

SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT

Analysis of Possible Disengagement Lines

The purposes of this paper are (1) to describe the main features of the various ceasefire lines and proposed disengagement lines, (2) to discuss special issues in the Mount Hermon, Quneitra, and southern areas, and (3) to lay out a line which might emerge from the Syrian-Israeli negotiation.

The six lines discussed below represent the range of the disengagement lines that have been proposed so far:

- A. The western of the two Syrian lines given to Secretary Kissinger in Damascus on January 20.
- B. The Israeli disengagement line on the Syrian map of April 13. [This is compared below with the eastern of the two lines given to Secretary Kissinger in Damascus on January 20.]
- C. The Syrian disengagement line on the Syrian map of April 13.
- D. The 1967 ceasefire line (also referred to as the October 6 line).
- E. The Israeli disengagement line in the Israeli proposal of March 29.
- F. The lines of present deployment, which in some respects differ from the October 1973 ceasefire lines.

Following this analysis is a discussion of an Israeli disengagement line behind the October 6 line returning Quneitra to Syrian control. This, of course, is the line we would like to see emerge from the negotiation.

Lines A-F are depicted in relation to the Israeli settlements on the map on the last page of this paper. Larger maps are available with overlays showing how these lines relate to roads and terrain features. Also attached to this paper are an aerial photo of Quneitra to show how a line might be drawn between the town and the Israeli settlement just west and a topographical profile of the Heights. Tab C following this paper describes the Israeli settlements. Tab D summarizes factors to be kept in mind on the Syrian civilian population and rebuilding of Quneitra.

XGDS - 3

DECLAS - Date Impossible to Determine.

BYAUTH - Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Analysis of Disengagement Lines Proposed So Far

Each of the lines below is discussed in terms of its characteristics as a possible easternmost line of Israeli control in a disengagement agreement. It is assumed in this paper that the forward line of Syrian control in a disengagement agreement would be established largely by deciding on the width of a suitable UN zone between the Israeli and Syrian lines. Areas of limited armament could be established behind each side's forward line, although the areas involved are smaller than in the Sinai and it may not be possible to separate the forces to a point where they are entirely out of artillery range of each other. The six lines below are depicted on the map at the end of this paper.

Line A: The western of the two Syrian lines given to Secretary Kissinger in Damascus on January 20 runs for the most part 2-4 miles east of the pre-1967 Israeli-Syrian line. The main features of this line are:

- Israel would lose twelve settlements. Only 9 of 21 Israeli settlements are west of this line. Eight of those are concentrated in the south, east of Lake Tiberias.
- It would leave no major north-south road on the Israeli side of the line.
- It would leave east of the line the principal high points in the Mount Hermon area that are of interest to Israel.
- It would leave well east of the line the ridgeline of higher ground which runs north-south just to the west of the 1967 ceasefire line. [See topographical profile attached.]
- This line would provide a logical definition of an area at the top of the Golan escarpment which, if denied to the Syrians, would prevent line-of-sight artillery and small arms fire into Israeli settlements in the valley. However, this would require such an Israeli pullback that it seems more suited to consideration in a final settlement than as a first step in disengagement.

Line B: The Israeli disengagement line in the Syrian proposal of April 13 runs mostly 4-8 miles east of the pre-1967 Syrian-Israeli line. The main features of this line are:

--This line is 0-2 miles west of the eastern of the two lines on the Syrian map of January 20 except at the southern end where it swings 5 miles to the west. The January line was based almost solely on terrain features and was very precisely drawn. The April line is slightly more generalized; General Shihabi said the line was moved to encompass several settlements.

--There are no Israeli settlements between Lines A and B, so Israel would still lose 12 settlements.

--This line gives the Syrians the highest ground on Golan.

--It removes Israel from the slopes of Mount Hermon.

--It would not give Israel any north-south road in the southern half of the Heights.

--This line gives Syria the best agricultural land, consisting of about 70% of the northern orchard lands and over 70% of the land suitable for grain farming. Israel would get the grazing land.

--It would return to Syria the sites of the largest and most prosperous of the pre-1967 Syrian settlements.

--It would give Israel enough land to eliminate the threat of observed artillery and straight-line small arms fire.

Line C: The Syrian disengagement line in the Syrian proposal of April 13 is for the most part 2-4 miles west of the post-1967 ceasefire line. Its main features are:

--Israel would lose 7 of its 21 settlements.

--This line is 3 miles west of Quneitra and would put the high ground overlooking the city and the airfield there under Syrian control.

--It would put practically all of Mount Hermon, including its highest peaks, under Syrian control. The Israeli early warning facility there would be eliminated.

--It still places most of the strategic high ground under Syrian military control as well as the primary north-south road running the full length of the Golan.

Line D: The 1967 ceasefire line runs 8-12 miles east of the pre-1967 Syrian-Israeli line in the north and 14-16 miles east in the widest point in the central area. It has the following advantages for Israel:

--It includes commanding positions on the Mount Hermon slopes.

--It gives Israel control of the main north-south road.

--It is well east of the main ridge line on the Heights, giving Israel positions which put significant high ground behind Israeli forces on the ceasefire line.

--Israel controls Quneitra, which was not only the main population center before 1967, but the point where the primary north-south and east-west roads meet.

Line E: The Israeli disengagement line in the Israeli proposal of March 29 is the same as the 1967 ceasefire line south of Quneitra but runs 2-5 miles to the east north of Quneitra.

--In addition to the advantages of the 1967 ceasefire line, this line gives Israel important high ground northeast of Quneitra toward Damascus.

Line F: The present battle lines are essentially the same as the ceasefire lines of October 24 with the possible exception of the Mount Hermon area. There has, however, been some minor shifting of positions along the line by both sides after the ceasefire went into effect, normally shifts of a few meters to attain more favorable defensive positions.

In the southern third of the front, Israeli forces are for the most part slightly (a mile or less) behind the 1967 ceasefire line. In the northern two-thirds, Israel now occupies key positions on Mount Hermon, and there is a significant bulge [the Sasa salient] in the line where Israeli forces drove toward Damascus. This salient puts Israeli forces barely within artillery range of the Damascus outskirts.

The Target: A Line Behind October 6

This line is not depicted on the attached map. It is the line that we would like to see emerge from the negotiation. It could combine many variations. The following (a) describes two possible approaches to the general line and then (b) discusses three special problems: Quneitra, Mount Hermon, the southern area around Jordan's Mukheiba Dam.

Two Approaches to the Line

To begin with, it is possible to think in terms of a minor westward adjustment of the October 6 line and then in terms of a slightly greater adjustment. When those general features have been considered, further adjustments can be made in connection with the special problems of Quneitra, Mount Hermon, and the Mukheiba Dam area. Two possible western adjustments are:

1. For a minor adjustment in the 1967 ceasefire line, it would be possible to move the 1967 line westward 1-3 miles. The main features of this line are:

--This would still leave Israel for the most part in control of the primary north-south road and would have Israel give up only a little of the cushion between the road and the disengagement line.

--It would leave the ridge line under Israeli control.

--It would have the symbolic advantage for Syria of removing from Israeli control some territory conquered in 1967.

--It would have the disadvantage for Syria of leaving Quneitra in Israeli hands. Removal of this city from Israeli control would be of major importance to Asad in showing that he got something important from disengagement.

--This line would still leave a little room behind it for a second disengagement (second approach below) before touching any Israeli settlement.

2. A greater adjustment in the 1967 ceasefire line would be a line mostly 2-4 miles west of the 1967 ceasefire line. It would lie as far to the west of the 1967 ceasefire line as possible while still staying to the east of all Israeli settlements. Its main features would be:

--This line is mostly 2-4 miles east of the Syrian proposal of April 13 (Line B). There are twelve Israeli settlements between Line B and this line.

--Israel would lose the main north-south road, at least in the north. The solution in meeting Israel's need for north-south road communication would be for Israel to rely on an existing network

of secondary, all weather roads 2-4 miles west of this line in the northern two-thirds of the Golan. This would put five settlements east of the north-south road network but behind the disengagement line. In the southern third of the Golan, Israel would either retain the primary road or have to upgrade existing tracks.

--Quneitra would be freed from the Israeli zone and placed in a UN Zone.

--The ridge of the highest hills might in a few cases be moved from Israeli control into the UN zone.

--Eight Israeli settlements would be almost right on the new line, and two more would be close behind. Any second step of disengagement would immediately force the issue of their fate.

Either of these approaches could be applied in different areas. For instance, there could be a greater adjustment near Quneitra and a smaller one near Mount Hermon.

### Quneitra

Quneitra is important largely for its symbolic value. Most of its buildings are destroyed or heavily damaged, and a repopulated Quneitra would have little economic base unless normal farming and civilian activity were restored across the Golan Heights--the area of the former Quneitra Province which was administered from Quneitra and for which Quneitra was the market center.

The principal technical problem as far as disengagement is concerned is that the Israelis have built two settlements within three miles west of Quneitra and are farming right up to the outskirts of the city. The aerial photograph attached shows this situation very clearly. Any disengagement line would have to cut through at least some of the Israeli fields.

### The Mount Hermon Area

To understand the possibilities at the northern end of the disengagement line, it is necessary to understand the Syrian view of where Israeli forces were on three separate dates:

--On October 6 (1967 ceasefire line) Israel maintained one post on the lower slopes on the western side of Mount Hermon--an early warning installation. The Syrians controlled much of the high ground, including the crest. The Syrians overran that post on October 6, thus breaching the 1967 ceasefire line. Thus by withdrawing to the October 6 (1967 ceasefire) line Israel would get back its one position on the Mount Hermon slopes behind the 1967 ceasefire line--the radar installation--but give up the positions on Mount Hermon it took between October 22 and 24.

--The Syrians say that Israeli withdrawal to the October 22 line would require Israel to vacate all military posts on the slopes of Mount Hermon while remaining in the Sasa salient on the road to Damascus. The reason is that the Syrians claim that the Israelis did not recapture the radar station there until after October 22. The Israelis, however, claim they retook the radar post before October 22. The UN believes the Israelis at least recaptured it by October 21. As we understand it, the Israelis launched an attack on the night of October 21-22 and probably cleared the lower slopes by the night of October 22-23. The Israeli interpretation of the October 22 line is that it would require them to give up only their new position on the heights of Mount Hermon.

--The October 24 line results from the fact that on October 23, there was intense fighting and air activity on the slopes of Mount Hermon. By October 24 the Israelis had taken the peak of Mount Hermon.

What happened after October 24 explains the recent fighting. According to the Israeli Director of Military Intelligence, the Israelis had evacuated their position at the summit during the winter when resupply was virtually impossible, while maintaining an outpost in the saddle about 4 miles southwest of the summit. The Israelis reportedly reoccupied the crest on April 6, although the Director of Intelligence says they returned on April 13 after the Syrians occupied the summit outpost. On April 6, the Israelis used aircraft for the first time since the October war to dislodge a 40-man Syrian force attempting to occupy the crest. The Syrians apparently succeeded in displacing the Israelis temporarily from the crest on April 13 and held the peak for most of the night. By morning, the Israelis were back atop the mountain.

As fighting continues with each side seeking to establish position, both Israel and Syria have been building roads to the top of the mountain--the Israeli road has reportedly been completed. Syrian and Israeli armor also is in the area of the ridgeline, some of which is reportedly on Lebanese territory.

The strategic importance of the military posts on the slopes of Mount Hermon is twofold: (1) They provide good artillery coverage of the northern part of the Golan Heights and of movement of Syrian regulars or fedayeen into the area of southern Lebanon where the Fatah has operated in the past. (2) They provide high ground for radar coverage.

In a disengagement agreement, the Israelis have proposed putting the heights of Mount Hermon in the UN Zone. This seems the most logical solution.

#### Mukheiba Dam

One other factor is worth noting because of its potential importance for a possible Jordan-Israel disengagement. Before 1967, Jordan had begun preparing the site for construction of the Mukheiba Dam which was to have increased the irrigation possibilities in the Jordan Valley. The dam site is on the Yarmuk River 8 miles west of the point where the southern end of the 1967 ceasefire line met the river. Work was suspended after Israel in 1967 took over the Syrian side of the Yarmuk at the dam site. If Arab control could be restored on the Syrian side of the river in the course of Syrian-Israeli disengagement, Jordanian work on the dam might resume in connection with the rehabilitation of the Jordan Valley.

One of two steps would have to be taken to permit Jordan to resume construction:

--Israel and Syria would have to agree. This is the less preferable of the two possibilities because one end of the construction site would be in Israeli-administered territory.

--In a Syria-Israel disengagement agreement, the southern end of the Israeli disengagement line could be turned west enough to put the dam site in the UN zone under Syrian administration.

There would also have to be some agreement between Israel and Jordan on the division of the Yarmuk Waters. This may be a manageable problem because the power facility at the dam would require that some water be released continuously and it then flows into Israel before entering the Jordan River.

#### Attachments:

- Map showing disengagement lines
- Topographical profile of Golan Heights
- Aerial photo of Quneitra area

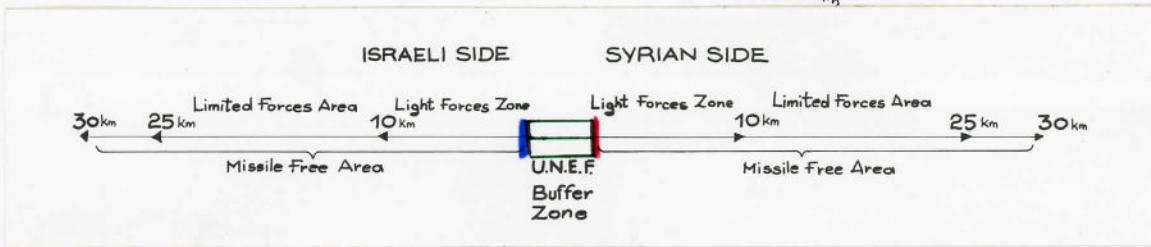
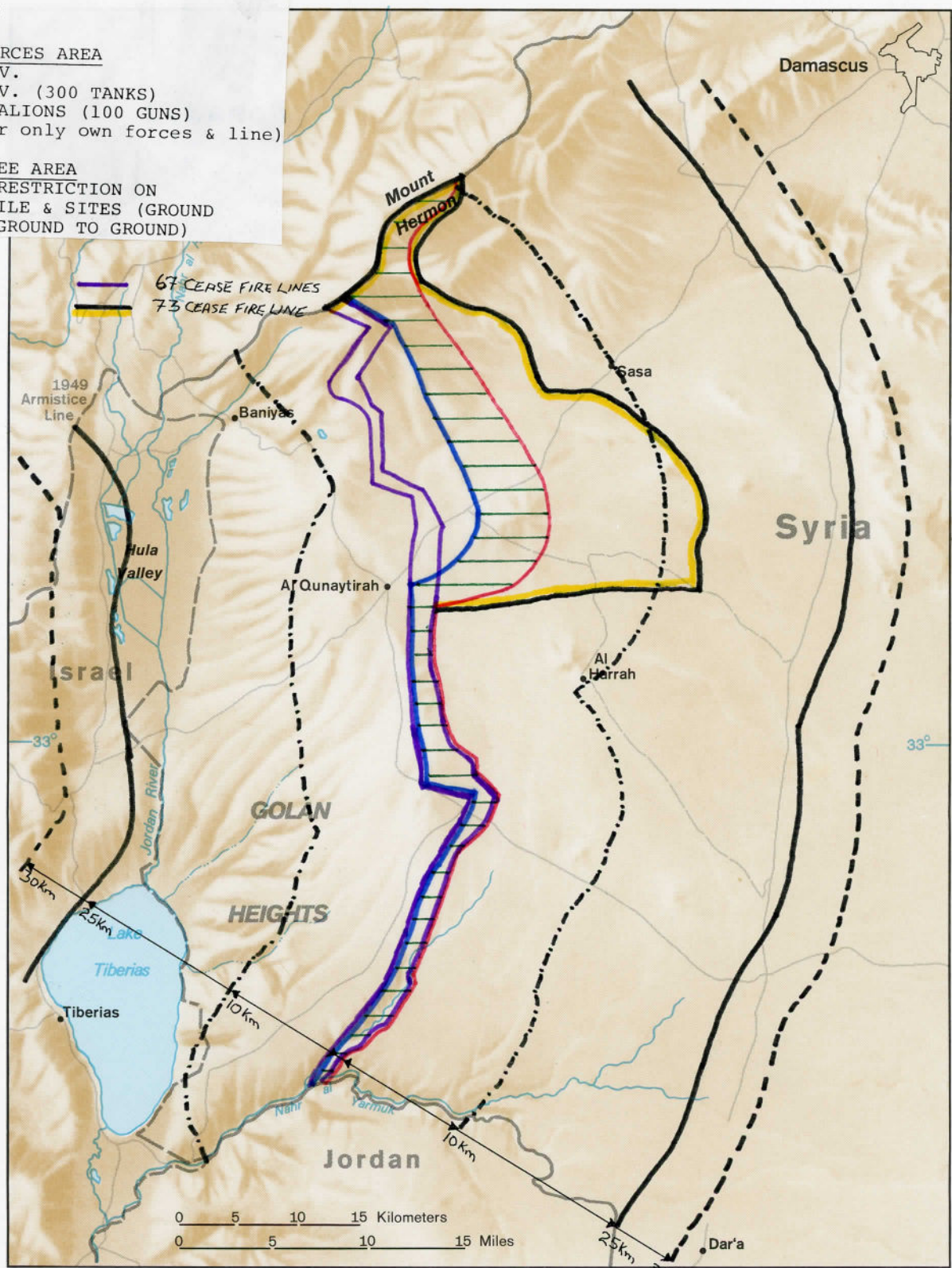
Drafted: NSC - Harold H. Saunders

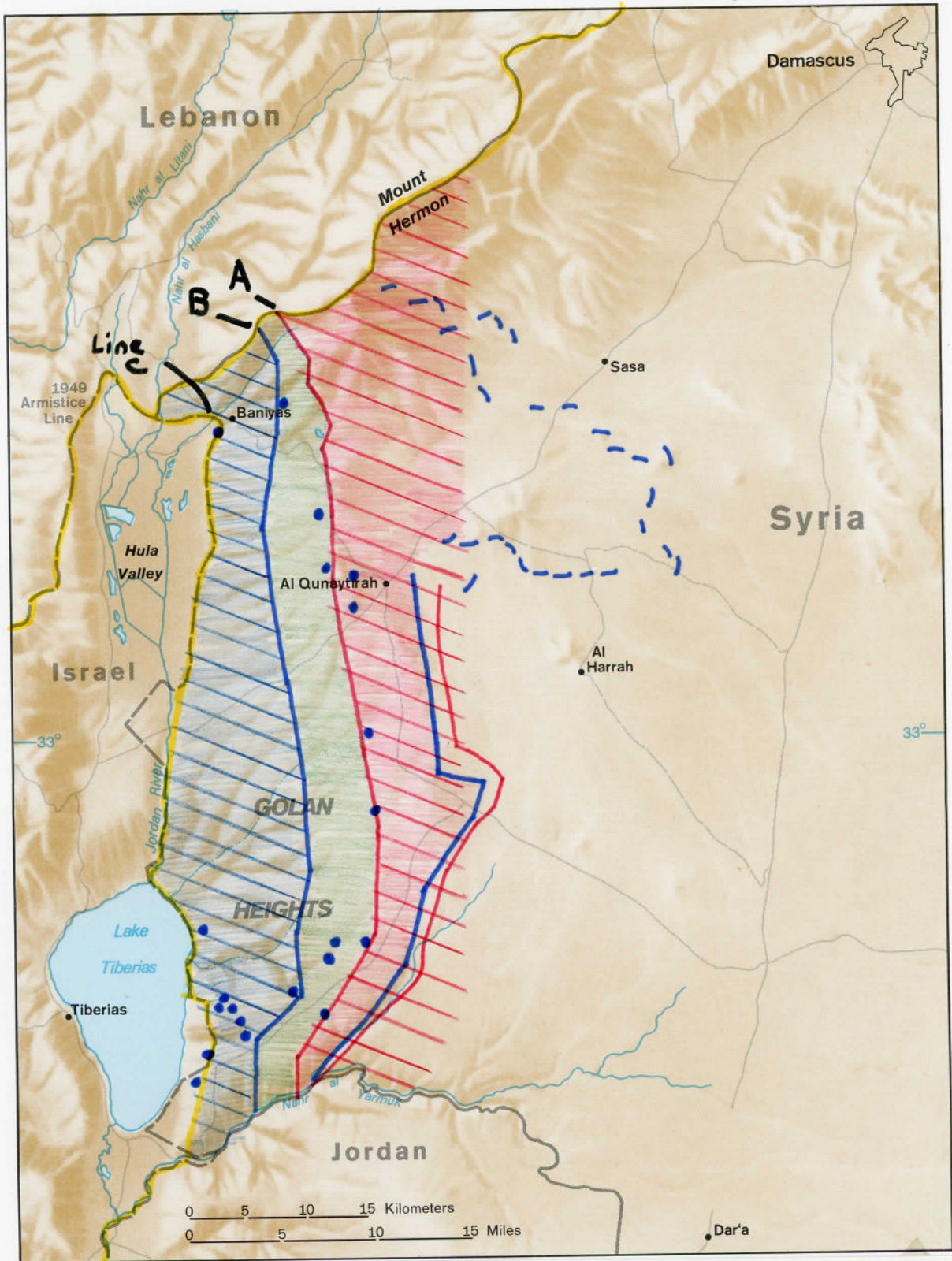
# ISRAELI PROPOSAL: March 29, 1974

**LIGHT FORCES ZONE**  
 2 INF. BATTALIONS  
 60 TANKS  
 3,000 MEN

**LIMITED FORCES AREA**  
 1 INF. DIV.  
 ARMOUR DIV. (300 TANKS)  
 ART. BATTALIONS (100 GUNS)  
 (to cover only own forces & line)

**MISSILE FREE AREA**  
 COMPLETE RESTRICTION ON  
 ANY MISSILE & SITES (GROUND  
 TO AIR, GROUND TO GROUND)





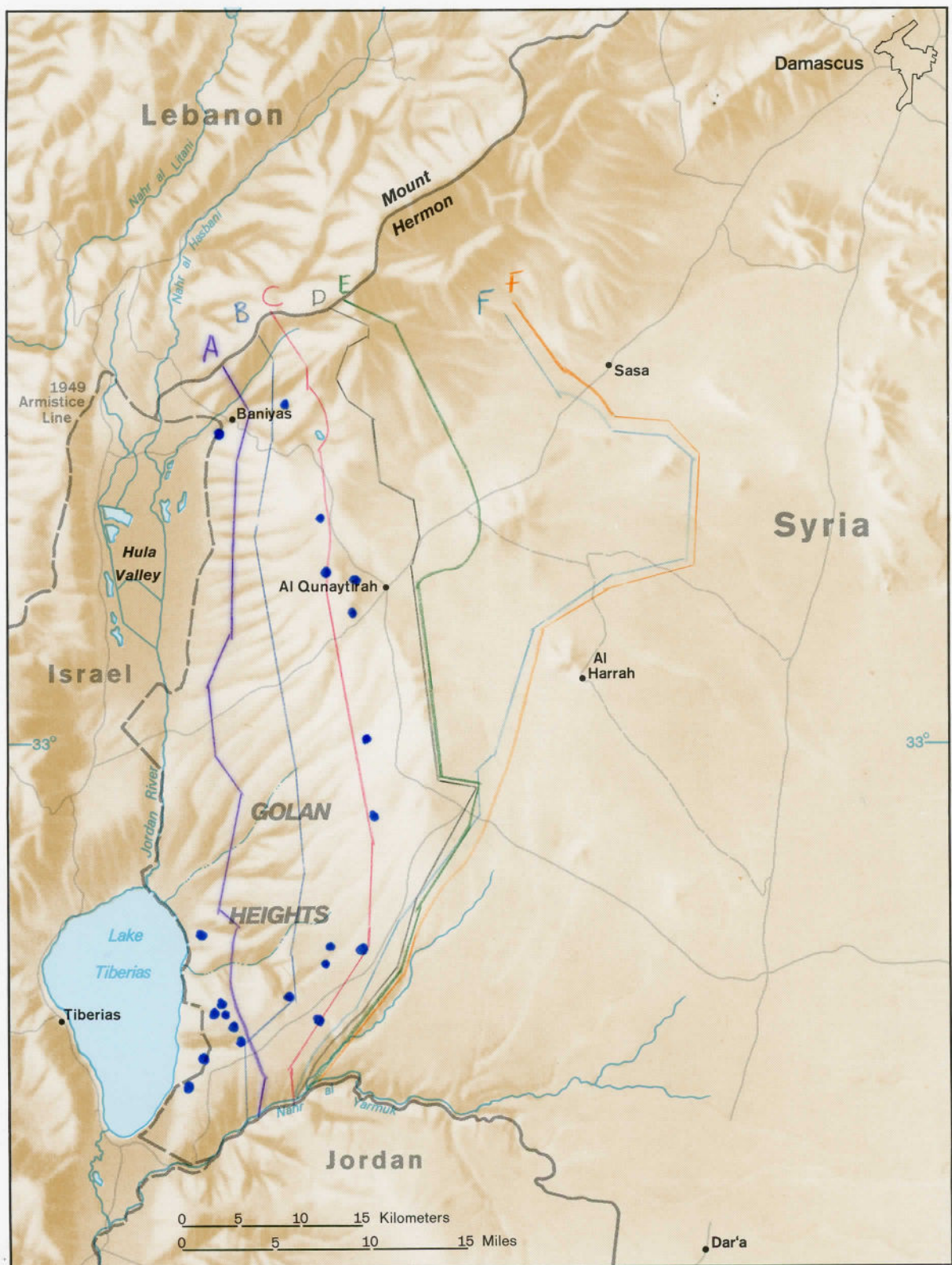
**PROPOSAL OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

*THE LINE TO WHICH THE ISRAELI FORCES SHOULD WITHDRAW IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE DISENGAGEMENT ON THE GOLAN FRONT.*

1. THE RED ZONE IS THE ZONE EAST OF LINE "A", IN WHICH THE SYRIAN FORCES WILL BE LOCATED
2. THE GREEN ZONE IS LOCATED BETWEEN LINES "A" AND "B". IT IS THE ZONE SEPARATING THE SYRIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES AND WILL BE PLACED UNDER SYRIAN CIVIL ADMINISTRATION, BUT ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISORY FORCE ARE TO MOVE ABOUT IN IT.
3. THE BLUE ZONE FALLS BETWEEN LINES "B" AND "C" AND IN WHICH THE ISRAELI FORCES WILL BE LOCATED ON A PROVISIONAL BASIS.

(TRANSLATOR'S NOTE -- LINE "C" FOLLOWS THE BOUNDARY ESTABLISHED BETWEEN SYRIA AND PALESTINE IN MANDATE TIMES.)

● ISRAELI SETTLEMENT



- A. Western line of Syrian proposal Jan. 20, 1974
- B. Israeli disengagement line, Syrian proposal April 13, 1974.
- C. Syrian disengagement line, Syrian proposal April 13, 1974
- D. 1967 ceasefire line
- E. Israeli disengagement line, Israeli proposal 29 March 1974
- F. } Syrian } Present line
- } Israeli }