



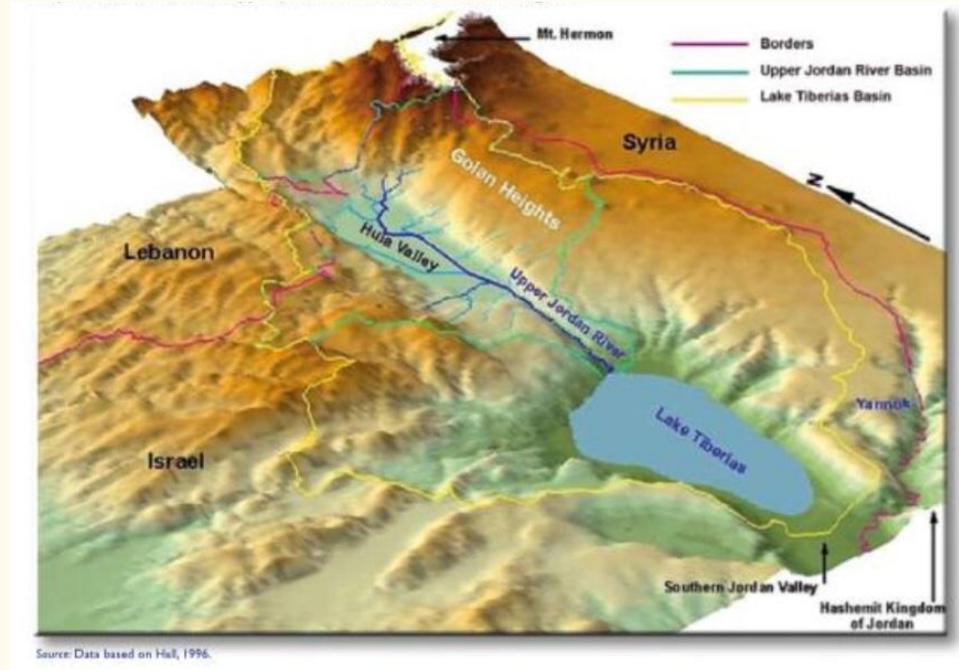
The Golan Heights Conflict



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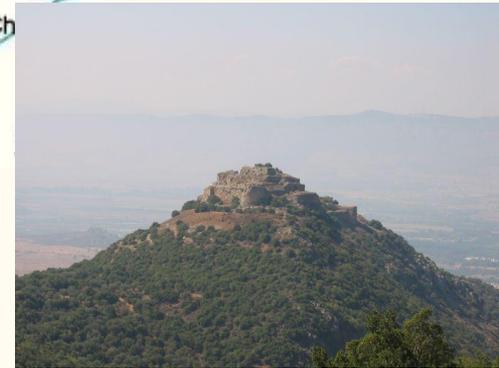
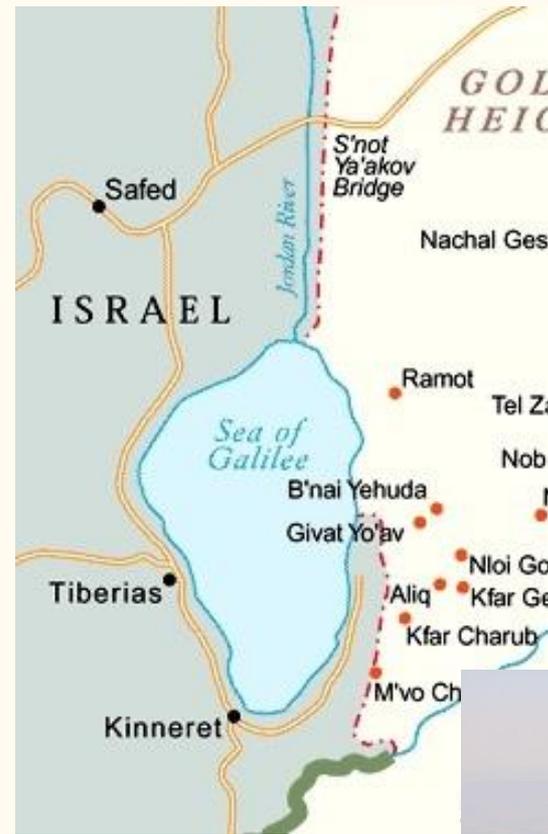
The Golan Heights as a geographical region

- Is a plateau bordered by the **Yarmouk river** in the south, the **Sea of Galilee** and **Hula Valley** in the west, the **Mount Hermon** in the north.
- **Total Area - 1,800 km²**
- **Area occupied by Israel - about 1,200 km²**
- Most of it is at an altitude of more than 1000 m above sea level.



Significant objects (places)

- **The Sea of Galilee** - lake in Israel. It is about 21 km long and 13 km wide, the area is 165km².
 - Also known as The Sea of Galilee, Kinneret, Lake of Gennesaret, or Lake of Tiberias.
 - Today, it is the main source of water for the all-Israel water supply.
- **Mt. Hermon** - the highest elevation point in Israel.
 - Radars
 - Mentioned in the Old Testament



The Golan Heights as a geopolitical region

Situated between Jordan, south Lebanon, south Syria, and northern Israel.

Today Israel possesses $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Golan

Area captured from Syria and occupied by Israel during the Six-Day war, territory which Israel annexed in 1981. This region includes the western two-thirds of the geographical Golan Heights, as well as the Israeli-occupied part of Mount Hermon.

The Golan is a strategically important geopolitical region



Economic significance: water supply

The Golan Heights are rich in water sources (which is rare in the Middle East) which flow into the Sea of Galilee. Up to a third of the water used in Israel comes from the Golan Heights.

More than 50% of Israel's fresh water is produced in this region.

According to experts, in the case of the transition of the Golan Heights to Syrian control, Israel will lose 70% of the watershed of the Kinneret, which will result in water famine and ecological catastrophe.(1)



Economic significance: agriculture and viticulture

8,100 hectares of land are under cultivation, producing a wide variety of crops, the Golan produces from 30 to 50% of certain types of fruits and vegetables;

Golan Heights is also a suitable place for viticulture (cultivation of grapes). About a quarter of all wines, including 40% of those for export, are produced here(3);

The loss of these territories poses a significant threat to the agriculture of Israel, because the Golan Heights were used by the Syrians to fire at Israeli farmland.



Oil



The geologist of Israeli subsidiary Genie Energy, Afek Oil & Gas, said in an interview (2013) with the Israeli channel Channel 2 that his company discovered large oil deposits in the Golan Heights.(2)

In April 2013, the State of Israel granted a license to search for oil in the southern Golan Heights of the company "Afek", a subsidiary of Genie Energy Ltd.

The production potential is billions of barrels of oil, but at the moment the specialists of the company still need to find out how high the recoverability of oil is. This greatly exacerbates the contradictions between Israel and Syria.

Economic significance: other

The Golan Heights are also one of the most **tourist**-visited places in Israel. The Golan continues to be a place of stable influx of tourists from Israel and abroad (about 2.1 million visits per year).

Another aspect of the importance of this territory for Israel is that leaving the Golan Heights is associated with significant budgetary costs for the resettlement of local residents and the need to increase the military contingent on the border with Syria.



The Golan plays a significant role in the Israeli economy. The loss of this territory will surely undermine the financial and economic well-being of Israel.

Historical Background

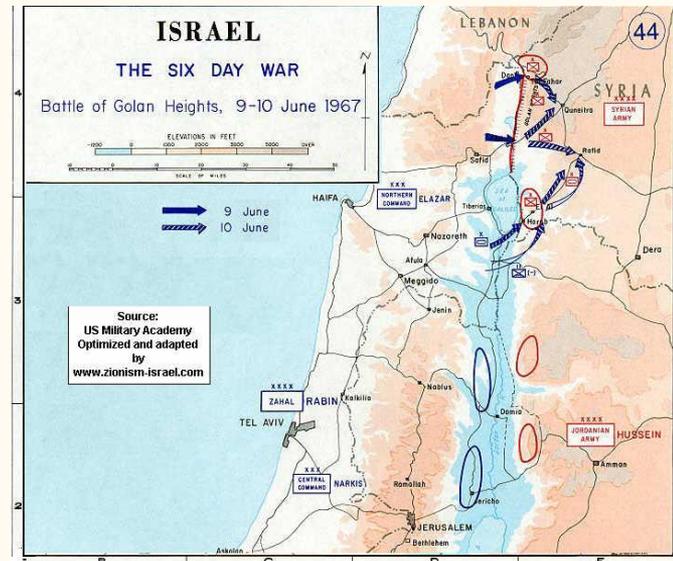
- The region became a part of a newly independent Syrian Republic in 1946 after the French mandate ended
- In 1948, Syria and other Arab countries invaded the newly established state of Israel and were defeated. An armistice was signed in 1949, but border conflicts continued.
 - War over water 1964-67
 - Syrians used the Golan Heights to constantly bombard peaceful Israeli border communities with artillery strikes [4].
 - Israel continued to build settlements in the DMZ thus provoking most of the Syrian attacks [5].



- Small conflicts eventually resulted in a full scale war in 1967

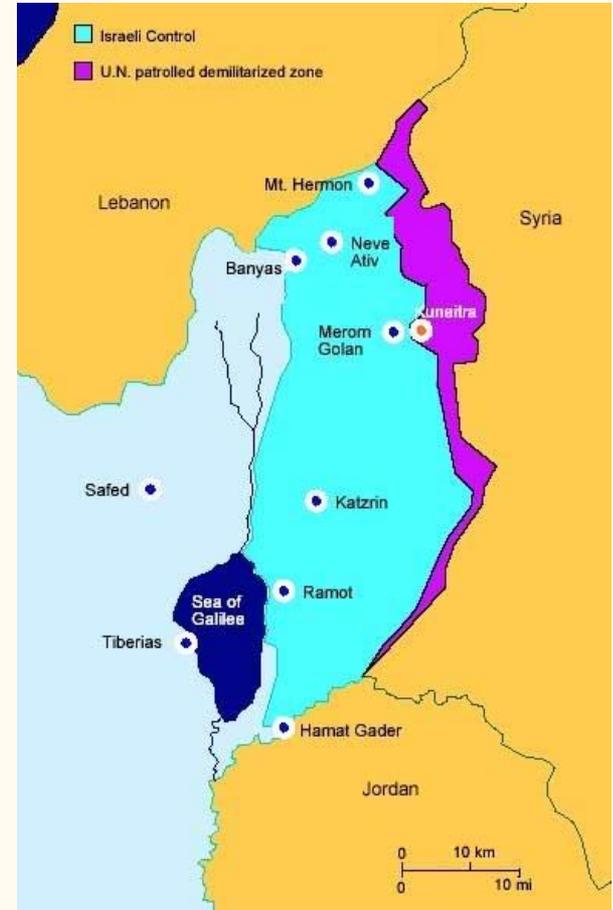
1960-70's

- In **1967** Israel launched a preventive strike on Syria, **capturing** most of the Golan Heights including Mt. Hermon.
 - 115 Israeli and 2,500+ Syrian soldiers died in this battle [6]
- Over 100,000 local residents (Syrians) fled as a result of war. Syria claims a large portion of them was expelled by the Israeli forces.
- Israel was willing to return the whole territory in exchange for peace, but the Arab League refused.
- In 1973 Syria attempted to recapture the Golan, but failed.



After the War

- *Purple line* - the ceasefire border since 1974
 - UNDOF buffer
- Military occupation until full annexation in 1981 by Israel
- Israel kept building settlements in the area (violating UN resolution) - today there are 20,000+ Jewish settlers there

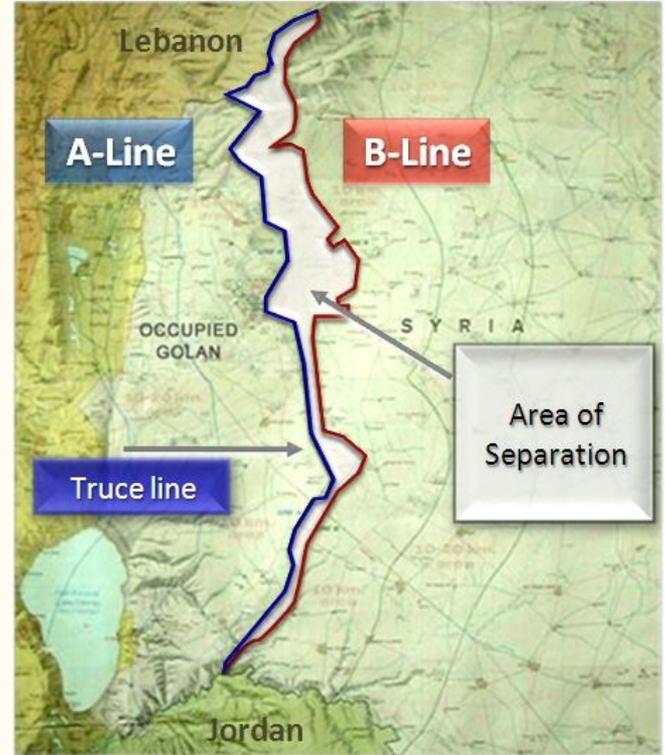


UN

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was established in 1974 in order to monitor the implementation of Agreement of Disengagement.

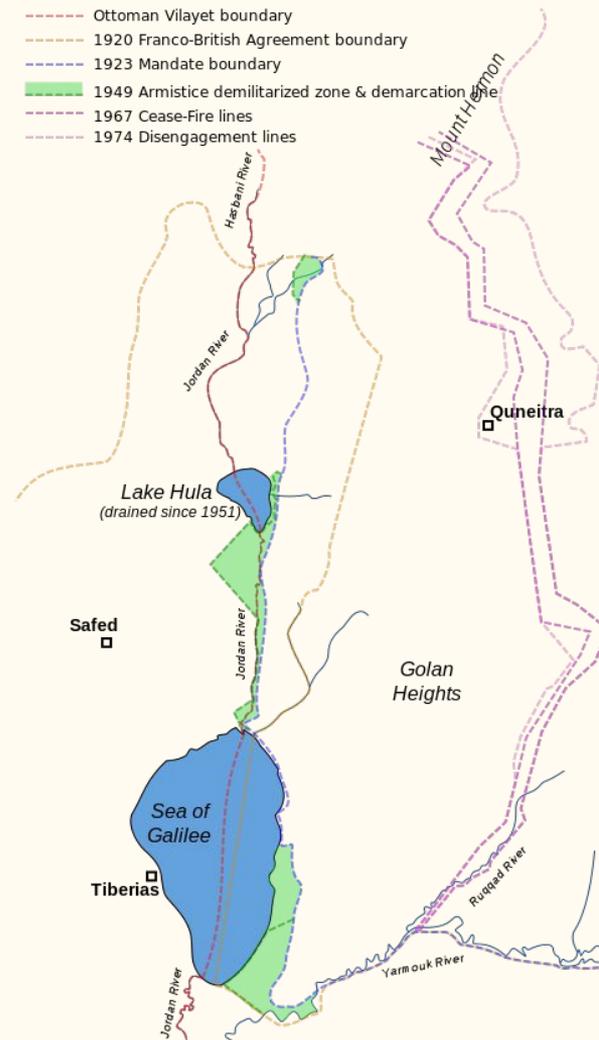
Agreement of Disengagement was signed on 31 May, 1974 in Geneva, Switzerland. It requires Israel and Syria to end ceasefire and restrain from any military actions [8]

UN does not recognize the Israeli annexation of the Golan



Attempts to resolve the crisis diplomatically

- Israel and Syria finally began to negotiate in 1999. The peace talks were mediated by the USA.
 - Syria demanded a withdrawal to pre-67 borders when she still controlled some of the Sea of Galilee shore. Water is very important to Syria
 - Israel agreed to return the whole Golan except for the strip of the Sea of Galilee shore. It is crucial for Israel to control 100% of the lake. Israel also demanded Syria to cut ties with Iran.
- The talks failed and never fully reopened



Thank you

References

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- (5) Richman, Sheldon L. "The Golan Heights: A History of Israeli Aggression." *Washington Report*, 12 Nov. 1991
- (6) Robert Slater. *Warrior Statesman: The Life of Moshe Dayan*, Robson Books, London (1992), pg. 277.
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