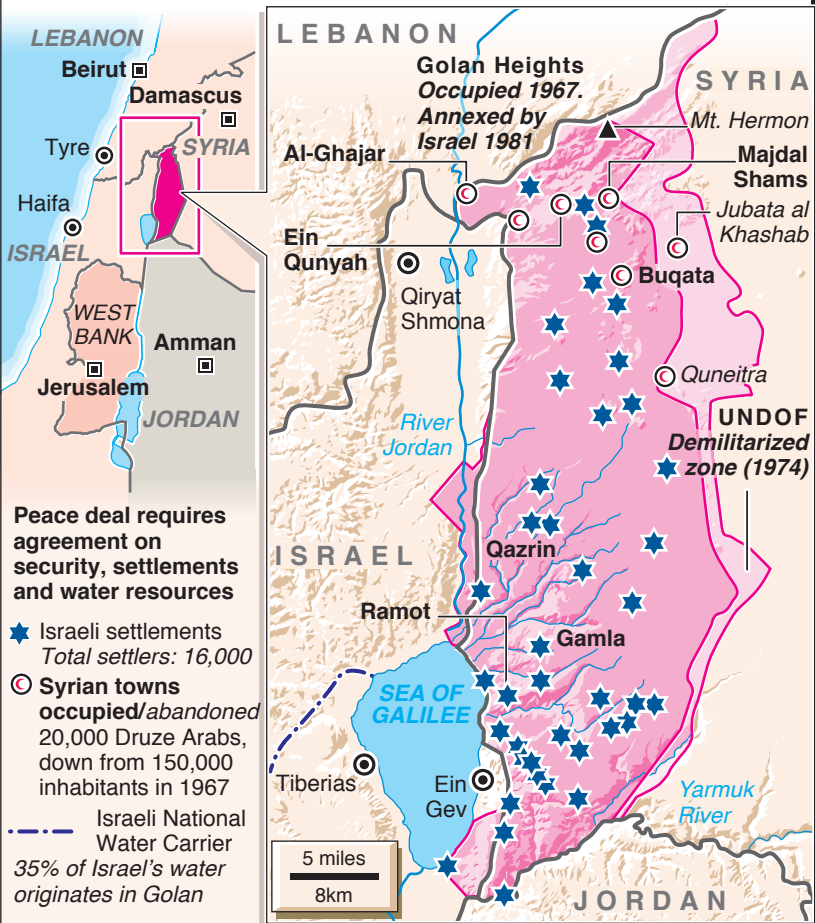


Golan forms barrier to Israeli-Syrian peace

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has rejected the call by Israeli President Katsav to enter peace talks. Damascus wishes to resume discussions where they ended in 2000, which it says included the return of the strategic Golan Heights – a precondition unacceptable to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon



Israeli pre-conditions
End Syrian backing of "terrorist groups"
Help in returning Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon and body of spy Eli Cohen for burial

Syrian conditions
Return of Golan Heights