



# USIPEACE BRIEFING

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## **A Renewable Energy Peace Park in the Golan as a Framework to an Israeli-Syrian Agreement**

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# *USIP Peace Briefing: Renewable Energy Peace Park in the Golan as a Framework to an Israeli-Syrian Agreement*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The widely discussed Syrian-Israeli peace park concept is rooted in the assumption that Syrian and Israeli "good will" for cooperation is sufficient to mobilize a long-lasting, firm peace treaty between the two countries. The current discussions on a layout for a peace park provide a description of the mechanisms that will control and maintain the park, but fail to provide the insights for how to keep these mechanisms functioning in one, five or ten years into the future. This paper argues that given the lack of stabilizing factors in an Israeli-Syrian partnership, even if negotiations succeed and an agreement is signed, the probability of failure during implementation is high.

This work will present options that can increase the acceptability of the park concept to both parties and provide measures to sustain the agreement in the future years. The work will explore the enhancement of a peace park design, by including renewable energy components and tourist activities. These additions to the general peace park concept will generate benefits to a peace treaty: the peace park will be self-sustainable and eventually profitable; the renewable energy aspect of the park idea will add an important extra dimension to the peace effort, contributing not just to regional peacemaking but also to environmental sustainability; finally, it is argued that such additions will significantly improve the chances of reaching an agreement in the first place.

The assumptions and analysis in this work are mostly based on a series of interviews and discussions conducted over the past several months and on several texts discussing the peace park issue, mainly the International Crisis Group's Middle East report from 2002 and Fredric Hof's policy paper written for the USIP in March 2009. In that sense, this work attempts to expand and develop the idea of a peace park, providing it with a larger work frame to ensure further cooperation between Israel and Syria.

## **LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT GOLAN HEIGHTS PEACE PARK CONCEPTS**

Several recent studies have explored the value of a peace park in directing opposing Israeli and Syrian positions towards a solution. Syria has firmly and repeatedly demanded a full evacuation of Israeli civilians and military personnel from territories held by Syrian forces prior to June 4,

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1967. If the withdrawal is to take effect as Syria demands, Israel will not only be denied access to the Golan Heights, but will find itself encircled on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

The merit of the peace park proposal is that it offers a solution to that restriction which was the most difficult issue in the previous negotiations such as the Assad–Barak talks of 2000. Establishing a peace park would address Israeli and Syrian concerns regarding these territorial issues. An environmentally-sensitive preserve under Syrian sovereignty, established in the problematic areas mentioned above, would avoid the environmental impact which Israel fears would jeopardize its sources of water, even though bringing Syria to the water's edge. It would secure the requirements of Syrian national pride, yet allow Israelis to drive unimpeded around the Sea of Galilee.

This concept for a peace park, however, lacks an important component: sustainability. The current plans assume that Syrian and Israeli willingness to reach an agreement is sufficient to mobilize and sustain a long-lasting peace treaty between the two countries with significant differences. The current discussions on a layout for a peace park provide a description of what needs to be done in order to establish and maintain the park, but fail to provide the basis for how to keep these mechanisms functioning in the future, especially in the fragile context of the Middle East: even if negotiations succeed and an agreement is signed, the probability of failure during implementation or the first few years is high.

As a place that borders two economies and two cultures, the park provides the opportunity for unique economic ventures and joint projects such as industrial parks, free trade areas and cross-border academic compounds. These activities require infrastructure, space and context, but can provide an array of future incentives for both parties to hold to the agreement, and create a firm foundation for future cooperation based on mutual benefit.

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**MAKING A PEACE PARK CONCEPT SUSTAINABLE**

The main goal of the peace park is both to solve the broadest possible range of conflicts between Israel and Syria over issues of access, territory and water, and assure the existence of this solution in the long run. This proposal calls therefore, for setting aside, in parallel with the nature-related area of the park, an area designated for research and production of renewable energy and the development of a series of tourist-oriented activities and industries. These features would strengthen the park concept in several ways:

- The peace park would be self-sustainable and eventually profitable, calling for the building of actual scientific facilities, research institutions and power plants, while supporting and enhancing the existing tourist activities. The park would in no way undermine Syria's perception of having regained lost territory and sovereignty. Rather, it will only play to Syria's advantage, boosting its economy, enhancing its international legitimacy and providing regional economic opportunities. As a result, the cooperation between Israel and Syria will be based not on altruism or artificial goodwill, but on the simple pursuit of national self-interest. Since Syria stands to profit from this model, it will have a greater incentive to cooperate.
- The renewable energy – related aspect of the park idea would add an important extra dimension to the peace effort, contributing not just to the regional peacemaking but also to global efforts to become more energy efficient. Consequently, the project is likely to attract active support from the international community in form of funds, research aid, professional cooperation and information exchange. The renewable energy dimension could become the "vehicle" for the whole process, providing momentum and keeping the parties focused on outcomes.
- If the overall agreement will be carried out in phases, the renewable energy mechanism enables the parties to prove to each other their commitment to previous agreements, and make gestures of cooperation without being explicit about it. The two countries will be seeking signs of good will, and cooperation can provide such signs, since making a commitment to such ventures means commitments in other areas too.

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- The Golan contains the worth of billions in the form of infrastructure which will significantly improve the chances for a successful Syrian resettlement on the land. An Israeli decision to leave these assets intact would stimulate Syrian incentive to be cooperative too. Cooperation on the energy park idea will put the need from Israel to leave the facilities intact in the context of trading one good for another; the infrastructure for the possibility of a park. The overall energy and tourism related projects will pave the way for Israel to create the right environment for Syria to agree.
- A joint venture aimed at nature preservation, production of "green energy" and cooperation would enhance both countries' prestige within the international community. This would be especially important for Syria, presently isolated and stigmatized. Such prestige would likely stimulate international support and foreign investment in additional fields.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY IN A GOLAN HEIGHTS PEACE PARK**

Renewable energy—that is, energy generated from natural resources, such as sunlight, wind and geothermal heat, which are naturally renewable—has taken on new importance in international relations and business. Climate change concerns, shifting oil prices and increasing governmental support are mobilizing renewable energy incentives and commercialization. Investment capital flowing into renewable energy climbed from \$80 billion in 2006 to a level \$117 billion by the beginning of 2008.<sup>1</sup>

According to David Faiman, chairman of the Department of Solar Energy & Environmental Physics at Ben-Gurion University's Institutes for Desert Research, solar resources in the Golan area lack the sufficient level of radiation for mass energy production. The same argument applies to the Golan's relatively small waterfalls for production of hydroelectricity. Wind power however, is a different story. Global wind power generation is growing at the rate of 30 percent annually, with a worldwide installed capacity that will reach 240 gigawatts by 2012.<sup>2</sup> The Golan Heights is abundant with wind energy potential. Currently there is a small wind farm containing 10 turbines on the Golan. The farm, built in the early 1990's produces a modest output of six megawatts which is channeled into the local grid. Extensive studies have shown however, that the potential for expansion of this resource is great. An Israeli company, Mei-Golan, is currently

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, 2008 report "investing in a climate for change".

<sup>2</sup> European Wind Energy Association press release April, 2008

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collaborating with the American energy corporation, AES, to build a \$600 million, 400 megawatt wind farm in the Golan.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 150 turbines will generate the output equivalent to that of a small to medium-sized coal plant. These plans, which have reached an advanced state, imply that commercial entities as well as Israel's municipal authorities have concluded that wind potential in the Golan is economically viable. Once built, the plant has the potential to become an additional obstacle to Israeli willingness to withdraw from the Golan; incorporating the plant within the agreement can significantly strengthen its prospects.

It is suggested that after an Israeli withdraw to the agreed lines, the peace park will be established and include these high wind potential territories (see map 2), wherein to develop, build and operate a wind energy plant and an academic center for research and development (R&D) in renewable energy. This will enable Syrian and Israeli establishments to work together to generate knowledge and produce wealth for both countries. The Golan infrastructures will remain intact and will be fully delivered to Syria.

The management of the park would be under Syrian authority, which will be in charge of managing the Golan Renewable Energy Industry (GREI). It is proposed that Syria will issue year-based working permits to scientist, teachers, service providers and technical staffs who wish to join the venture. Those permitted to live in the park, whether Syrian, Israeli or foreign nationals will reside in the designated areas for the research and tourism. Employees of the GREI will be encouraged to obtain and renew working permits in order to remain in the area and continue to contribute to this initiative. Additional incentives will be offered to draw professionals to the park.

Instead of being evacuated and abandoned as in the current plan, it is proposed that the city of Katzrin will be transformed into a tourist overnight hub and the site of an academic R&D center. The town will become the center of the energy industry to be developed by the two parties with the participation of the international community. Instead of becoming a ghost town, the houses of Katzrin will become the residence of scientists and scholars; its public institutions will continue to function as research labs, libraries and convention centers. It is suggested to establish branches Syrian and Israeli academic institutions in Katzrin that will lead the research, providing a firm basis for the overall agreement between the countries.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection, department of planning, northern district

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If the park is to be successful in resolving conflict between Israel and Syria, it must fully utilize its most valuable asset: nature.

**NATURE RESERVE AS BASIS FOR TOURIST ACTIVITY**

Most of the water-rich nature reserves on the Golan are near the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee and the Mt. Hermon range. The wind rich areas are near Mt. Hermon range too. The Yehudiyya Forest, Majras, Jordan Park, Beit Saida and Nahal Dvorah Nature Reserves are all situated in the Sea of Galilee area and harbor streams emptying into the Sea of Galilee. The Hermon National Park contains the Banias River which flows from Mt. Hermon into the Jordan (see map 2). These nature reserves not only provide a major portion of Israel's water supply, they also happen to be the most popular vacation sites in the country. Incorporating these reserves into the peace park will enable Israeli tourists to be a more significant factor in the park's activity; it will also highlight the importance to the agreement of environmental sustainability. An overall sustainable solution to the issue, providing Israeli tourists a good access to the nature reserves and maintaining Israel's water interests, will go far to relieve Israeli anxieties about the wisdom of a Golan withdrawal act and make a deal easier to achieve. Israeli or international citizens coming from Israel will be able to enter the park through the Israeli roads leading to the Golan park from morning until evening, for tourist, ecological or humanitarian purposes, and to stay overnight in a designated resort without the need for a special visa. If planning to cross the park's boundaries into Syria, Israeli or international visitors will be required to have a visa.

It is also suggested that commercial properties, whether related to business, tourism or agriculture in the park area, will remain active and be purchased by either the Syrian government or multinational corporations. Israeli citizens currently living in areas to be occupied by the park and owning commercial property there will be allowed to continue

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their activities and own up to 49 percent of the companies, contingent on approval by both governments.

### **COSTS OF A PEACE PARK**

The costs of establishing a peace park and incorporating energy and tourism elements are considerable. It is nevertheless the position of this work that considering the high cost of a violent conflict and its potential to negatively influence on the whole region, the cost of reinforcing a peace treaty as a sustainable, long-lasting solution will turn out to be a good investment.

This work describes two main cost factors in the plan: the withdrawal cost and the wind farm cost. It is clear nonetheless, that the overall cost of all options will require additional funds for tourist and industry facilities, academic centers (in case of options 2 and 3) infrastructure, maintenance, wildlife protection and more. Although these costs will be significant, this work does not detail them, assuming that these costs can be flexible and change according to the will of the parties as well as the funds available. The wind farm and withdrawal however, are crucial components of the Renewable Energy Peace Park and are briefly explored here.

### **COST OF WITHDRAWAL**

Despite some other cost estimations, the best estimate how much an Israeli withdrawal from Golan would cost is based on the actual costs of the 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. This paper assumes that economy of scale does not have much effect on the different numbers of people involved (8,800 in Gaza; 17,500 in the Golan) apart from additional few hundreds of millions which will be designated for larger operation costs, overhead expenses and so on. These assumptions may be challenged, but they can, nonetheless, give an initial estimate of the evacuation costs.<sup>4</sup> At the current exchange rate of approximately 4NIS per U.S. dollar, the withdrawal from Gaza cost about \$2.15

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<sup>4</sup> Source: The Israel State Comptroller 2006 report: "Budgeting of the disengagement plan and cost estimations".



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billion for 8,800 people; evacuation of 17,500 will cost about \$4.5 billion (At the time of writing, the exchange rate was 4.17NIS to the dollar and the estimated cost therefore: \$4,266,337,000).

## **COST OF A WIND FARM**

According to the American Wind Energy Association, the cost of a wind turbine can range between \$1.2 and \$1.8 million dollars per megawatt<sup>5</sup> (and constantly dropping; the cost per MW in 2005 was \$2.1 million). Since the initial intended output will be 400 MW, the initial cost for turbines would be \$720 million on the high estimate.

Transmission grid costs are harder to estimate. For the sake of simplicity this paper will assume that electrical output would be sold to one of the parties (with higher electricity average prices) in order to save the cost of multiple substations, but revenues will be evenly divided between the investors, Syria and Israel. Electricity generated by the turbines will be routed to a substation on the premises of the wind farm, and from there delivered to a population centers adjacent to the Golan area. If the electricity is sold to the Syrian grid it could lead to the Al-Qunaytirah area, approximately 15 km (9.4 miles) away. The Israeli grid would lead to the town of Kiryat Shmona, approximately 20 km (12.5 miles) from the farm.

The current Israeli initiated plans for the power grid call for a 161 kilovolt power line.<sup>6</sup> This paper proposes to build a higher capacity infrastructure to accommodate future development of the wind farm's output. The estimated costs per mile for a 345 kilovolt power line are \$2.78 million<sup>7</sup> (assuming purchase of the most expensive components). The estimated cost of the transmission grid would thus be about \$35.8 million.

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5 Source: [http://www.awea.org/faq/wwt\\_costs.html#How%20much%20does%20wind%20energy%20cost](http://www.awea.org/faq/wwt_costs.html#How%20much%20does%20wind%20energy%20cost)

6 Source: Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection, department of planning, northern district

7 This estimation was prepared by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas in their study: "Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZ) Transmission Optimization Study". And might not be equivalent to the prices in the Middle East. The study can be found in: [http://www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/re\\_wind-transmission.htm](http://www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/re_wind-transmission.htm)

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In addition there are other components that need to be installed. The overall cost of the wind farm is estimated around \$850 million. Some initial studies done on the subject suggest that even in the current economic turmoil, the plant can be profitable.

### **BENEFITS OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI COOPERATION**

Although Damascus could theoretically build a wind farm or vacation resorts unilaterally in these same high-potential areas following Israeli withdrawal, cooperation is more advantageous for both parties for the following reasons:

- Investment in good will: Good will between Syria and Israel is the essential ingredient to the success of every aspect of an agreement and is assumed to be a Syrian interest as much as it is an Israeli one. Developing good will on basis of cooperation that both parties benefit from is much more promising than mere kindness, which is unlikely to develop spontaneously as result of a peace treaty.
- International community support: The international community is in a position to contribute funding, personnel and extensive technical support to the project, but might do so for the sake of a combined Israeli-Syrian effort only, symbolizing the new understanding between the countries.
- Cost: Infrastructure in the Golan will cost billions of dollars, a cost which can be shared by both sides if a spirit of cooperation prevails. Although Syria would be justified in building a wind farm or a new tourist resort by itself, leaving Israel out of the project, having to bear the cost alone would far outweigh any possible profits it might generate. For the Syrians, cooperation with Israel on these issues makes convincing economic sense. Syria's economic outlook is poor. Its oil reserves have shrunk, its economy is relatively isolated, and its unsavory international behavior discourages investor confidence.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The World Bank Doing Business Indicators ([www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org)), which provides measures of business regulations and their enforcement ranks Syria at 171 out of 181 in getting credit in 2008, 145 in doing business, and 173 in enforcing contracts. The Global Competitiveness Report (<http://gcr.weforum.org/gcr/>) ranks Syria 78th of 134 in competitiveness (106<sup>th</sup> of 134 in transparency of policy making, 93rd in macroeconomic stability, 123rd in labor market efficiency, 131st in efficient use of talent and 122nd of 134 in trustworthiness and confidence.

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### **DESIGN OPTIONS**

The nature components mentioned above aim for a peace park that addresses the full potential of energy production and tourist activities. It is reasonable however, to assume that more "simple" versions of the park are more likely to be executed due to their simplicity. This paper therefore, will propose three major options for the park's layout which spread a range of combinations. These options present a trade-off between the benefit from an option and its complexity: The more complicated ventures are, they are more likely to become a "win win" arrangement, but are also more likely to be rejected due to their complexity.

#### **Option 1: The Golan Heights Environmental Peace Park (Map 3)**

This option, which is very similar to the peace park ideas under discussion currently, deals only with the nature reserves, anticipates that establishing a joint industry employing many permit-based workers might create too many complications for a fragile, tentative Israeli-Syrian cooperative relationship to resolve. It proposes, therefore, to focus the agreement to combining the Golan two major clusters of nature reserve, near the Sea of Galilee and Mt. Hermon, into an environmental preserve focusing only on issues of water and access. The northern site, which is near Mt. Hermon (5.4 percent of the Golan, 61 square km), and the central site, near the northeast shores of the Sea of Galilee providing most of the Golan's nature preserves and tourism (17.3 percent of the Golan, 198 square kilometers). This option will include 23.5 percent of the Golan Heights, approximately 267 square km in a total area of 1144 sq km.

Israeli visitors would have access to the nature reserves and national parks without a visa. The energy industry, wind farm and R&D centers would be deferred. Syria will determine how to monitor the entrance to the park. The possibilities range between formal check-in stations on the border of the park located on the Israeli road leading into it, or just a sign informing drivers that they have entered the park and Syrian territory.

There are several disadvantages to this option. First, it is lacking means of self-support, production of revenue and a basis for long-lasting cooperation. The agreement's sections regarding nature preservation and green energy production will nonetheless contribute to environmental efforts and give the whole venture a sense of sustainability.

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Second, this option has less potential to benefit Syria, since it does not create mechanism for long-term revenue nor lead to substantial international investment in Syrian companies and national ventures.

Third, it is less likely to convince Israel to cooperate fully in withdrawal. Despite access to the park and the opportunities to participate in its activities, Israel might be encouraged to support an agreement based on this option only if it is perceived as leading to much more substantial long-term economic collaboration.

Finally, this option contains fewer components required to ensure long-lasting success. Since the park will not be based on mutual benefits but merely on good will, it will enforce each side's obligation to keep its end of the agreement in a less efficient way. The proposals contained in this option, however, are likely to win the international community's support in terms of political and financial backup.

**Option 2: The Golan Heights Environmental and Energy Peace Park (Map 4)**

This option is the most complicated one, but also the sustainable option in the long run, the one with the most potential to benefit Syria and most likely to convince Israel to cooperate fully in withdrawing its civilians and military. In the same logic of the current park idea, the main clusters of national parks and nature reserves are near the Sea of Galilee and Mt. Hermon. It is proposed therefore, to establish the park in two main locations adjacent to the natural sites: The northern site, which is near Mt. Hermon as well as the zones harboring high potential for harvesting wind energy (10.6 percent of the Golan, 121 square kilometers), and the central site, near the northeast shores of the Sea of Galilee providing most of the Golan's nature preserves and tourism (17.3 percent of the Golan, 198 square kilometers).

In the north, the park covers the Hermon and a Banyas national park near Mt. Hermon, adjacent to the region of highest wind energy potential, and extends south to the town of Magdel Shams. In the center, this option covers the Yehudiyya, Majras, Gamla, Nahal Dvorah, Beit Saida and part of Park Hayarden nature reserves near the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. The

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renewable energy research and development center, as well as tourist accommodations, will be located in the town of Katzrin, in the center of the nature preserve area.

A small portion of the park (only 0.8 percent of the Golan -- about 9 square km) will be located along the course of the Yarmouk River, containing the town of Hamat Gader. Altogether the proposed park will cover 28.7 percent of the Golan Heights, approximately 329 square km of a total of 1144 square km.

The main roads giving Israelis access to the park and to the Beit Saida Nature Reserve will be Roads 92 (from the south) and 87 (from the west) near the Sea of Galilee. These lead to the Gamla Nature Reserve via Road 869, to the Yehudiyya Reserve via Road 888, and to the Nahal Dvorah Reserve via Road 91. The access to the wind farm would be via Road 99 to the northeast, within the premises of Israel but can also be approached via Road 91 (as in map 5). If Road 91 is used to connect between the two clusters (which might be problematic to Syria), it has the potential to become a main corridor for activity in the Golan, enhancing the connection between the Tourist and energy sectors and enriching the park's activity.

This option suggests that the entrance to the park will enable an access as swift and easy as possible to assure an efficient function of the energy, tourist and academic activities. This can be achieved by monitoring systems that automatically register vehicles that cross their path without human intervention or even stopping the vehicle (as used today in some toll highways). If a more meticulous system is required, there can be entrance booths monitoring the vehicles the very same way it is handled at the entrances to national parks around the world.

The exit of Israeli vehicles towards Syria or Syrian vehicles towards Israel will involve actual crossing stations, customs and other international cross border facilities that will be located at points of exit from the park leading further into Syria and Israel (blue dot on the map for a Syrian crossing point; red dot for Israeli crossing point).

There are several advantages to this option. It offers the promise of self-support, production of revenue and long lasting cooperation. Thus it is the option that is likely to benefit Syria and Israel the most. Mutual benefit is also the main component that will hold the agreement intact and motivate the two parties to continue to hold on to their agreement.

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Second, this is the option most likely to convince Israel to cooperate fully in withdrawing its civilians and military. Allowing Israeli citizens easy access the nature preserves and permitting their participation in park-related industries will mitigate some of the public's resistance to evacuation.

Third, the broad array of issues addressed in this option is likely to gain the international community's support in terms of political and financial backup. This support will translate to more funds for improvements and donations within the park, as well as a new range of opportunities for the two countries outside the park.

Finally, this option facilitates a smoother everyday process: The profit prospects of this venture will generate motivation to smoothen thousands of technical details that might fail the overall park idea; difficulties in entering the park, bureaucracy, lines, evacuation procedures, law enforcement, etc. The existence of a full scale program for the park will provide a different context to the overall management scheme of the park, thus improving its efficiency and function -- and its chances to succeed. This will also improve entrances and exits: the existence of the energy and tourist needs will reframe the access demands, creating a more efficient system of entrance and exits in order to support the venture.

The initial disadvantage of this option is its cost. The wind farm industry is capital intensive; developing the R&D centers will require massive investments to build establish and maintain. In addition, the park's operations and regulations will be complicated to carry out: It will require the park authorities not only to monitor entrance and exit of visitors, but also to issue work permits and maintain working statuses. This option will also require proper operations of the energy plants, including management of production, distribution and transmission of electricity, maintenance of R&D facilities. It is also complicated to carry out in terms of regulation. Since the park zone will comprise many different activities, the number of agreed-upon regulations will grow proportionally. Regulations will have to address entrance, exit, overnight stay, medical treatment, jurisdiction, criminal justice and other activities related to tourism, issues of taxes, revenues, profits, safety, maintenance, and energy production. Each issue will need to be discussed, agreed upon and incorporated in the agreement.

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Finally, this option has the potential to alarm the Syrians regarding sovereignty issues: This scenario requires a somewhat Syrian flexibility on how they envision and exercise sovereignty and hegemony. Simple Israeli access to territories nominally under Syrian sovereignty will be difficult for Damascus to accept in any event. Since, for political reasons, the Syrians would like to erase all vestiges of the Israeli occupation, any ongoing Israeli partnership in joint economic ventures will be especially problematic for them. Additionally, the presence and activity of international institutions on sovereign Syrian soil runs counter to deeply rooted Syrian political culture.

### **Option 3: The Golan Heights Environment and Energy Peace Park: limited version (Map 5)**

This option is similar to the previous one, suggesting a combination of nature preservation, tourism, a renewable energy R&D center and wind farms. The main difference between the two proposals would be separating the two areas, designating one for tourism and nature conservation, another for the energy industry which would be accessible only to scientists, researchers and employees of the GREI. The R&D center would still be located in Katzrin where the main cluster of activities would take place.

The rationale for this difference is the concern that Damascus may find a proposed park combining both nature-tourism and technology-research functions too large and diverse. This second proposal, therefore, suggests a more distinct separation between the two functions, allowing Syria to have better control over the various activities taking place in the park.

Under this scenario the northern nature reserves would not be included in the park. The tourist-nature activities would take place only in the main cluster adjacent to the Yehudiyya Nature Reserve northeast of the Sea of Galilee and in the small area bordering the Yarmouk River (18 percent of the Golan, 206 square kilometers altogether). The wind farm and other energy infrastructures would be restricted to the area of high wind energy potential (5.3 percent of the Golan, 60 square km). The total size of this option would be 23.3 percent of the Golan Heights, about 266 square km.

The access to the wind farm can be via road 91 to the northeast, designated for use only by GREI employee (and Syrian citizens) which appears as a dashed blue line in map 5. If this

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arrangement, however, is unattractive to Syria, another option would be to approach the wind farm from the north via Roads 99 and 87. This option, though, is less appealing since it creates a division between the two areas and makes accessibility more difficult. Furthermore, it separates the wind farm from the energy infrastructure and R&D center in Katzrin, thus undermining Katzrin's prestige as focal point for the park.

There are some advantages to this option in comparison to option 1. Although still complex, the park's operations are less complicated to carry out since the two main activities are managed in two separate locations. The tourist and academic management bureau will focus on Katzrin area; the energy industry will be active in the wind farm areas.

Also, this option's regulations would be less complicated to enforce, since the energy production center and the tourist activities have different regulations and different locations.

Finally, in comparison to option 1, this third option is less likely to alarm Syrian sensibilities regarding sovereignty since the two geographically and conceptually distinct activities will be relatively easier to manage, a fact which will give the venture a better sense of order.

### **CONCLUSION**

This proposal fully appreciates the yearning of the Syrians to reestablish full sovereignty over the land they lost in 1967; likewise it is sensitive to the profound reluctance of Israelis to contemplate parting with the Golan, a land to which two and a half generations of Israelis have dedicated love, toil and creative energies. These are the very reasons why there is a need to explore inventive solutions.

Given the current state of regional political affairs and the two parties' negotiation history this proposal might seem rather optimistic. It is however, this writer's belief that if the Israeli-Syrian process is carried out, every effort should be made- and incorporated into the agreement- to avoid failure down the road. The time seems to be ripe for a regional peace process; a failure can take the whole region many years back.

In contrast to other proposals for a peace park, this proposal, in order to be successful, requires larger monetary investment. Though less ambitious plans might work, they lack the bold



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environmental and infrastructural ventures which would contribute so much to making the agreement attractive and sustainable. It could open wide new possibilities for a cooperative and constructive future for the two countries, a future until recently impossible to conceive, in which sustainable peace, environmental protection and economic success go hand in hand.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

This *USIPeace Briefing* was written by Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat. Greenfield-Gilat is a graduate of Harvard Kennedy School of Government and holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. He is the cofounder of SAYA, an architectural and planning practice providing design, research and consultancy services. SAYA's main focus is its pioneering resolution planning work, characterized by deployment of architectural and urban design tools for the promotion of conflict resolution and conflict management. His graduate work focuses on the influence of development, infrastructures and planning tools on conflict resolution and territorial negotiations. He lives in Jerusalem. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of USIP, which does not advocate specific policies.

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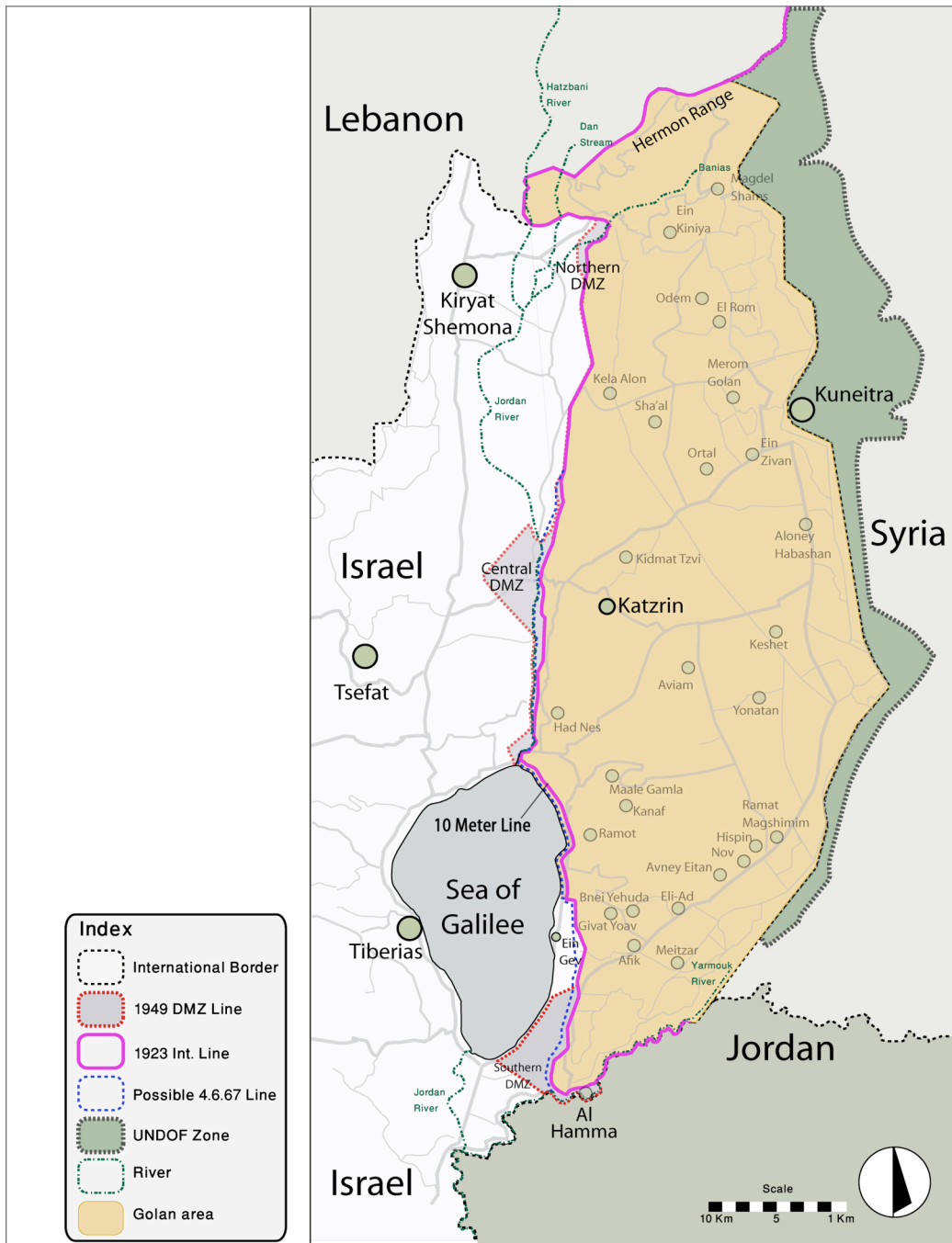
The Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution designs and manages the Institute's efforts in areas where fighting is active. The center also conducts research, identifies best practices, develops new peacemaking tools, and supports related training and education efforts.

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*USIP Peace Briefing: Renewable Energy Peace Park in the Golan as a Framework to an Israeli-Syrian Agreement*

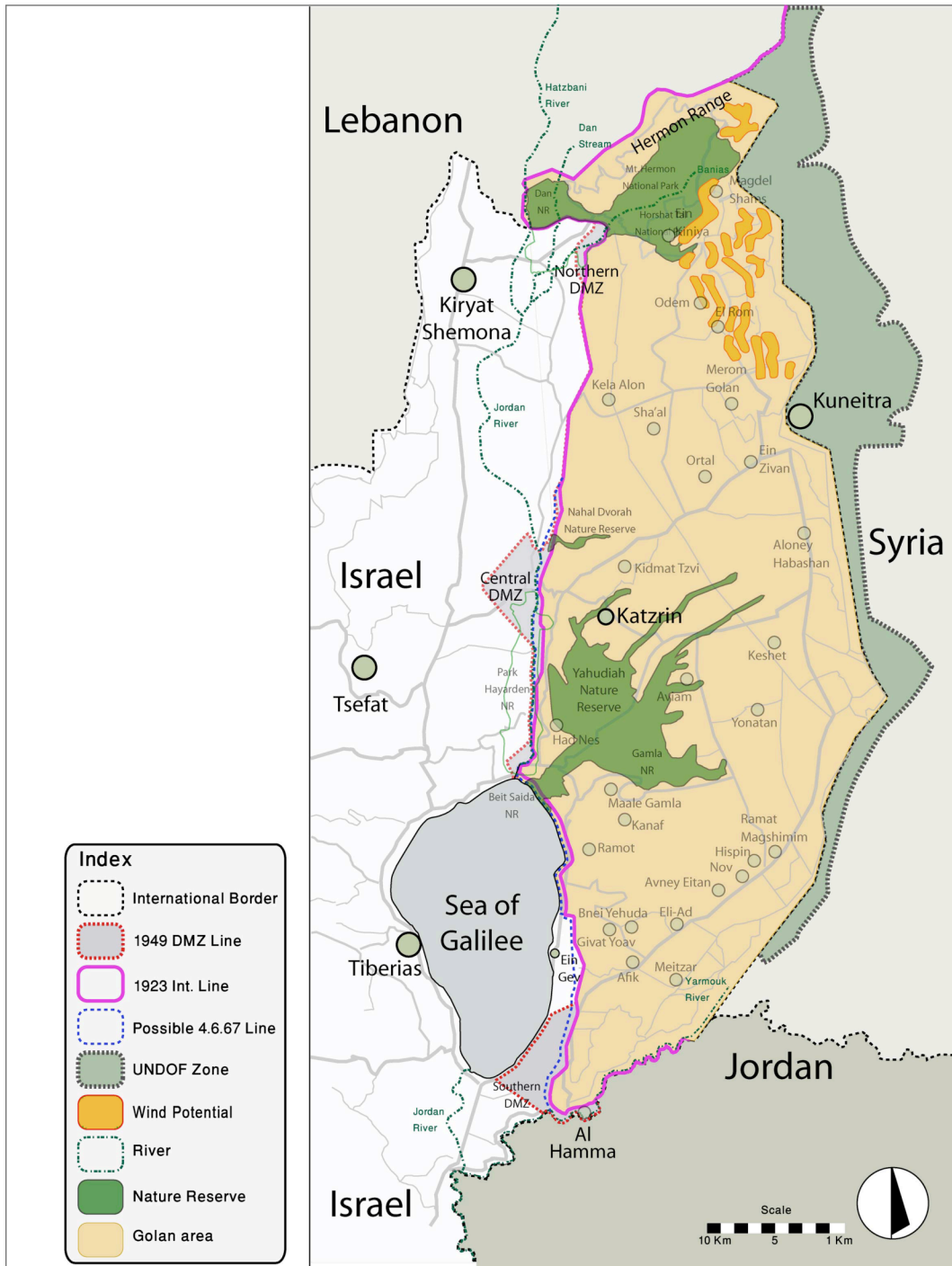
**Map 1:** The different lines; the 1923 international line, the supposed 06.04.1967 line and the DMZ areas



# USIP Peace Briefing

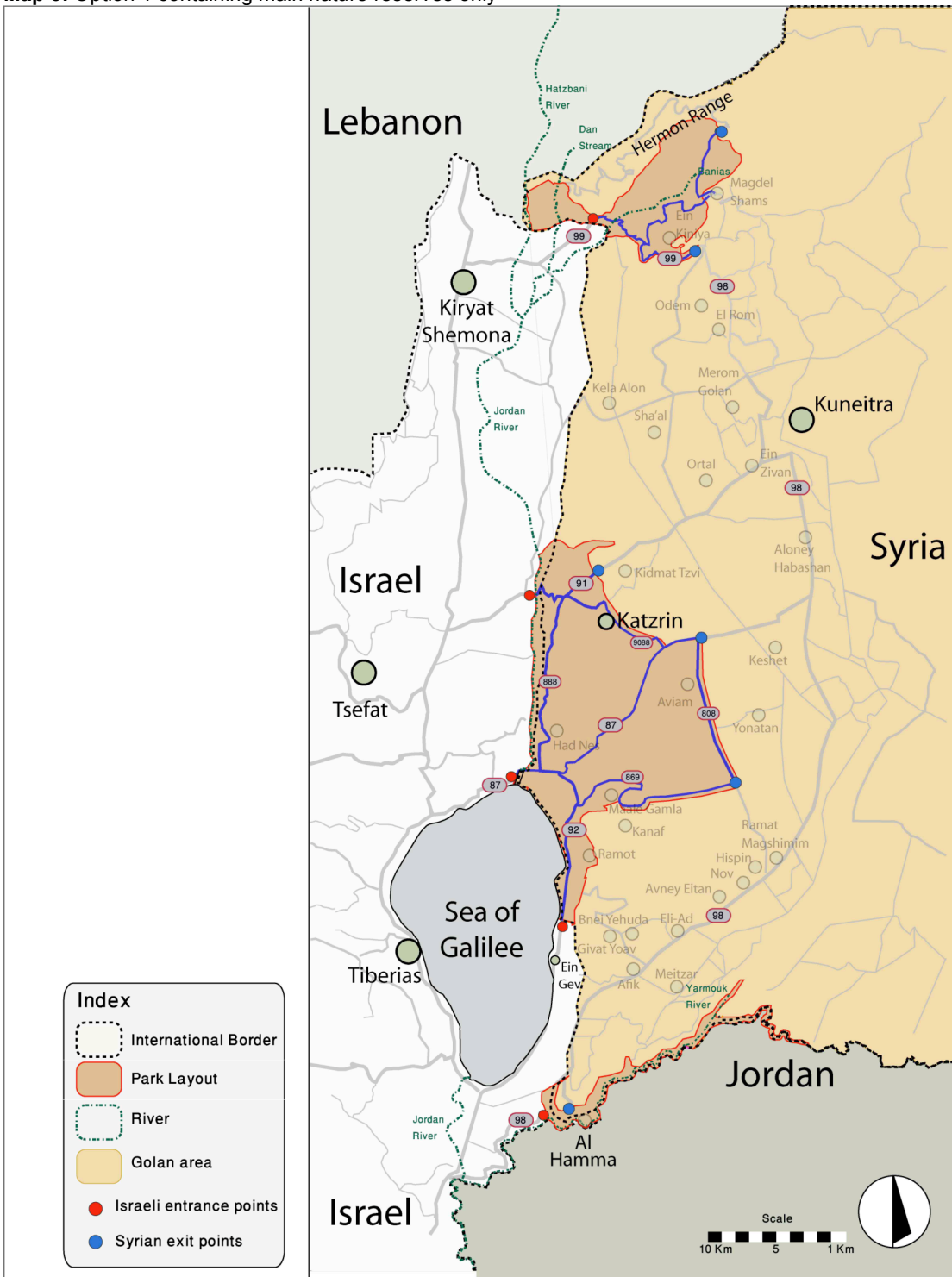
## A Renewable Energy Peace Park in the Golan as a Framework to an Israeli-Syrian Agreement

**Map 2:** The main nature reserves and wind high-potential areas in the Golan territories



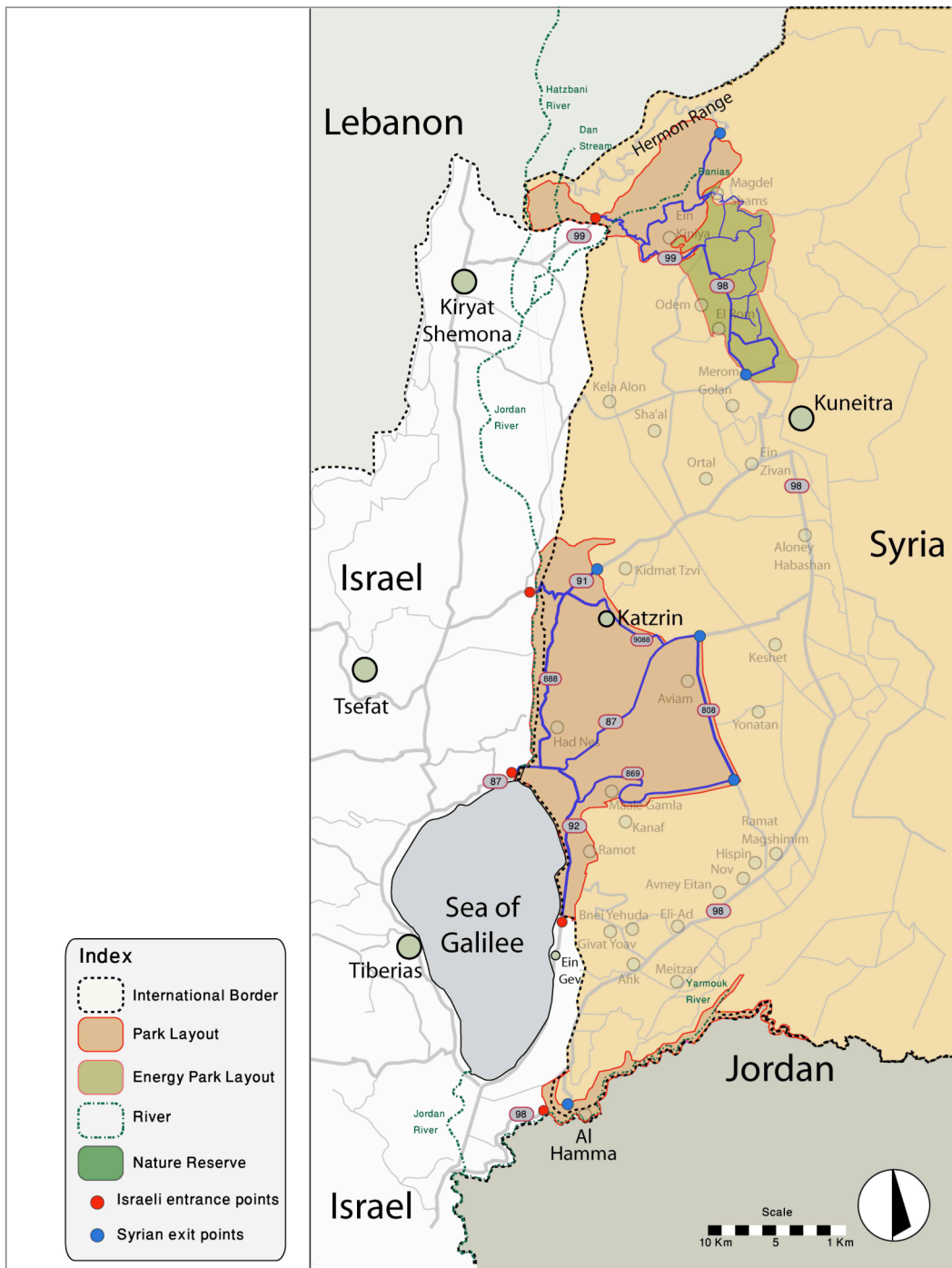
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**Map 3:** Option 1 containing main nature reserves only



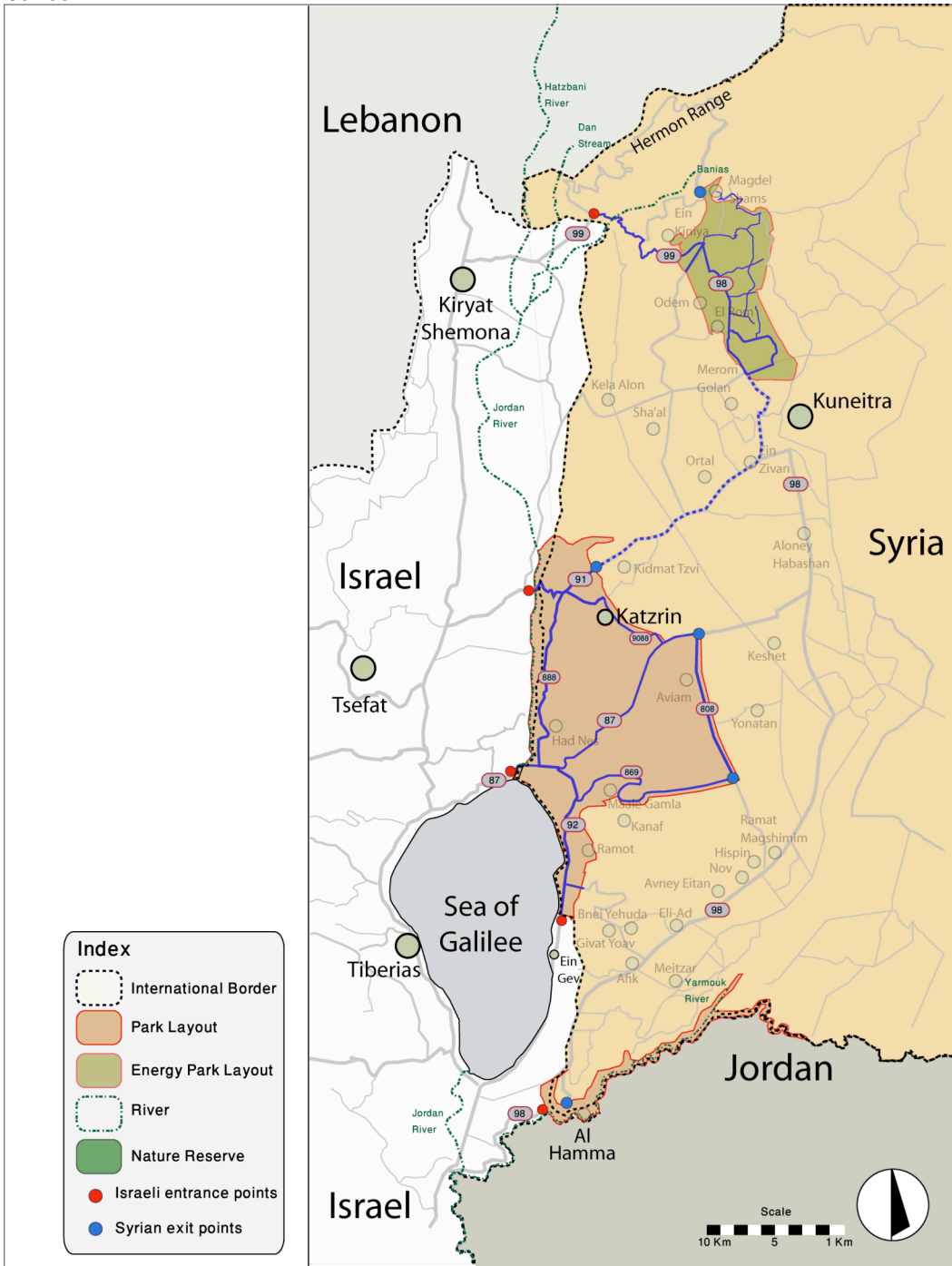
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**Map 4:** Option 2 containing the energy fields and the two main nature reserves



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**Map 5:** Option 3 containing the energy fields and the central cluster of nature reserves near the Sea of Galilee



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