim, Yonatan, Ani'am, Kanaf, Natur, Keshet, Alonei Habashan, Ortal, Merom Hagolan, Odem, El Rom, Ein Zivan and Neve Ativ.

- It does not annex the Druze villages of the Golan Heights to Israel; the number of residents in these villages (Majdal Shams, Mas'ada, Ein Kiniya, Baq'ata) is about 20,000.
- It would provide Israel with a protection strip over its main water sources.
- It would grant Israel access to the Hermon through its own territory, while the Hermon area would be handled as described above.
- It would resolve the "conflict" with Lebanon over the Shab'a and al-Ghajar areas.
- It would widen Israel's territory in the al-Hama area.

In any case, before Israel enters into negotiations on an accord with Syria, and in order for the negotiations between Israel and Syria to be conducted on a symmetrical basis, Syria would need to fulfill two requisite conditions:

- Stop its support for Hezbollah and the Palestinian terror organizations
- Disengage from Iran

We will discuss here three alternatives for land swaps. (We will not address the internal domestic considerations in adopting each of these):

- Land swaps between Syria, Israel and Lebanon
- Land swaps between Syria, Israel and Jordan
- Multilateral land swaps between Syria, Israel, Lebanon and Jordan

Land swaps between Syria, Israel and Lebanon (Alternative I)

Key points of the alternative:

Israel would retain 250 square kilometers of the Golan up to "the Heights border." Lebanon would transfer territory of an equivalent size (250 square kilometers) to Syria. Israel would transfer to Lebanon an area of about 50 square kilometers along their joint border. The Hermon area would be internationalized and become a joint tourist site. (See Map 2.)

Details

- Israel would retain an area of about 250 square kilometers in the Golan Heights to the west of "the Heights border." This would leave about a fifth of the Golan Heights in Israel's hands and approximately two-thirds of the Golan Heights' Israeli population.
- Lebanon would transfer to Syria an area of similar size to that which remains in Israel's hands in the Golan Heights. This territory could be, for example, the area from the Lebanese al-Baqa ("the valley") region, which is considered a strategic area from Syria's perspective due to its close vicinity to Damascus.
- As part of its compensation, Lebanon would receive from Israel an area of about 50 square kilometers at various points along the joint border (not necessarily geographically contiguous).
- In addition, Lebanon would receive territory in the southwest Hermon, north of the Galilee panhandle, an area now held by Israel. This area includes the al-Ghajar village and Shab'a Farms, which Lebanon claims belong to it. This would also resolve the conflict between Israel and Lebanon regarding these areas.
- The Hermon region With the exception of the southwestern part that would be transferred to Lebanon, the Hermon would become, with the help of international investment, a joint development and vacation area for Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

The problem with Alternative I stems from the lack of symmetry in the compensation the various sides receive. While the room for geographic maneuvering between Lebanon and Syria is relatively large in a circular accord because of the long border between them and the distribution of the Lebanese population, Israel's room for maneuvering in this circular accord along the border with Lebanon is much more limited. The Israeli side of the border between Israel and Lebanon is strewn with Jewish communities that were established after the War of Independence to strengthen Israel's grip on this territory and to prevent a non-Jewish territorial continuum between the Galilee and southern Lebanon. Thus, any transfer of territory from Israel to Lebanon, even 50 square kilometers, would require the painful uprooting of settlements, primarily long-established Jewish

communities, and it would bring Lebanon deeper into Israel and create a continuum of non-Jewish communities between Lebanon and the Israeli Galilee. It would endanger Israel's hold on geo-strategic assets that have been in its hands since the establishment of the state – mountain ranges (like the Meron hills) and riverbeds – that are linked to Israel's various interests.

A discussion of the option of land swaps between Israel, Syria and Lebanon demands an examination of the issue of "the seven villages" – Tarbiha, Hounine, Nebi-Yush'a, Saliha, Kades, al-Malikiya and Ibl al-Kamah (see Map 5). These Shiite villages were included in the jurisdiction of the British Mandate for Palestine following a French-British decision in 1924. During the War of Independence in 1948, the residents of these villages fled to Lebanon; the villages themselves were later subsumed within the State of Israel, inside the armistice line the two sides agreed to under the auspices of the United Nations. Israeli communities were built in this area, including Malkhiya, Yiron and Margaliyot. Most of the Shiites who lived in these villages until 1948, and their descendants, became part of the Palestinian community in Lebanon received Lebanese citizenship in 1994.² At least since 1960, the residents of the villages have claimed that Israel conquered their villages from Lebanon in 1948. Thus, in December 1999, the prime minister at the time, Salim al-Hoss, demanded the return of the villages.³ Then, on the eve of the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah's leaders declared that they would not recognize the withdrawal as complete if it did not include these seven villages. Hezbollah's demand for the return of the villages has since remained vague and the government of Lebanon quickly retreated from the official demand presented by al-Hoss.

If a discussion begins on land swaps between Israel, Syria and Lebanon, Hezbollah is liable to again raise the issue of the seven villages or pressure the government of Lebanon to do so. An Israeli consent to engage in discussion of this subject is liable to lead to

² "Old Games, New Rules: Conflict on the Israel-Lebanon Border," ICG Middle East Report No. 7, 18 Nov. 2002 – http://www.meib.org/articles/0102_11.htm;

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=595114>

³ ibid

negotiations on the demarcation of the border from an inferior starting point for Israel, and could "open" for discussion Arab demands for a return to the partition borders.

On the other hand, the transfer of 50 square kilometers from Israel to Lebanon, while avoiding the uprooting of long-established communities, would require demarcating a more winding border (composed of "fingers") that would make the border more difficult to defend due to its length and the inferior topographical conditions in parts of the border.

For all of these reasons, this alternative appears to be less practicable than the others.

The idea of trilateral land swaps between Israel, Syria and Lebanon was recently raised in an article by Professor Micha Michaeli⁴, who referred to swaps that are limited in scope and an Israeli evacuation of almost the entire territory of the Golan Heights. According to Prof. Michaeli's idea, Israel would retain a quite narrow land strip to the east of the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River, starting from the south of the lake and ending near the Bnot Yaakov bridge. (The total area of this strip is about 40-50 square kilometers.) Lebanon would transfer to Syria territory of an identical size and would receive from Israel an area of identical size in the central part of the northern Galilee. The Hermon area would receive an international status. In other words, this option suffers from all of the shortcomings noted above in regard to the transfer of Israeli territory to Lebanon and would again leave the communities of the Galilee panhandle (and northern Israel in general) in a strategically inferior position vis-à-vis the Syrian control of the Golan. Moreover, it would require the evacuation of almost all of the settlements in the Golan Heights.

⁴ A professor emeritus of economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The name of the article he published on this subject is: "Land Swaps with Syria," *Haaretz* [Hebrew edition], November 23, 2006, Part B, page 2.

Trilateral land swaps between Israel, Syria and Jordan (Alternative II)

Key points of the alternative:

Israel would hold the territory west of "the Heights border" (250 square kilometers). Syria would receive land of an identical size from Jordan (250 square kilometers). Israel would transfer to Jordan an area of identical size. The Hermon area would receive an international status and Israel would maintain early warning stations. (See Map 3.)

Details

- Israel would retain about a fifth of the Golan Heights in the territory west of "the Heights border;" about two-thirds of the Israeli population in the Golan lives within this territory.
- Jordan would transfer 250 square kilometers of territory to Syria along the border between the two states. This territory could include areas Syria conquered during its incursion in September 1970, settled with its citizens and only agreed to return to Jordan under an agreement between the two states in late 2004.
- Israel would transfer 250 square kilometers of territory to Jordan in the Arava and/or south of the Dead Sea (for example, in the uninhabited area between Neot Hakikar and Hatzeba.) Another possibility would be to compensate Jordan with "land value" in the form of exclusive transit rights or port rights of substantial economic value. In this way, Jordan would swap territory in the northeastern part of the kingdom – territory of marginal value – for land of greater value, while at the same time strengthening its international standing as a country that has contributed to achieving peace between Israel and Syria. Jordan would also benefit from participating in economic ventures deriving from the accord.
- The Hermon region: It would become, with the help of international investment, a joint development and vacation area for Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

Multilateral land swaps between Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan (Alternative III)

Key points of the alternative:

In light of the difficulty entailed in land swaps between Israel, Syrian and Lebanon, it is worthwhile examining the possibility of expanding the circle of states involved in the accord in order to increase the room for maneuvering. Israel would hold the territory west of "the Heights border" (250 square kilometers). Jordan would compensate Syria with half of the amount of land that remains in Israel's hands. Lebanon would compensate Syria for the other half. Israel would compensate Lebanon and Jordan along its joint borders with them with territory of approximately the same size as that which Lebanon and Jordan transfer to Syria. The Hermon area would become a joint vacation site (See Map 4.)

Details

- Israel would retain the territory west of "the Heights border" of 250 square kilometers.
- Lebanon would transfer Syria territory that is similar in size to about half of the land that Israel retains in the Golan Heights. The land that Lebanon transfers to Syria would be in the Lebanese al-Baqa region, which is strategically important for Syria.
- Israel would compensate Lebanon for the territory the latter transfers to Syria with lands along Israel's border with Lebanon in a way that would minimize the need to evacuate Jewish communities and the loss of territory of geo-strategic value. In addition, Lebanon would receive land in the southwestern Hermon (north of the Galilee panhandle), which is today in Israel's hands. This area includes the al-Ghajar village and Sheb'a Farms, which Lebanon claims belong to it.
- Jordan would compensate Syria for half of the Israeli territory in the Golan Heights with land of a similar scope anywhere along the long joint border or in the areas that Syria conquered during its incursion in September 1970, settled

with its citizens and only agreed to return to Jordan under an agreement between the two states in late 2004.

- Israel would compensate Jordan for the territory it transfers to Syria with territory in the Arava and/or south of the Dead Sea on a 1:1 basis. Another possibility would be to compensate Jordan with "land value" in the form of exclusive transit rights or port rights in Israeli territory.
- The Hermon region: With the exception of its southwestern section that would be transferred to Lebanon, the Hermon would become, with the help of international investment, a joint development and vacation area for Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

The advantage of this alternative is that the multiplicity of players expands the maneuvering room for land swaps and the scope of benefits the sides could receive from the accord in return for the concessions they make.

Summary

Syria's calls in recent months to renew negotiations on an accord with Israel oblige Israel to reassess its interests on the Golan Heights and propose creative ideas for neutralizing the stumbling blocks that have stymied progress in the previous rounds of talks between Israel and Syria. One of the ideas raised in this context is the idea of land swaps, a notion that has already been raised in the past as an operative proposal in the Israeli-Palestinian context. This idea is aimed at expanding Israel's maneuvering room and enabling it to continue to hold areas that are important for its security.

An examination of Israel's interests in the Golan Heights reinforces the essentiality – from both the strategic-security and settlement perspectives – of holding at least a fifth of the Heights, also in order to ensure control of Israel's principal water sources. An effort should be made, therefore, to achieve an accord that includes the following components:

- Israel's continued hold on a territory of about 250 square kilometers in the western Golan Heights, up until "the Heights border."

- Land swaps based on providing Syria with territorial compensation of 250 square meters from another state.
- Leasing agreements that would anchor an Israeli presence in the Golan Heights to the east of "the Heights border" for a period of 99 years.
- The Hermon region: (It was agreed in the past that this region would be internationalized in order to maintain an Israeli presence at the early warning facilities). The Hermon would become, with the help of international investment, a joint development and vacation area for Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

One of the options raised in the past in this context would entail swapping territory between Israel, Syria and Jordan: Jordan would compensate Syria for the territory that Israel keeps for itself and in return would receive Israeli territory of similar size at the south of the Dead Sea and/or in the Arava. These swaps would therefore preserve a principle of 1:1.

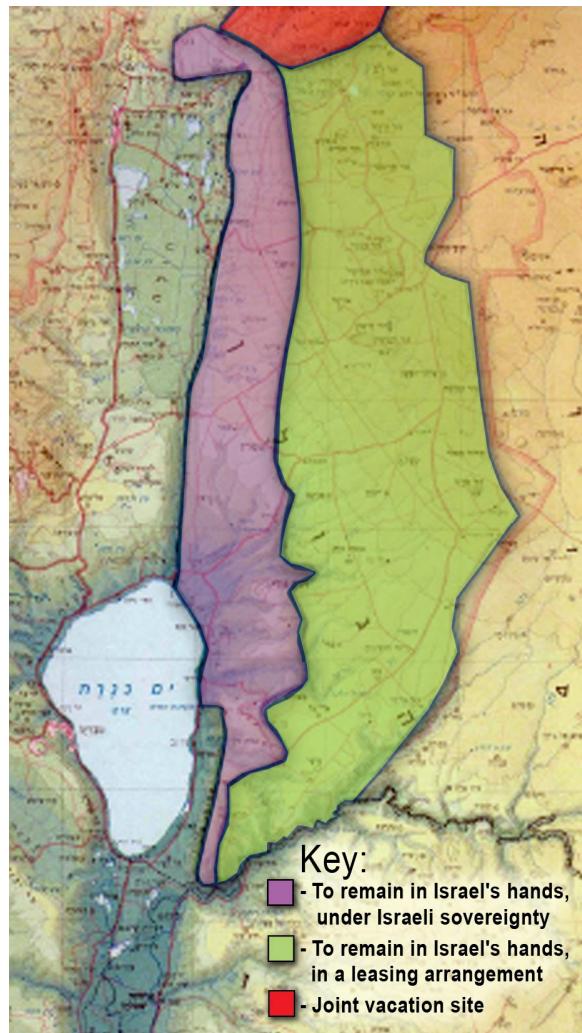
Another, relatively recent option, would entail land swaps between Israel, Syria and Lebanon: Israel would retain the territory in the Golan Heights west of "the Heights border;" Syria would be compensated for this with Lebanese territory of a similar size; and Lebanon would receive land from Israel at various points along their common border (not necessarily territorially contiguous). Lebanon would also receive territory in the southwest of the Hermon, north of the Galilee panhandle, including the village of al-Ghajar village and Sheb'a Farms. The main difficulty in this option is the heavy price it would extract from Israel in territory along the Lebanese border from the perspective of settlement, topography and strategy. This price could overshadow the benefit of retaining the territory in the Golan Heights.

For this reason, it is worth examining the possibility of multilateral land swaps between Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. This type of expanded, circular accord could minimize the "damages" for each of the countries involved. As in the other options, the Hermon region, with the help of international investment, would become a joint development and vacation area for Israel, Syria and Lebanon, under international sovereignty.

It would be worthwhile to conduct a meticulous study of the benefits and disadvantages of the three options from an Israeli perspective so that they could be included in the framework of any future negotiation, if indeed it turns out that there is sincere Syrian interest and readiness to reach a peace agreement with Israel.

It must be emphasized that any steps to advance an accord with Syria must be coordinated with the U.S., and that the requisite conditions for entering into negotiations between Israel and Syria must include a halt to Syria's support for Hezbollah and the terror organizations, and Syrian disengagement from Iran.

Proposal for "the Golan Heights border" route



Map 1

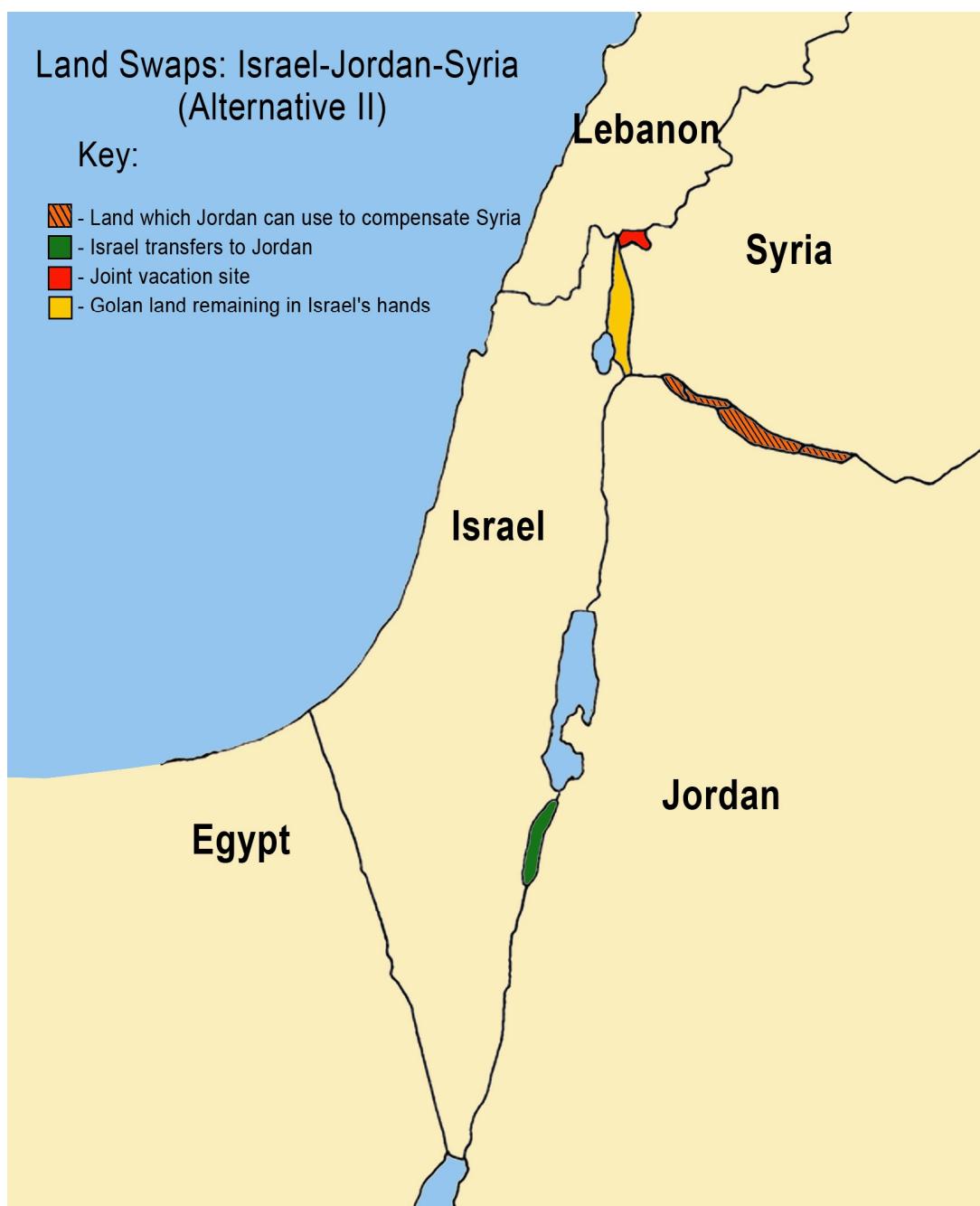
Land swaps: Israel-Lebanon-Syria (Alternative I)

Key:

- - Int'l/joint territory
- - Golan land remaining in Israel's hands
- - Israel transfers to Lebanon
- - Land which Lebanon can use to compensate Syria



Map 2



Map 3

Land swaps: Israel- -Syria-Lebanon-Jordan (Alternative III)

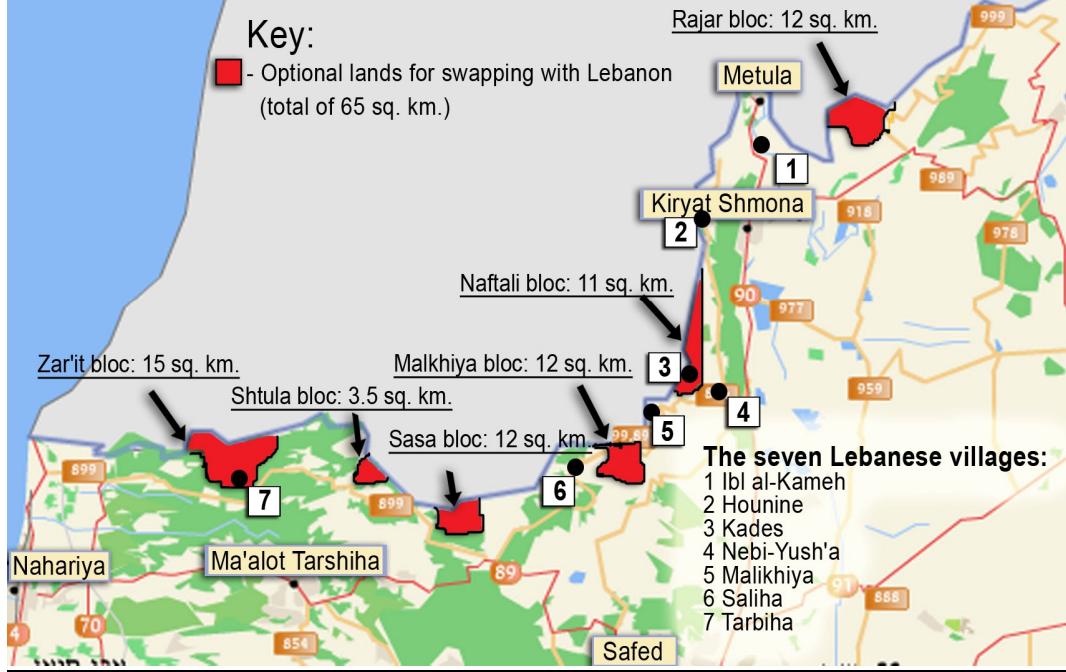
Key:

- - Land which Jordan can use to compensate Syria
- - Israel transfers to Jordan
- - Joint vacation site
- - Golan land remaining in Israel's hands
- - Israel transfers to Lebanon
- - Land which Lebanon can use to compensate Syria



Map 4

Optional lands for swapping with Lebanon



Map 5