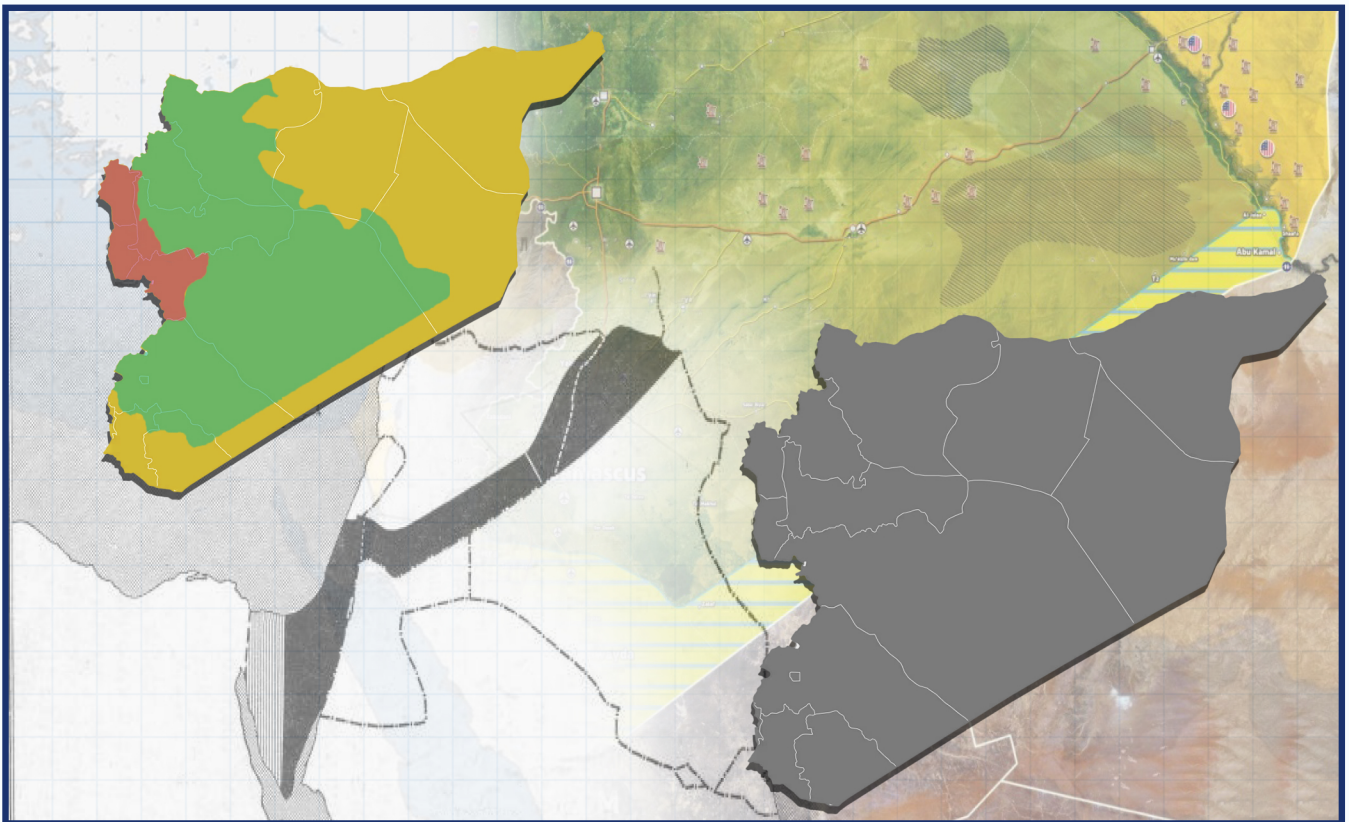




Milestones on Israel's Path to Partitioning Syria



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Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

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Abstract

This documentary study aims to construct a comprehensive picture of the challenges Syria faces under the Israeli divisive trajectory, which is inseparable from the Zionist vision of fragmenting the Arab region as a whole and establishing independent ethnic, religious and sectarian entities that require Israel's support and protection, or at least its acquiescence. The study examines aspects of the early Zionist efforts to partition Syria within a colonial context, providing illustrative examples drawn from traditional Israeli plans for dividing Syria, the strategic considerations and implications perceived by Zionism and Israel, and some Israeli partition proposals during the Syrian crisis (the revolution) and the subsequent post-Assad period. It further analyzes the case of the "Salahuddin/ David's corridor," a revived older formula that has been reintroduced into discourse. Finally, the study explores Israel's prospective bets on Syria's partition and the "realistic" options available to the Syrian regime in response.

Keywords

Israel and Syria	Israel and the Druze	Israel and the Kurds
Partition of Syria	David's Corridor	



Milestones on Israel's Path to Partitioning Syria

Ibrahim 'Abdul Karim¹

Introduction

Israeli orientations and positions aimed at fragmenting Syria belong to the strategy of “interventions in the geopolitical environment,” which Israel employs to safeguard its existence and advance its overarching objectives. This strategy rests on linking the survival of the state and the attainment of its goals to control over its surroundings, through a full (organic) adoption of the Nazi “Großraum (Greater Space)” theory and its integration into Israel’s conception of what it terms its national security. In doing so, Israel translates its particular geopolitical vision from theory into practice, harnessing its accumulated capabilities to impose its will and pursue its interests within its immediate neighborhood.

In this context, the reliance on the ideological and practical stock from which Israel derives the foundations of its Syria policy enables the delineation of a clear Israeli trajectory. This trajectory represents a continuation of the path pursued by the Zionist movement, encompassing plans and demands aimed at exploiting Syria’s resources (historically referred to as *Bilad al-Sham*), culminating in interventions designed to reshape and control the current Syrian state.

This study examines the early Zionist efforts to partition Syria within a colonial framework, offering illustrative examples drawn from traditional Israeli plans for dividing the country, as well as the strategic considerations and implications identified by Zionism and Israel. It further reviews certain Israeli partition proposals during the Syrian crisis (the revolution) and in the period following the fall of the Assad regime, with particular focus on the “Salahuddin/ David’s corridor *וידלא חאלס רוזורפ*,” a revived older formula recently reintroduced into discussion. The study concludes by assessing Israel’s prospective bets on Syria’s partition and the “realistic” options available to the Syrian regime in response.

A careful examination of these lines of inquiry reveals a truth that has crystallized over decades of implementing the Zionist project in Palestine and contesting it: the fragmentation of Syria is intrinsically linked to Zionism’s broader vision of dismantling

¹ A Palestinian researcher based in Syria, specialized in Israeli affairs, the Palestine issue and the Arab-Zionist conflict. Since 1980, he has been a full-time researcher at Al-Ard Institute For Palestine Studies in Damascus, heading the editorial department from 1994 to 2021. He has lectured in academic and research institutions across Syria and internationally. A member of The Arab Writers Union in Syria: Research and Studies Association since 1995 and the Palestinian Writers Union since 1980. He has published 25 books and hundreds of research papers and studies, among them Academic Papers at Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations.

the Arab region and establishing independent ethnic, religious and sectarian entities within it. Consequently, the Syria envisioned by Israel is one devoid of a unified national identity, fragmented into weak sub-national or sub-state entities that depend on Israel for support and protection or, at the very least, require its acquiescence.

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of this approach is the predominance of excessive animosity and hatred in the Zionist and Israeli partitionist tendencies, distinguishing them from other global conflicts, particularly through the use of minorities as instruments in the fragmentation project that Israel pursues and is determined to implement, with the aim of destabilizing Syria and returning it to a “pre-state” condition.

Although discussions have emerged regarding the possibility of reaching a security agreement between Israel and Syria, this study assumes that such an agreement would neither generate an internal restraint nor an external deterrent compelling Israel to abandon its partitionist project. Israel would not adhere to any limitation, given the inseparable relationship between its ideology and practice and the consistency of its strategic approach toward Syria.

First: Israel’s Efforts to Divide Syria within the Framework of Western Colonialism

An examination of developments in *Bilad al-Sham* (Greater Syria) over the past centuries reveals events whose reverberations persist to this day. It is evident that Western colonial interventions systematically positioned Syria on a trajectory toward fragmentation, guided primarily by their own strategic interests. These interventions initially took the form of limited measures, yet they progressively expanded, encompassing a broader strategic arena.

Historically, Syria, which encompassed present-day Syria, Lebanon, historic Palestine and eastern Jordan, was gradually fragmented through a series of external interventions. This process began by exploiting the violent clashes between the Druze and Maronites in Lebanon in 1860. Consequently, under European diplomatic pressure, the Ottoman state established the “Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon,” which enjoyed autonomous governance under the Sublime Porte (Istanbul). It was led by a non-Lebanese Christian Mutasarrif, appointed by the Ottoman Sultan with the consent of European powers. As noted by The Druze Heritage Center in Israel, “The model of sectarian governance and European patronage employed in the Mutasarrifate agreement laid the foundation for modern Lebanon, encompassing the very problems that would precipitate multiple crises within it.”²

² Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon, site of The Druze Heritage Center in Israel, <https://dhc.org.il/ar>



The establishment of this Mutasarrifate arose from early developments aimed at undermining the centrality of Damascus and Syria more broadly. These developments subsequently facilitated the Zionist movement's integration into the broader framework of Western colonial partitioning during World War I and prompted consideration of Syria's fragmentation, which was seen as a means of removing anticipated obstacles to the advancement of the Zionist settlement project in Palestine. This perspective is clearly articulated in an article by Vladimir (Zeév) Jabotinsky, the founder of Revisionist Zionism, published in the Yiddish newspaper *Di Tribune*, widely circulated among Jewish communities in Eastern Europe on 15/11/1915, entitled "We and Turkey." Jabotinsky asserted, "The only prospect that holds hope for us is the carving up of Syria... It is our task to prepare for that prospect. All else is a purposeless waste of time."³ In this statement, Jabotinsky anticipated the potential threat that a unified Syria might pose to the Zionist project, despite the fact that Syria remained under Ottoman rule and lacked a sufficiently organized nationalist leadership capable of resisting Zionism to the degree that would warrant partition.



**Vladimir (Zeév)
Jabotinsky**

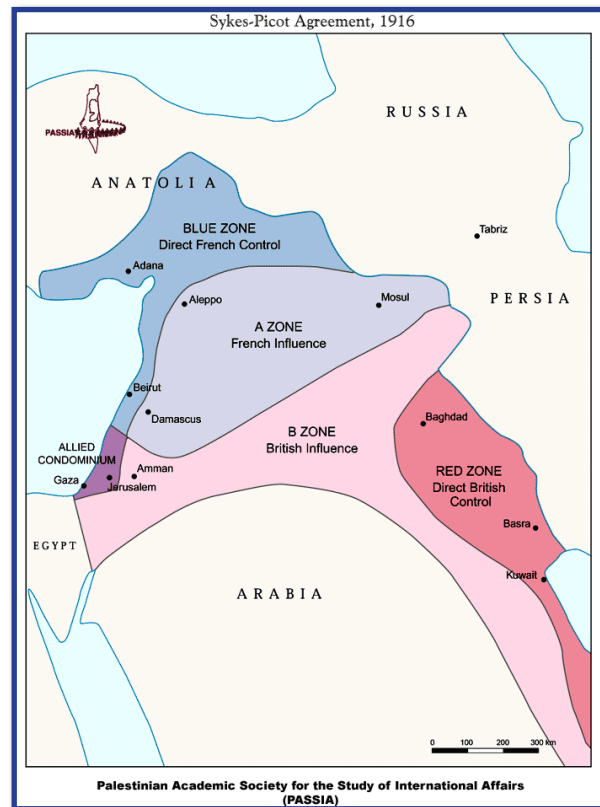
The reasoning underlying this consideration appears to have centered on separating Palestine from Syria as a preliminary step toward facilitating Zionist encroachment.

Indeed, the Zionist movement intensified its efforts, led by Chaim Weizmann, and played a pivotal role in detaching Palestine from Syria through strategic collaboration with British and French colonial authorities, notably within the framework of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement,⁴ which partitioned the Arab Levant (see the following map).⁵ This arrangement reflected the strategic interests of Britain and France, within which close ties were cultivated between the two powers and the Zionist leaders of the time, Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, and others..., thereby facilitating the continued advancement of the Zionist settlement project in Palestine.

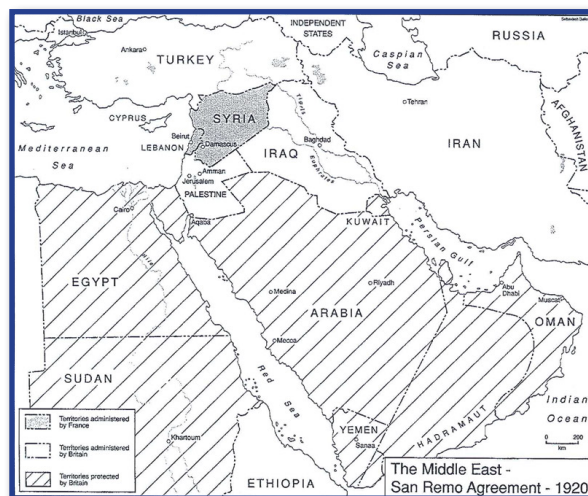
³ Greater Israel is the End Game in Syria, site of Decode the World, 9/12/2024, <https://:decodetheworld.substack.com/p/greater-israel-is-the-end-game-in>, quoted from Zeév Jabotinsky, "We and Turkey," *Di Tribune*, 30/11/1915.

⁴ For details, see: Khairiyah Qasmiyeh, *Al-Nashat al-Suhyuni fi al-Sharq al-Arabi wa Sadah 1908–1918* (Zionist Activity in the Arab East and Its Echo 1908–1918) (Beirut: Research Center – Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 1973), pp. 324 ff.

⁵ Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916, site of Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA).



In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was issued, calling for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine and outlining a mechanism for its implementation through the Mandate system adopted by the League of Nations following its establishment in 1919, after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles at the Paris Peace Conference. Subsequently, Zionist movements intensified their efforts and coordination with Western powers, culminating in the 1920 San Remo Conference in Italy, where Palestine and Transjordan were detached from Syria, leaving the latter confined to what is now Syria and Lebanon (see the shaded area in the following map).⁶



⁶ The Middle East - San Remo Agreement - 1920, site of Center for Israel Education, <https://israeled.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/1920-San-Remo-Agreement.jpg>



Simultaneously, Zionist influence in France contributed to the separation of Lebanon from Syria in 1920 and aimed at establishing a Maronite state. One of the most significant acknowledgments of Zionist activity is found in a doctoral dissertation, subsequently published as the book *The Lebanon Tangle 1918–1958* by the Israeli scholar Reuven Ehrlich. Ehrlich, a reserve colonel with prior service in the Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman), currently serves as the director of the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, located in the Galilot neighborhood north of Tel Aviv.⁷



**Reuven Ehrlich -
Basvach Helevanon
(The Lebanon Tangle)
1918–1958**

With the onset of the French occupation of Syria in 1920, Damascus was home to several relatively prominent Jewish and Zionist figures, including Rabbi Jacob Danon, the educator and orientalist Joseph Joel Rivlin, Yossef Laniado, the first Jewish member of the Syrian parliament in 1919, and Ibrahim Totah, the managing editor of the Zionist-oriented newspaper *HaMizrah* (The East), among others. Several of these individuals maintained cordial relations with the French occupying authorities. A particularly symbolic event of this period was Rabbi Danon's hosting of General Henri Gouraud and several of his officers at the Maktab 'Anbar School.⁸

However, no documents have surfaced that clarify the political matters Syrian Jews were negotiating with the French. It therefore remains a matter of "cautious assumption" that Jewish and Zionist figures (in Syria and France) may have played an advisory or even inciting role in General Gouraud's partition of Syria into six states under the



**Damascus Chief Rabbi (hakham bashi)
Jacob Danon hosting General Gouraud
and several officers at the Maktab
'Anbar School, Damascus, 1920.**

⁷ "The Policy of the Zionist Movement toward Lebanon during the Mandate Period," in Reuven Ehrlich, *Basvach Helevanon 1918–1958* (The Lebanon Tangle 1918–1958) (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2000), pp. 21 ff. (in Hebrew).

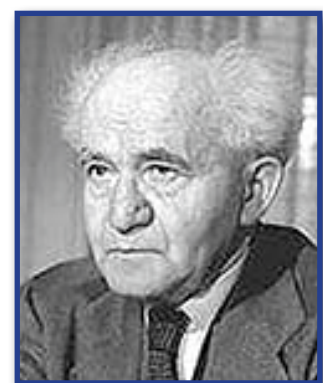
⁸ Photo from: Sami Moubayed, *Gharb Kanis Dimashq: Muhawalat Suhyuniyyah li Ikhtiraq al-Mujtama' al-Suri 1914–1954* (West of the Damascus Synagogue: The attempts of the Zionist to infiltrate the Syrian Society 1914–1954) (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 2018), p. 32, <https://archive.org/details/1914-1954/page/n17/mode/2up>

French Mandate, namely: Greater Lebanon, the State of Damascus, the State of Aleppo, the Alawite State, the Druze Mountain State, and the Sanjak of Alexandretta (see the map below).⁹



The basis of legitimacy for this “cautious assumption” (a research-based hypothesis pending documentation) lies in the idea that the fragmentation of Syria into small states and sectarian entities served the interests of the Zionist project, an outcome recognized and even encouraged by the Zionists themselves. This fragmentation undermined a unified national identity, dispersed political forces after the fall of the Syrian Kingdom under Faisal, prevented the formation of a centralized Arab leadership, and weakened the prospects of a unified Syrian front against Zionism and the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. Consequently, it also lent momentum to the idea of transforming Palestine into a Jewish state, modeled after the aforementioned Syrian states.

Among subsequent indications of Zionist ambitions to dominate Syria, the pre-1948 statement by Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion is particularly revealing. Specifically, he declared before 1948, “We should prepare to go over to the offensive with the aim of smashing Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria.... The weak point in the Arab coalition is Lebanon [for] the Moslem regime is artificial and easy to undermine. A Christian state should be established....When we smash the [Arab] Legion’s strength and bomb Amman, we will eliminate Transjordan, too, and then Syria will fall.”¹⁰



David Ben-Gurion

⁹ Philip Shukry Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* (Princeton: Princeton Legacy Library, 1987). <https://archive.org/details/syriafrenchmanda0000khou/page/n13/mode/2up?q=Mandate+for+Syria>

¹⁰ Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion: A Biography*, translated by Peretz Kidron (New York: Adama Books, 1978), p. 166, <https://archive.org/details/bengurionbiograp0000barz/page/166/mode/1up?q=lebanon>



What stands out in these excerpts concerning Israel's targeting of Syria prior to 1948—before the war in which the Syrian Army and the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) intervened to prevent the establishment of Israel—is the Israeli anticipation of future threats, as though a latent Syrian explosive were awaiting detonation. This perception prompted a shift from a defensive posture to a proactive offensive strategy. The latter unfolded through carefully executed, long-term operational measures: it began with discursive framing and gradually advanced, over successive phases of Israel's history, toward its strategic objectives.

Second: Selected Examples of Conventional Israeli Proposals and Plans to Partition Syria

Following the establishment of Israel, a stream of diverse reports and analyses emerged concerning schemes to partition Syria. Among the most prominent was the Israeli army's strategic plan for 1956–1957, which was publicized by the Indian journalist R. K. Karanjia in his book *The Dagger of Israel* (first published in English in 1957 and later translated into Arabic). The book is based on an “exclusive interview” conducted by Karanjia with General Moshe Dayan, then Israel's Minister of War, who disclosed a “secret document” outlining an Israeli plan to fragment the Arab states in a manner that would secure a “Greater Israel” extending from the Euphrates to the Nile. The document devoted substantial attention to the means through which Israel might undermine Arab unity, including the deliberate incitement of religious, sectarian and ethnic divisions. It also detailed a sequence of measures to be implemented from the very outset of a planned war, with the objective of establishing new states within the *Mashreq*. The plan purportedly stated: “To undermine Arab unity and sow religious discord among Arabs, measures must be taken from the first moment of the war to create new states in the territories of the Arab countries... in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia... and in Syria: a Druze, a Kurdish, and an Alawite state.”¹¹



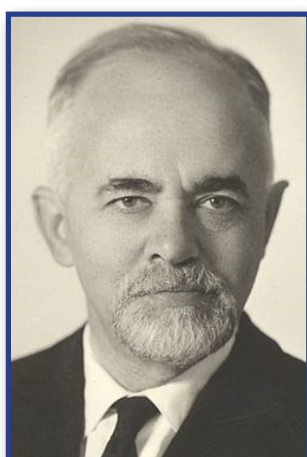
Numerous contributions within Israeli academic and research circles have advocated the partition of Syria. These writings not only reflect the prevailing intellectual climate in Israel but also illustrate the reciprocal influence between scholarly discourse and official policy orientations.

Among the most prominent Israeli politicians and intellectuals who devoted their writings and activities to promoting the fragmentation of the Arab world was Professor Eri Jabotinsky (1910–1969). A former activist in the Betar youth movement (Brit Yosef Trumpeldor), founded and led by his father, Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Eri Jabotinsky later served as a member of the First Knesset (1949–1951) representing the Herut party.

¹¹ R. K. Karanjia, *The Dagger of Israel* (Bombay: BLITZ Publications, 1957).

Jabotinsky also lectured in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the Technion in Haifa and served as Dean of the Faculty of Science at Haile Selassie University in Ethiopia.¹²

In a lecture delivered at the “Academic Club” in Haifa, Jabotinsky addressed what he described as “Arab imperialism.” He argued that the peoples commonly labeled “Arab” are fragmented into dozens of distinct communities and nations, and they are riven by mutual conflicts. Jabotinsky went on to propose that Israel should seek to undermine Arab imperialism by extending support to the Kurds fighting in Iraq, which would, in his view, lead to the disintegration of Iraq. Furthermore, in order to continue to destabilize Syria, he recommended that Israel adopt subversive measures to stir up the Alawites and the Druze.¹³



Eri Jabotinsky



Maariv newspaper, 13/2/1969, p. 10.

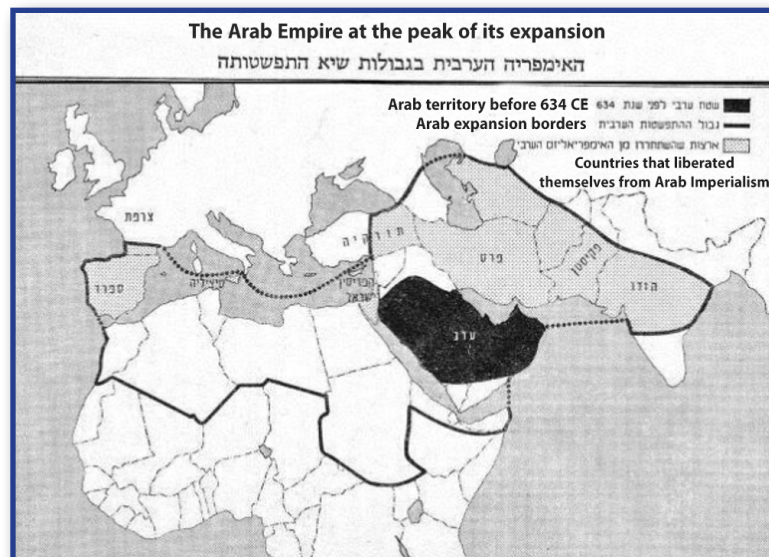
Among the most controversial publications of the 1970s was the book *The Conflict: Why and Until When?*, in Hebrew, by Professor David Kama, born in 1939 in Poland and who immigrated to Israel in 1950. He obtained a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Oxford and a PhD in International Relations from Tel Aviv University in 1970. He subsequently held positions as lecturer and professor emeritus of

¹² Eri Jabotinsky, site of Wikipedia, 11/8/2025, https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%99_%D7%96%D7%91%D7%95%D7%98%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%99 (in Hebrew)

¹³ Professor Jabotinsky Calls for the “Explosion” of Arab Imperialism, *Maariv* newspaper, 13/2/1969, p. 10, site of The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/mar/1969/02/13/01/article/97/?e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7CtXI-----1> (in Hebrew)



International Relations at the University of Haifa. Moreover, Kama was a member of the Israeli government's Middle East Peace Committee and one of the founders of the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement Forum. In this book, he devoted Chapter Five to articulating his perspectives, in which he advocated for the return of Arabs to the Arabian Peninsula, asserting that they were “occupiers” of all other territories (see the map he published in the book, p. 23).



Kama explains (p. 174) “how Israel will achieve peace,” emphasizing that this objective is pursued through the fragmentation of the Arab region, by establishing ethnic and sectarian ministates. He asserts that the most comprehensive and radical regional transformations must occur on Israel’s eastern front, as it constitutes, in the long term, the most perilous front for Israel and represents its strategic soft underbelly. His central proposition involves dividing the eastern belt surrounding Israel into two distinct halves: Syria and Lebanon in the northern sector, and Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia (and Palestine, should it come into being) along with the remaining Arab states in the southern sector. A broad strip of territory, extending from the Mediterranean to Iran, would separate these two halves and be placed under a nonArab authority (further details, including a map, will be provided subsequently — researcher’s note). Kama maintains that there will be room to support Lebanon as a Christian-majority state through the incorporation of Christians from Syria. He contends that Israel should establish alliances with non-Arab states, as such a non-Arab coalition would be capable of striking at Arab capitals and posing threats to Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia comparable to those these states pose to Israel. Moreover, Kama maintains that Israel must act decisively, engaging in acts of sabotage to incite rebellious sentiment among Syria’s minorities,



Cover of David Kama's Book

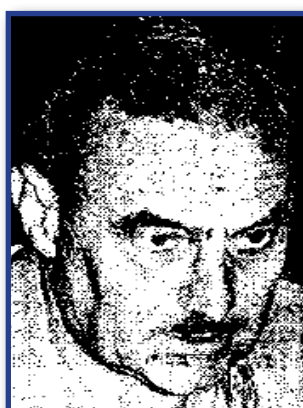
while simultaneously forging alliances with those states to free itself from what he describes as the Arab colonial burden.¹⁴

During the same period, Professor Shlomo Avineri, a scholar at the Hebrew University and former Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offered an interpretation asserting that “Recognition of the pluralistic character of the Middle East is a condition for establishing peace in the region... And the example set by Israel serves as an encouraging factor to other groups in the region that are not prepared to put up with an unfettered Arab - Islam hegemony.” In the same period Avineri said that in the Middle East there should be “room for a variety of national movements,” and further “The Arab attempt to create an entirely Arab - Muslim Middle East should be foiled. This is what we did when we established the Jewish state.”¹⁵



Shlomo Avineri

Similarly, in 1977, Aharon Amir, who served as Head of Foreign Relations and Media at the Israeli Government Committee on Lebanon Affairs, declared that in contrast to the Arab slogan of unity, he believes that, in time, it will disintegrate, giving rise to distinct ethnic and geographic entities such as a Christian Lebanon, a Kurdish region in northern Iraq, and a Druze enclave in Syria, alongside the State of Israel.. Ultimately, Jordan will also join this constellation, forming a Fertile Crescent under Israel’s leadership. At that stage, all member states of this union will collaborate in advancing regional development and implementing joint engineering projects, including the shared utilization of the Jordan, Yarmouk and Litani Rivers. Consequently, regional issues will assume a conceptual dimension and only secondary importance.¹⁶



Aharon Amir



¹⁴ David Kama, *The Conflict: Why and Until When?* (Jerusalem: Shikmona Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 143–178. (in Hebrew)

¹⁵ Nikolaos Van Dam, “Israel and Arab National Integration: Pluralism and Arabism,” *Asian Affairs Journal*, vol. 10, part 2, June 1979, pp. 145–146, <https://nikolaosvandam.academia.edu/research#papers>

¹⁶ Aya Ornstein, Mourning Transformed from a Divisive into a Unifying Force across Both Sides of the Border, *Maariv*, 20/9/1977, p. 9, <https://www.nli.org.il/he/newspapers/mar/1977/09/20/01/article/158/?e=-----he-20--1--img-txIN%7CxtTI-----1> (in Hebrew)



In 1982, *Kivunim* (Directions), a journal published by the World Zionist Organization, featured an article by Oded Yinon, a senior official in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and advisor to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, entitled "A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties." The article gained widespread notoriety, in which Yinon argued that:¹⁷

All the Arab States east of Israel are torn apart, broken up... Syria is fundamentally no different from Lebanon... But the real civil war taking place nowadays between the Sunni majority and the Shi'ite Alawi ruling minority (a mere 12% of the population) testifies to the severity of the domestic trouble. The dissolution of Syria... into ethnically or religiously unique areas... is Israel's primary target on the Eastern front in the long run.... Syria will fall apart, in accordance with its ethnic and religious structure, into several states.... a Shi'ite Alawi state along its coast, a Sunni state in the Aleppo area, another Sunni state in Damascus hostile to its northern neighbor, and the Druzes who will set up a state, maybe even in our Golan, and certainly in the Hauran and in northern Jordan. This state of affairs will be the guarantee for peace and security in the area in the long run, and that aim is already within our reach today.



Oded Yinon



Kivunim Hadashim
(New Directions)

These samples, among others, demonstrate that the partition of Syria remained a central concern for Israeli official, research and media circles during Israel's early decades. Having engaged in conflicts with its neighbors, Israel understood that such partition constituted a deliberate form of confrontation with Syria, following the divisive Zionist blueprint conceived prior to Israel's establishment and perpetuated throughout the subsequent decades.

¹⁷ Israel Shahak (trans & ed.), *The Zionist Plan for the Middle East* (Belmont: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1982), https://dn720006.ca.archive.org/0/items/yinon-plan/Yinon_Plan.pdf, a translation of 'Oded Yinon, "A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties," *Kivunim* journal, vol. 14, February 1982, pp. 49–58.

Third: The Strategic Considerations and Implications of Syria's Partition for Zionism and Israel

Israel's hostile stance toward Syria, much like its position toward the Palestinians, derives from a distinctive ideological, political and behavioral framework developed by Jews throughout their history. This framework produced what has often been termed "Jewish paranoia," a psychological construct that fuses fear of the Other with an inherent proclivity toward aggression. Its components were shaped by inherited social traditions, historical experiences, and centuries of fraught interactions between the insular "ghetto" community and its surrounding environment. The cumulative effects of these experiences were subsequently transmitted to Israelis and came to align with the structures and challenges underpinning Israel's conception of "national security" and its overarching strategic doctrine, which together frame and direct all of Israel's orientations and practices.

In this regard, Israel's motives for partitioning Syria derive from both intrinsic and objective factors, structured by a long-standing relationship of hostility that has endured over the past decades. Israel's exceptional nature, both in its genesis and its behavior, further shapes these dynamics. The principal underlying factors include:

- ▶ The ideological legacies of Zionism, which propagate a negative stereotypical image of Arabs while seeking to legitimize regional pluralism, particularly the "Jewish component" within it.
- ▶ The pursuit of Zionist expansionist ambitions in Syrian territory, and the attempt to generate new realities that could resolve the struggle over the settler base (Israel within the 1948 borders), thereby ensuring its endurance and potential expansion.
- ▶ Israel cannot secure its existence, which is threatened by internal and external forces, Palestinian, Arab and regional alike, nor achieve a decisive victory, except through the interplay of two strategies: first, by reinforcing its own resources and alliances; and second, by weakening its adversaries and undermining their homelands to ensure its continuity, in accordance with the "functional role" assigned to the Zionist project by colonial powers, a role that the partitioning of Syria undoubtedly supports.
- ▶ Addressing the challenge of Israel's "strategic depth," which has been exacerbated by the Syrian threat and what Israel terms the "danger from the north," requires practical measures. Among these is the establishment of what is called "artificial strategic depth," particularly through the occupation of new territories designed to function as security belts for Israel.
- ▶ Acting in accordance with the Israeli strategic plan to weaken and fragment Syria, by stoking internal disorder and undermining its geographic and political sovereignty. This fragmentation is pursued as a means of weakening Syria through the incitement of religious, sectarian and ethnic cleavages among population groups, the consumption of social mobilizations within their internal environment, and the replacement of intra-group differences with hostile antagonisms that are detached from Israel, while adapting relations with regional states accordingly. Israel's professed support



for minorities constitutes a blatant form of hypocrisy, given that its war machine simultaneously carries out campaigns of ethnic cleansing and politicide against Palestinians, undermining the very foundations of their independent development.

- Reshaping Syria, imposing comprehensive normalization on its components, and establishing multiple relations—political, security, economic, and otherwise—with weak polities under an Israeli umbrella.

These factors have developed within a particular historical context that can be described as the “curse of partition,” which has afflicted Syria along a trajectory extending from the late Ottoman period to the present. This trajectory transformed Greater Syria into a fragmented state consumed by religious, sectarian and ethnic divisions, its parts pulled by external actors, ultimately to Israel’s advantage, through the deliberate marginalization and forcible exclusion of Syria from the sphere of regional struggle and influence.

In Israeli collective memory, a persistent impetus continues to fuel the aspiration to achieve this outcome. It stems from the enduring weight of Syria’s role in confronting the Zionist project before, during and after the 1948 war. For example, Israel has not forgotten the Syrian volunteers who fought in Palestine, the participation of the Syrian army in that war, and its deployment west of the Jordan River in enclaves it was later compelled to evacuate and convert into a demilitarized zone during the 1949 armistice negotiations. Israel also recalls that the first operation of the Palestinian revolution in 1965 was launched from Syrian territory, that the Syrian army took part in the October 1973 War, and that Syria participated in resisting the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, while supporting Hizbullah and the Palestinian resistance, among other actions.

It should be noted that Israel’s effort to neutralize the Syrian threat is not merely retaliatory; it also reflects a strategic calculation to employ its surplus power preemptively, anticipating any future developments that could maintain Syria as a front in its confrontation. This approach became particularly evident during the violent events that engulfed Syria from 2011 onwards.

Fourth: Israeli Partition Proposals During the Syrian Crisis (Revolution)

Israel’s involvement in the Syrian crisis assumed a divisive character, as Israeli political circles and propaganda outlets launched an aggressive campaign aimed at encouraging the Druze and Kurds to separate from Syria. They framed the Syrian crisis (revolution) in terms and concepts intended to deepen fissures within Syria’s internal front, exploiting the atrocities that occurred during the years of civil war. Israel coordinated these efforts with the United States, whose forces occupy parts of eastern Syria and support the Kurdish self-administration along with its military formations, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which were established in 2013 across three areas: al-Jazira (Al-Hasakah), Afrin (rural Aleppo), and Kobane (Ayn al-Arab). This territory was designated Rojava, meaning “Western Kurdistan” in Kurdish.

According to an analysis prepared and published in 2012 by Professor Michel Chossudovsky, a researcher, author and professor of economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa and founder and director of the Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG), entitled “Hidden US-Israeli Military Agenda: ‘Break Syria into Pieces’,” the report stated the following:

The objective of the US sponsored armed insurgency is –with the help of Israel– to “Break Syria into Pieces”. The “balkanisation of the Syrian Arab Republic” is to be carried out by fostering sectarian divisions, which will eventually lead to a “civil war” modelled on the former Yugoslavia.... One possible “break-up scenario” pertaining to Syria, which constitutes a secular multi-ethnic society, would be the formation of separate and “independent”... states.... a federal Syria, separated into four or five regions on an ethnic basis, would also serve as a natural “buffer” for Israel.¹⁸

In connection with the aforementioned “agenda,” Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, a Palestinian researcher and academic and the General-Manager of Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, argued in his 2016 analysis of US policy in Syria that “the US wants to maintain the ISIS “scarecrow” for the longest possible time, in order to reach the outcome it desires. To be sure, the extremism of ISIS is perfect fodder for sectarian and ethnic polarization, and the emergence of walls of blood and hatred.” Saleh further observed that a discernible pattern emerges from a “careful reading of the US policy and conduct, and the conclusions drawn from studies conducted by think tanks, commentators,” and influential actors in decision-making: the division of Syria into “Alawi, Sunni, Druze, and Kurdish states emerging from the ruins of the Syrian state.” In this vision, “the walls of blood become official borders.”¹⁹

Multiple documents indicate that the discussions concerning Syria’s partition are part of a broader endeavor to redraw the map of the region. An endeavor characterized by the logic of “dividing the divided and fragmenting the fragmented.”²⁰

¹⁸ Michel Chossudovsky, Hidden US-Israeli Military Agenda: “Break Syria into Pieces”, site of Global Research, 16/6/2012, <http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=31454>

¹⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, US Policy in Syria: Walls of Blood,, site of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 25/8/2016, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2016/08/25/political-analysis-us-policy-syria-walls-blood/>

²⁰ For further details, see four selected documents translated and published by Al-Zaytouna Centre in “*The Middle East: New Maps Being Drawn*,” Al-Zaytouna Translation Series (74), January 2013, https://www.alzaytouna.net/arabic/data/attachments/TransZ/Middle_East_New-Maps_74.pdf



One of these documents is an article, published on 25/3/2011, by Aluf Benn, editor-in-chief of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. He stated that “A smart Israeli policy, which correctly identifies the opportunities inherent in the emergence of new states and knows how to take advantage of these opportunities, will be able to leverage the inevitable process to reinforce Israel’s power and influence in the region.”²¹

During this period, the Hauran region, encompassing the governorates of Daraa and Sweida, received particular attention in Israel’s strategy to dominate its neighboring areas. Among the proposals put forward within the Israeli military was a detailed analysis titled “Strategic Opportunities for Israel in Hauran: The Potential for Developing Alliances with Groups and Tribes in Hauran,” it stated:

Several acute issues concerning the individual and shared interests... warrant attention.... Hauran residents’ long-standing aspiration for autonomy and independence, and the opportunities this provides for differentiating the region from the Syrian state and establishing a buffer between it, Jordan, and Israel.²²

One of the potential models for cooperation proposed by the study includes a “minority alliance....echoing a strategy employed during the pre-state Zionist movement,” professional humanitarian and agricultural assistance, and the “establishment of a shared living space, [in which] Israel could provide basic needs to tribes and sects, enabling them to protect their lands and property.”²³

According to the Orientalist Yoni Ben-Menachem, a veteran Arab affairs and diplomatic commentator for Israel Radio and Television, a senior Middle East analyst for the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, who served as Director General and Chief Editor of the Israel Broadcasting Authority,



Yoni Ben-Menachem

The civil war in Syria... has once again brought to the surface sectarian divisions.... A fragmented and divided Syria is preferable for Israel to a strong, unified state... Should separate cantons or several small states arise, they are likely to remain preoccupied with their internal affairs and inter-state rivalries rather than engaging in conflict with Israel.²⁴

²¹ Aluf Benn, Caution: Middle East under Construction, *Haaretz* newspaper, 25/3/2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/caution-middle-east-under-construction-1.351743>

²² Munir Amar, Strategic Opportunities in Emerging Frontier Areas – Syria as a Case Study, site of Dado Center, 1/2/2014, <https://www.idf.il/42421> (in Hebrew) (Head of the Civil Administration. At the time of writing this article, he was Commander of the Haifa District in the Home Front Command).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Yoni Ben-Menachem, The Syrian Federal Republic, site of News1, 2/3/2016, <https://www.news1.co.il/Archive/0024-D-109993-00.html> (in Hebrew)

Among the main measures advancing this divisive policy, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's focus in 2017 was on ensuring that "any future agreement to end the civil war in Syria include the establishment of buffer zones along the borders between Syria and Israel in the Golan Heights." Netanyahu reportedly discussed this matter with international officials, including the Trump administration.²⁵ In practice, however, this represents a strategy that, under the guise of security, seeks Israel's control over southern Syria,²⁶ including its Druze-populated areas and other communities, as a prelude to a future partitioning scheme.

Regarding the Kurds, Israeli positions, both official and public, have consistently emphasized the necessity of supporting them in their pursuit of independence. For instance, Ayelet Shaked, chair of Yamina and former minister, asserted that "the interest of Israel and the US, in terms of security and regional stability, lies in the establishment of a Kurdish state. The Kurds constitute the largest stateless people in the world, numbering approximately 35 million. They are an ancient people with a unique historical connection to the Jewish people,.... the Western world must stand by them."²⁷

Regarding the outcome of Israel's efforts at that time, a study prepared by Ehud Yaari, a writer, expert and one of Israel's leading analysts on Middle Eastern affairs at Channel 12, was published in June 2023. Yaari, who also serves as a Lafer international fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, released the study jointly with the Washington Institute and the Jerusalem Strategic Tribune. The study acknowledges that "Israel comes out of the 12 years of civil war in Syria as the biggest loser. The survival of the Assad regime, closely allied with Iran, amounts to nothing short of an Israeli strategic failure." Yaari further disclosed that discussions took place between Israeli security officials and representatives of the Syrian Druze and Kurdish communities:

After intensive discussions with Druze dignitaries, including "The Men of Dignity," an anti-Assad group, the Israelis concluded that the Druze were not prepared to completely sever ties with the Assad regime.... The Kurds of northeast Syria, led by General Mazloun Abdi who commands the Syrian Defense Forces.... kept contacts with Israel throughout the civil war. One idea discussed in 2016 was to encourage Abdi's units to link up the Syrian city of Afrin on the Turkish border to the Mediterranean coast, so that oil from fields under Syrian Kurdish control could be exported without going through Turkey.²⁸

²⁵ Barak Ravid, Netanyahu Seeks Establishment of a Buffer Zone Between Syria, Israel, and Jordan, *Haaretz*, 7/4/2017, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2017-04-07/ty-article/.premium/0000017f-ebbf-d639-af7f-ebff195d0000> (in Hebrew)

²⁶ For details, see Ibrahim Abdul Karim, Southern Syria and the Risks of Israeli Control, site of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 23/9/2025, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2025/09/23/academic-paper-southern-syria-and-the-risks-of-israeli-control-arabic/>

²⁷ Ayelet Shaked, Israel's Interest – A Kurdish State, site of Arutz7, <https://www.inn.co.il/news/415061> (in Hebrew)

²⁸ Ehud Yaari, How Israel Lost the Syrian Civil War, site of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 2023, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-israel-lost-syrian-civil-war>



An examination of efforts to partition Syria shows that what has been described as Israel's "strategic failure" during the civil war did not hinder its continued activities in Syria's new phase.

Fifth: The Division of Syria in Israeli Assessments Following the Fall of the Assad Regime

In the aftermath of the Assad regime's collapse, Israeli figures engaged in political and strategic affairs have produced a range of assessments aimed at delineating potential Israeli approaches to the division of Syria. In this context, the persistent difficulties in integrating the country's diverse minorities within a unified state framework have been highlighted as a key factor. Moreover, numerous proposals have focused on sectarian and ethnic dynamics, suggesting that Israel perceives an opportune moment to translate its visions of territorial and political fragmentation into concrete reality.

Notably, among the views that have emerged, particular emphasis has been placed on the idea that altering the nature of governance in Syria, whether through federal, confederal or independent-state arrangements, could produce outcomes favorable to Israel, given the implications such changes would have for its strategic relationship with Syria.

In an extended joint article, retired Major General Amos Yadlin, former head of Military Intelligence (AMAN) and currently chair of the MIND Israel platform, together with Brigadier General (res.) Udi Evental, a strategic and policy planning expert at the same platform, noted that, according to their assessment, "Israel has an interest in a federation or confederation in which all parts balance each other: Kurds in the north under US sponsorship; Sunnis in the northwest and center under Türkiye's auspices; Alawites along the coast under Russia; and moderate Druze and Sunnis in the south closely aligned with Jordan and under Israeli-American support."²⁹

Yehuda Belanga, an Israeli expert on Arab affairs at Bar-Ilan University, contended that Israel should, and indeed can, strategically engage separatist groups to advance its interests. In this context, establishing relations with minority communities, particularly the Druze across the borders and the Kurds in northern Syria, would be central. Furthermore, he emphasized the need to revive the concept of a peripheral alliance, thereby developing



Yehuda Belanga

²⁹ Amos Yadlin and Udi Avnethal, This is a sign that the entire Middle East has changed. Without Assad, Hezbollah is stuck, site of Channel 12, https://mobile.mako.co.il/news-columns/2024_q4/Article-b3735ed07f6a391026.htm?sCh=5fdf43ad8df07110&pId=173113834&partner=Lobby (in Hebrew)

strategic partnerships with actors who face the greatest threats, rely on external support, and could assist Israel in confronting a potential common adversary.³⁰

Ten days after the fall of the Assad regime, Zvi Hauser, who served as Israel's Cabinet Secretary from 2009 to 2013, was a Knesset member from 2019 to 2022, and currently chairs the Coalition for the Israeli Golan, published an article. Under the subheading "Dismantling Syria Along Ethnic Lines," it examined how Israel might pursue this strategy:



Zvi Hauser

Israel should strategically consider dismantling Syria into zones defined by ethnic and religious divisions, with a view to simultaneously establishing Israeli spheres of influence. Within this framework, two central groups emerge: the Druze, predominantly located along the areas adjacent to the Israeli border, and the Kurds, supported by the US and situated in northeastern Syria. These groups [Hauser contends] are naturally positioned to serve as partners for Israel; consequently, strengthening them would enhance Israel's strategic posture and consolidate its regional interests. Through coordinated political, economic and military support, Israel, in alignment with the US, could facilitate the establishment of autonomous zones that promote stability, mitigate radical control in these areas, and equip these groups with combat resources obtained as spoils from Lebanon and Gaza. When combined with humanitarian and economic assistance, such measures could thereby establish the basis for enduring cooperation, ultimately safeguarding both Israeli and US interests in the region.³¹

Yoni Ben-Menachem has argued that

Israel is acting appropriately in calling on the international community to protect minorities in Syria, particularly the Kurds and the Druze, both from a moral and a political standpoint. These two groups represent potential allies for Israel in Syria, given that the existence of a centralized, radical Islamic government controlling the entirety of the country and its minorities would not serve Israel's interests. Israel's interest lies in partitioning Syria into geographically and administratively autonomous regions, while ensuring that the regime in Damascus remains weak. This

³⁰ Yehuda Belanga, To Lead the Minority Alliance, site of Israel Hayom, 12/12/2024, : <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/opinions/article/16950294> (in Hebrew)

³¹ Zvi Hauser, A Once-in-a-Century Opportunity: How Israel Can Shift the Balance in the Middle East, Israel Hayom, 18/12/2024, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/16990364> (in Hebrew)



would enable Israel to form defensive alliances with the Kurds, the Druze and possibly even the Alawite community, thereby helping to prevent the return of Iranians and their proxies to Syrian territory.³²

Ben-Menachem further notes that:

the idea of forming a minority alliance in Syria is strategically sound, as it would unite all ethnic groups there against the radical Islamic rebel regime. Israel should adopt a strategy that partitions Syria into four cantons; Sunni, Alawite, Druze and Kurdish, especially given that current developments suggest Syria is heading toward becoming a state governed by a radical Sunni regime akin to the Taliban.³³

At the official level, one month after the fall of the Assad regime, an Israeli report unveiled deliberations within Netanyahu's government regarding developments in Syria. These discussions were initially organized by Defense Minister Israel Katz in preparation for a subsequent meeting led by Prime Minister Netanyahu. During these discussions, Eli Cohen, a member of the cabinet and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, proposed promoting an international conference on Syria. The debate also addressed an initiative that senior political and security officials had been considering since the fall of the Assad regime: dividing Syria into provinces (cantons) to safeguard the security and rights of all ethnic communities within the country. Minister Cohen suggested "addressing this issue at a dedicated conference aimed at reshaping Syria and its borders."³⁴ This account was subsequently corroborated by a report in the *The Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), which cited Israeli security sources as stating that

Israel is lobbying world powers around the idea of making the new state emerging in Syria a federal system of autonomous ethnic regions.... While Israel immediately seeks to protect its borders and create a buffer zone, its actions are paving the way for an Israeli vision of federalist Syria with an autonomous zone controlled by friendly Druze along its border. In such a scenario, Syria would become a union of states, mostly autonomous from what would be a weak central government, with more power in local hands, especially in areas pushing up to Israel's borders.³⁵

³² Yoni Ben-Menachem, A Fragmented Syria Is an Israeli Interest, site of Epoch, 20/12/2024, <https://epoch.org.il/geopolitics/584152> (in Hebrew)

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Shirit Avitan Cohen, The Day After: In Israel, a Proposal Was Discussed to Establish an International Conference to Partition Syria into Cantons, Israel Hayom, 9/1/2025, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/17119598> (in Hebrew)

³⁵ Sudarsan Raghavan and Dov Lieber, Israel Sees Growing Threat in Islamists Trying to Unify Syria, site of *The Wall Street Journal*, 4/3/2025, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-syria-turkey-islamist-government-leaders-d5c118d8>

Regarding the regional and international spheres of influence over the aforementioned entities, Ron Ben-Yishai, the military analyst for *Yedioth Ahronoth*, observes that “In essence, Israel is proposing to Turkey a division of Syria into zones of influence under the auspices of the U.S. in the east, Russia along the western coastline, Turkey in the north, Israel in the south and east, and the temporary Syrian regime in the remaining areas.”³⁶



Ron Ben-Yishai

In light of the developments following the bloody events in Sweida (July 2025), Kfir Tshuva, an expert in game theory and decision-making and a lecturer in economics at Ramat Gan Academic College, recommended in an interview with *Maariv* that Israel capitalize on the crisis in Syria to garner regional and international support for the protection of the Druze. This strategy would, in effect, allow for the establishment of an independent Druze entity in southern Syria, functioning as a buffer zone to ensure stability along its northern border. Simultaneously, Israel should reinforce a discreet alliance with the Kurds in the north, who constitute a natural strategic partner in countering the Islamic threat.³⁷



Kfir Tshuva

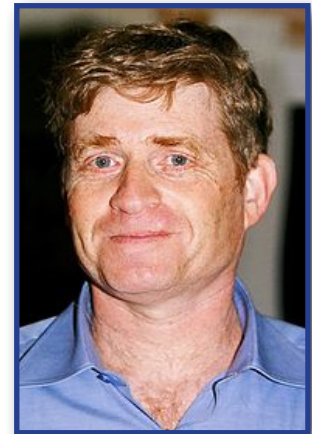
When combined with the repeated statements of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yisrael Katz concerning the so-called “protection of the Druze in Syria,” along with other Israeli pronouncements supporting the Kurds, the extent of Israel’s interference in Syria’s internal affairs becomes unmistakably clear. Such actions aim to consolidate and perpetuate the country’s internal divisions, consistent with the “Alliance of Minorities” framework that Israel seeks to bring under its influence.

³⁶ Ron Ben-Yishai, Israel, Turkey ponder how to split Syria into spheres of influence until stable governance takes hold, site of Ynet News, 6/4/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/opinions-analysis/article/hkmd9qyake>

³⁷ Peled Arbeli, For the first time in decades: Israel has been presented with a historic opportunity in Syria, *Maariv*, 18/7/2025, <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1215768> (in Hebrew)

Sixth: “Salahuddin/ David’s Corridor” ...A Historically Revived Term in Israeli Discourse

Among the Israeli divisive schemes for Syria, a plan currently circulating under the name “David’s Corridor” has emerged, though its origin remains difficult to trace. Israeli sources, however, refer to it as the “Salahuddin’s Corridor,” which envisages the establishment of two states, a Druze and a Kurdish state, linked to Israel, extending from southern Syria adjacent to the Golan Heights to its far northeastern reaches. This designation appears to have been adopted by Israel in an effort to court the Kurds, invoking the symbolic significance of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi for them. At the same time, it serves as a reminder that Salahuddin was reportedly tolerant toward his Jewish subjects, according to Professor Reuven Amitai, head of the research center “The Formation of Muslim Society in Palestine – Eretz Israel.”³⁸



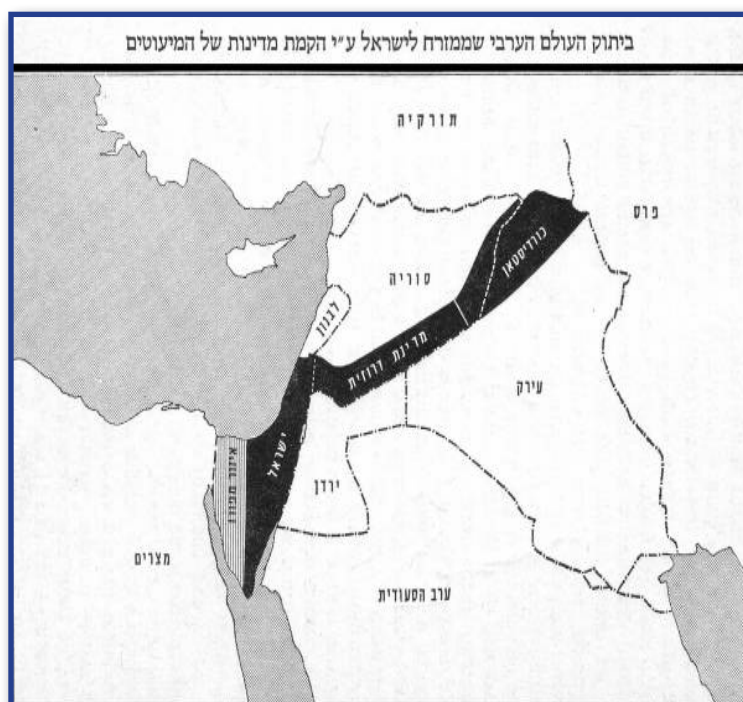
Reuven Amitai

It is remarkable that the concept of this corridor, namely, the establishment of Druze and Kurdish states connected to Israel, was first proposed fifty years ago by the Israeli intellectual David Kama. He substantiated this idea with a map presented on page 175 of his 1975 book *The Conflict: Why and Until When?*,³⁹ which delineates the details of a project he proposed to detach Syria and Lebanon from Iraq and Jordan through the establishment of a series of ethnically and sectarian-based mini-states, as follows:⁴⁰

³⁸ Conversations with Researchers, Conversation with Prof. Reuven Amitai, Israel Science Foundation (ISF), Annual Report 2013/ 2014, site of ISF, <https://www.isf.org.il> (in Hebrew)

³⁹ The author of this paper included this alarming map in his book *Al-Istishraq wa Abhath al-Sira ‘ Lada Israel* (Orientalism and Conflict Studies in Israel) (Amman: Dar al-Jaleel for Publishing and Palestinian Research and Studies, 1993), p. 477, as part of his discussion of the aforementioned book by David Kama. He also presented it in several lectures delivered at academic and research institutions both in Syria and abroad. A review of search engine results indicates that this map has remained virtually unknown in electronic publications.

⁴⁰ David Kama, *The Conflict: Why and Until When?*, p. 17.



The Jewish state: encompassing all of Palestine and a significant portion of Sinai.

The Druze state: stretching from the Golan Heights through Hauran to the Syrian Desert.

The Kurdish state: comprising territory cut from eastern Syria up to the border with Türkiye, along with a larger area taken from northwestern Iraq.

The Jewish state: encompassing all of Palestine and a significant portion of Sinai.

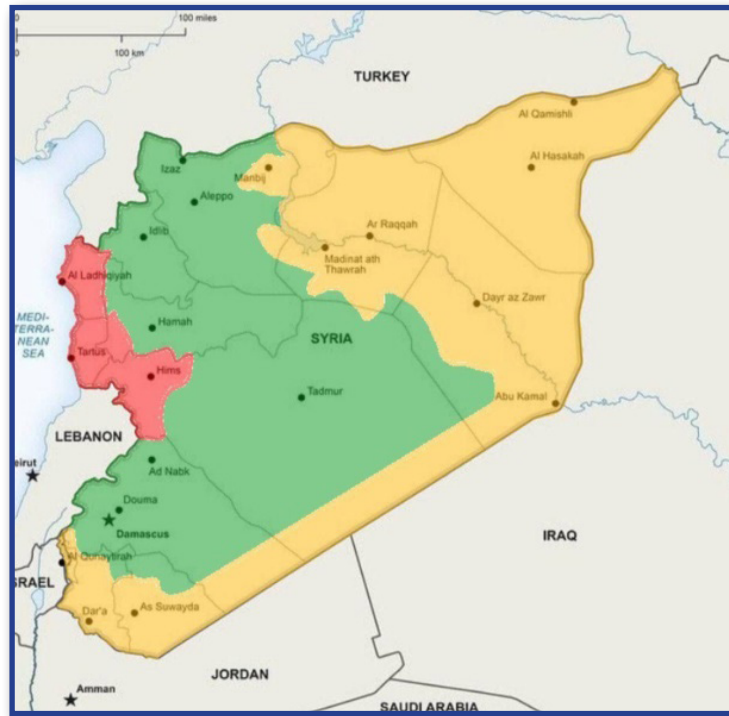
The Druze state: stretching from the Golan Heights through Hauran to the Syrian Desert.

The Kurdish state: comprising territory cut from eastern Syria up to the border with Türkiye, along with a larger area taken from northwestern Iraq.

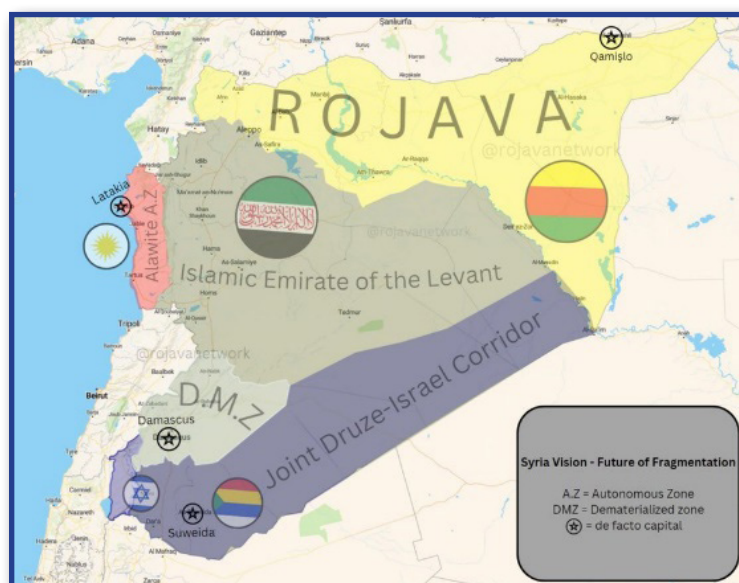
At that time, in the mid-1970s, neither the Druze nor the Kurds in Syria faced internal challenges with the state that would compel them to pursue a solution with a regional, geographic or political dimension. Nevertheless, the Zionist strategists conceived a plan designed to solidify direct engagement with Israel. After five decades, this plan has resurfaced in the period following the fall of the Assad regime, accompanied by the publication of maps reminiscent of David Kama's earlier proposal, along with analyses of their geopolitical and economic significance.

On the eve of Assad's regime collapse, a map circulated on social media proposing the partition of Syria into three distinct states: an Alawite state along the coast (marked in red), where Assad would retain partial authority; a rebel state encompassing the majority of Sunni-majority Syrian cities; and a joint Kurdish-Druze state, incorporating a corridor along the border with Israel and another along the Jordanian frontier, intended to separate Islamist rebels from Israel.⁴¹

⁴¹ Kim Presser, "This map, in its various versions, has been circulating for the last 24 hours," site of LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kimpresser_this-map-in-its-various-versions-has-been-activity-7271189592647602176--Sr-



In its periodic report covering 25/2–5/3/2025, entitled “Spotlight on Syria,” the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center included a map depicting a projected “future division of Syria.” Notably, the map features a “shared Druze-Israeli corridor” extending from southern Syria along the Jordanian border to the tri-border area with Iraq, where it connects with the Kurdish autonomous region in northern and eastern Syria (known as Rojava). The Alawites were allocated autonomy along the coastal region, whereas Damascus was designated as a demilitarized zone, and the remainder of the country was labeled under the new Syrian flag as the Islamic Bilad al-Sham Emirate, an Islamic state led by Ahmad al-Sharaa.⁴²



⁴² Spotlight on Syria February 26 – March 5, 2025, site of The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 6/3/2025, https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/app/uploads/2025/03/E_054_25.pdf

In early March 2025, Israeli journalist Pazit Rabina published a report on Makor Rishon website, entitled “The Justice and Freedom Corridor: How Turkish Influence in the Middle East Will Be Broken.” The report featured an interview with İbrahim Halil Baran, founder of the Kurdish Party Partiya Kurdistanî (PAKURD) in Türkiye and currently a refugee in the Netherlands. Rabina highlighted that Baran is also the architect of the “Salahuddin’s Corridor” concept, which is grounded in his vision for reshaping the Middle East through what he terms the “Justice and Freedom Corridor,” stretching from Kurdistan to the Mediterranean. According to Baran, the initiative seeks not only to curtail Türkiye’s influence in the region but also to foster coexistence among the various communities along its path. He adds:



İbrahim Halil Baran

The greatest danger, however, lies in Türkiye’s expansionist policy, which even surpasses that of Iran, as Ankara seeks to revive its historical Ottoman influence in the region. To prevent such an undesirable scenario, a strong alliance must be formed between the Kurds, the Druze and Israel. This alliance would enable the establishment of the “Salahuddin’s Corridor,”... securing trade routes and strengthening regional stability. Such a corridor would not only provide the Kurds with an exit from their current geopolitical trap but also help Israel balance pressures from Türkiye and extremist Islamist factions. Strategic sectors such as oil, agriculture, water resources and trade routes would achieve a new economic and political equilibrium through a Kurdish-Israeli partnership. This framework would safeguard the long-term interests of the Kurds while enhancing Israel’s regional influence and ultimately fostering a broader security architecture for the Middle East.⁴³

The report adds:

The autonomy and military council the Druze have declared today enjoy direct support from the Kurds. If necessary, Kurdish fighters can deploy additional forces in the area to support them. This model is not limited to the Druze and can be extended to the Alawites and other non-Muslim communities. The key factor here is Israel’s ability to cooperate with these historically marginalized communities within the new balance of power emerging in Syria.⁴⁴

⁴³ Pazit Rabina, “A Corridor of Justice and Freedom”: How Turkish Influence in the Middle East Could Be Broken, site of Makor Rishon, 2/3/2025, <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/news/819667/> (in Hebrew)

⁴⁴ Ibid.

In another report, journalist Pazit Rabina characterized Netanyahu's pledge to protect the Druze in Syria as part of a US-sponsored geostrategic initiative to establish the "Salahuddin's Corridor" for minority freedoms, designed to link the Kurds and Druze with Israel.⁴⁵

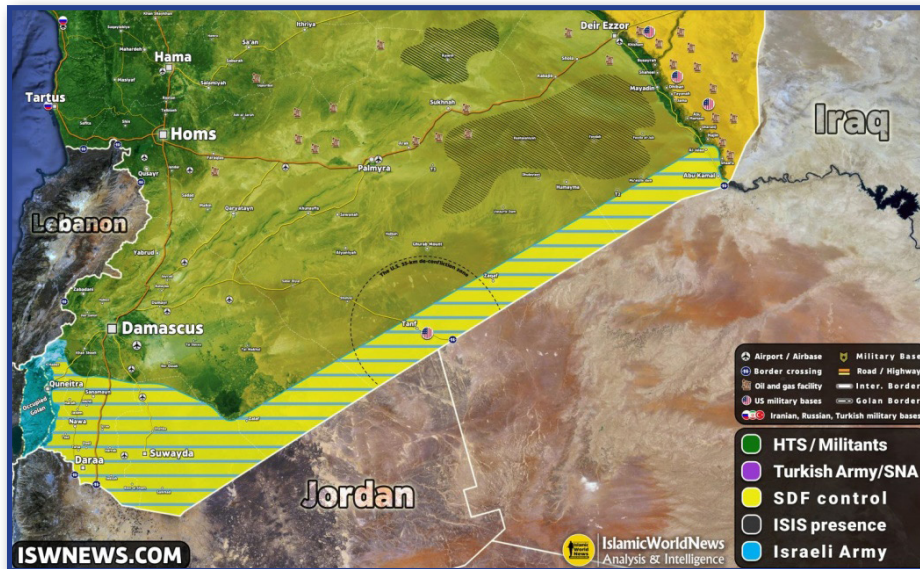
A report entitled "Salahuddin Corridor – Kurds, Druze, and Israelis" cited Ibrahim Baran as saying: "The state known as Syria has effectively ceased to exist, and governing authority should be transferred to the legitimate inhabitants of these lands. A new political structure must be established to represent Kurds, Alawites, Druze, Arabs, and non-Muslim minorities.." The investigation exposes "the Kurdish-Druze connection and its intersection with statements by Prime Minister Netanyahu. The piece highlights Kurdish-Druze-Israeli partnerships and reveals that Major General Ghassan Aliyan, Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), and Sheikh Muwaffaq Tarif, head of the Druze community in Israel, are actively involved in developments in Syria. The program includes the employment of Druze workers from border-adjacent Syrian villages in Israeli communities." The report highlighted the striking similarity between the flag of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and that of the Sweida Military Council led by Colonel Tariq al-Shufi, a former Syrian army officer who declared that he would not join the new Syrian army. The investigation noted that signs are beginning to emerge indicating the development of a strategic relationship between the Druze and Kurdish minorities. In February 2025, a delegation from the SDF visited Sweida to meet Sheikh Hikmat al-Hajri, leader of the Druze community, at his residence." The report posed the question of whether what we are witnessing is the inception of an unprecedented strategic initiative uniting, for the first time, Israeli, Druze and Kurdish interests with US support. Its conclusion was affirmative: what is unfolding constitutes a strategy far broader than merely employing Syrian Druze workers in Israel.⁴⁶

A report titled "Formation of the Suwayda Military Council: Is Israel Supporting the Druze to Implement the David Corridor Plan?!", published by the Islamic World News website, 3/2025, stated that "the actions and statements of Israeli officials have fueled speculation about Tel Aviv's intention to implement the David Corridor plan in Syria." This development coincided with the announcement by local armed groups in Sweida Province of the formation of the "Sweida Military Council," which maintains positive relations with SDF. Tariq al-Shufi, head of the Sweida Military Council, expressed gratitude to all those supporting the Council and contributing to the protection of the Druze community and the stabilization of the region. Some analysts considered these actions an Israeli attempt "to support Israel's Kurdish allies east of the Euphrates in order to fuel separatist conflicts in the region." The "occupation of areas in Daraa province by the Israeli army could be seen as part of this plan." According to the report, if the Israelis decide to implement this plan, Tel Aviv's next step after advancing in Daraa province would be Sweida. Securing access to and passing through Sweida requires the support and consent of the Druze, which has been partially achieved. Following Sweida, the advance of the Israeli military in southern Syria

⁴⁵ Pazit Rabina, Breaking Turkish Influence: The Motive Behind Israel's Support for the Druze in Syria, Makor Rishon, 2/3/2025, <https://www.makorishon.co.il/news/819641> (in Hebrew)

⁴⁶ Emily Halabi, Salah al-Din Corridor: Kurdish-Druze-Israeli Cooperation, site of Karmel, 1/3/2025, <https://www.karmel.co.il/חברה/פרוודור-סלאח-אלדין-כורדי-דרוזי-ישראלי> (in Hebrew)

would be facilitated, as the “Al-Tanf region in Homs province has been under American occupation for years,” and the US army would pave the way for the Israelis to reach Deir Ezzor province. The report concluded, “It is worth noting that the construction of the David Corridor is considered part of the ‘Greater Israel’ plan.”⁴⁷



Among the Israeli media calls for implementing the plan was an article by Avi Abelow, host of the “Pulse of Israel” daily video/podcast and the CEO of 12Tribe Films Foundation:

We must stop pleading for international action. Israel is the regional power. We are the only force in the region.... The only way to truly protect the Druze and other minorities in Syria is for Israel to secure control over southern Syria, up to Damascus.... Let’s be who we already are: a moral superpower with the strength to change the course of history.⁴⁸



Avi Abelow

On both the Druze and Kurdish sides, repeated calls were made to establish communication between their respective regions. On 17/7/2025, Sheikh Hikmat al-Hajri urged the opening of corridors toward areas under SDF control and toward Jordan.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, during a meeting on 21/7/2025 between Tom Barrack, the US Presidential

⁴⁷ Formation of the Suwayda Military Council: Is Israel Supporting the Druze to Implement the David Corridor Plan?!, site of Islamic World News, 3/3/2025, <https://english.iswnnews.com/37442/formation-of-the-suwayda-military-council-is-israel-supporting-the-druze-to-implement-the-david-corridor-plan/>

⁴⁸ Avi Abelow, Israel must secure southern Syria, up to Damascus to protect Druze, site of *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper, 5/5/2025, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-852631>

⁴⁹ Al-Hijri calls for opening corridors to Jordan and areas under SDF control, site of Ghad News, 17/7/2025, <https://www.ghadnews.net/?p=123294>



Envoy to Syria, and an SDF delegation, the envoy requested the delegation's assistance to help the authorities in Damascus restore stability in the country. The delegation, however, set several conditions for such cooperation, among them the establishment of a humanitarian corridor linking the Kurdish-controlled areas with the Mountain of the Druze (*Jabal al-Druze*).⁵⁰

Analytically, the geopolitical implications of the corridor plan entail the consolidation of Israel's predominance over southern Syria and the reinforcement of a separatist logic for the Druze and the Kurds. Consequently, areas under the control of the Syrian state would be progressively encircled and brought into contact with multiple, heterogeneous fronts of confrontation; military, security, political, economic and social. Conversely, the corridor would facilitate economic cooperation and partnership between Israel and the Autonomous Administration in north-east Syria in strategic sectors such as oil and gas, agriculture, and related fields, transiting through Sweida and the Badia, thereby to the detriment of the Syrian state while simultaneously enhancing Israel's standing regionally and in Europe. Moreover, the corridor would ease the provision of weapons, security services, and logistical support to the Kurdish and Druze entities, thereby bolstering their separatist posture and protection, assets that would, in turn, be instrumentalized in furtherance of Israel's interests.

Moreover, although the Kurds and Israel have maintained good relations for decades, Israel's capacity to support them has always been constrained by geographic limitations. However, a new development, as explained on the Hebrew news site Rega, suggests that Israel's engagement with Kurdish autonomy, facilitated through the establishment of a new Druze-led self-governing framework, could significantly strengthen its relations with the Kurds. This development carries profound strategic implications, effectively separating two axes that pose distinct threats: the Shi'ah axis, extending from Iran to Lebanon through Syria and Iraq, and the emerging and potentially dangerous Sunni axis, which may form from Türkiye and Syria toward Jordan and the WB, with the Mountain of the Druze serving as a natural barrier to Turkish expansion.⁵¹

However, the site emphasizes that "the primary challenge concerns the area between the Golan and the Mountain of the Druze, spanning thousands of square kilometers, inhabited by Sunni populations loyal to the new Syrian government, including the Daraa region, which has witnessed large-scale protests against Israel."⁵²

Various data have been published regarding the potential material benefits that Israel could obtain if the corridor were implemented, due to the region's wealth in natural resources. It has been noted that areas from Daraa and Sweida to al-Qaryatayn and

⁵⁰ The Kurds' conditions for helping the Shari'a regime impose stability in Syria, site of i24NEWS, 21/7/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/middle-east/artc-3a11464d> "(in Arabic)

⁵¹ The Druze in Syria: Israel's Key to Strategic Transformation, site of Rega News, 25/2/2025, <https://reganews.co.il/> (in Hebrew)

⁵² Ibid.

al-Tanf contain enormous deposits of high-purity silicon quartz—up to 99% purity—which constitutes the primary raw material for the production of electronic chips, semiconductors, solar cells and other advanced technologies. According to geologists cited by the report, the value of these resources in southern Syria, combined with other strategic minerals such as phosphates, zeolites and quartz sands, exceeds the combined mineral wealth of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. These assessments further emphasize that the rise of artificial intelligence industries, renewable energy technologies, and advanced military applications renders these materials more valuable than oil in the world of tomorrow. The report also notes that Israeli intelligence estimates the value of Syria's mineral resources, if exploited using advanced technologies, at over three trillion US dollars!!! Moreover, the report highlights that Israel is constructing a large technological complex in the Negev Desert specializing in the manufacture of drones and advanced electronics. Scheduled to open in 2025, this complex will require vast quantities of high-purity silicon, precisely the resource concentrated in southern Syrian regions.⁵³

There is, therefore, a long-term plan in which ideological, geopolitical, economic, and other components converge, aiming to shape a unique model of entities and relationships in the region. This model seeks to contribute to the reconfiguration of the Middle East, a topic frequently discussed by various Israeli leaders and circles, reflecting their overt hegemonic ambitions.

Seventh: Prospects of Israel's Partition Bets in Syria

Given the current complexities afflicting the Syrian arena, it is nearly impossible to delineate precise contours of its future developments. Nevertheless, it remains possible to discern the general trajectory of Israel's partition-oriented intervention. Driven by its persistent insistence on this involvement, Israel continues to wager on the deepening of its perilous repercussions within Syria's national fabric, geographically, politically, and socially, amid an environment marked by widening internal rifts that threaten coexistence, civil peace and stability.

This situation provides Israel with an opening to further activate and continuously update its partition plans, primarily through the policy of "strategic entanglement and empowerment of minorities," mobilizing them collectively against the Syrian state. As with its established channels with the Kurds, Israel may respond favorably to repeated appeals for assistance from certain Alawite circles,⁵⁴ thereby aggravating Syria's internal crisis.

⁵³ Wasim Jaber, "Syria's Strategic Minerals: The Hidden Treasure Behind Israel's Grand Project," site of Kalima, 2/3/2025, <https://kalimaiq.com/news/details/35526>

⁵⁴ For more about these appeals, see Roi Kais, A senior figure in the Alawite community approached Israel to explore the possibility of receiving assistance, site of Kan, 10/3/2025, <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/869135/> (in Hebrew); and Sapir Lipkin, The Bloody Unrest in Syria | Alawites in a Special Interview: "We are Asking Israel to Assist Us or Intervene Directly," Channel 12, 10/3/2025, https://www.mako.co.il/news-world/2025_q1/Article-c873232947f7591026.htm



However, the more alarming issue concerns the situation in Swayda Governorate and its connection to Israel, which has taken center stage in recent events. It is likely that Israel, for reasons including its consideration of the Druze factor, will continue to support the faction led by al-Hajri. This group has called for a break with the central government since the July 2025 events, during which the “Supreme Legal Committee” and subsidiary administrative committees were established, a “National Guard” composed of armed factions was formed, and the public display of Israeli flags became widespread, accompanied by open calls for Israel’s entry into the region. In addition, al-Hajri has repeatedly affirmed, including on 4/9/2025, that the Druze under his leadership will not relinquish their right to self-determination, asserting that their demand is for what he terms the establishment of an independent entity that ensures living with dignity under the protection of international law and the standards of advanced states.⁵⁵

Although representatives from Syria, Jordan and the US presented the “Roadmap for Resolving the Crisis in Sweida and Stabilizing Southern Syria” on 16/9/2025⁵⁶ and requested its adoption as an official document by the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the UN General Assembly,⁵⁷ the “Supreme Legal Committee” in Sweida, affiliated with al-Hajri, rejected the initiative. It reiterated its demands, chief among them the province’s independence or the right to manage its affairs autonomously.⁵⁸

In fact, the demand for Sweida’s independence constitutes a high ceiling, essentially a wish, due to the severe weakness of the necessary material foundations, coupled with the absence of international legal backing and regional consensus. By contrast, the demand for autonomous administration appears feasible. In either case, if a “humanitarian corridor” were established with the occupied Golan area, supplied with Israeli-supported content and features favoring Sweida’s demands, these claims could acquire geographical, economic and political form, though it is currently premature to determine their precise nature. At the present stage, however, the status quo is likely to persist, with potential susceptibility to emerging developments in the relations between Israel and Syria.

Against this backdrop, it seems unlikely that Israel will cease its efforts to undermine Syria’s unity, aiming to lure the Syrian regime into a political trap in which it would face pressure and be cornered to join the Abraham Accords without paying any tangible costs, beyond hollow Israeli assurances or declarations of non-interference in Syrian affairs.

⁵⁵ Al-Hajri Reiterates Call for an “Independent Entity” for Syrian Druze, Expresses Gratitude to Netanyahu and Trump, site of Anadolu Agency, 5/9/2025, <http://v.aa.com.tr/3678784> (in Arabic)

⁵⁶ A tripartite meeting in Damascus between Syria, the United States, and Jordan sets a comprehensive roadmap for resolving the Sweida crisis, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Syria, 16/9/2025, <https://mofaex.gov.sy/en/news/اجتماع-ثلاثي-في-دمشق>

⁵⁷ Envoys of Syria, Jordan and USA ask United Nations to adopt Sweida roadmap, site of Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), 18/9/2025, <https://sana.sy/en/international/2268238/>

⁵⁸ Sweida: The Supreme Legal Committee Rejects the Government’s Roadmap, site of Sky News Arabia, 17/9/2025, <https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/1820764>

This would hold even if negotiations avoided the occupied Golan and focused solely on newly occupied territories. The rationale is that Israel is investing in a major strategic operation: mobilizing religious and sectarian minorities and ethnic entities, which harbor the seeds of separatism that could emerge and develop within the new Syrian environment. According to Yaron Friedman, a lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Haifa University, writing in *The Jerusalem Post* on 18/8/2025, “Sharaa regime’s nightmare [is] the disintegration of Syria into regions: Druze in the south, Alawite in the west, and Kurdish in the north. In practice, this means that the regime in Damascus will only have direct control over about 60% of the country.”⁵⁹

The natural consequence, should it occur, is that the Syrian government would find itself in confrontation with separatist groups receiving support from Israel, which uses them as instruments to divide Syria. Moreover, given that no geographic area in Syria is homogeneous in terms of religion, sect or ethnicity, and that the political regions being discussed are characterized by social and demographic diversity, the anticipated separatist movements within these regions are likely to be accompanied by disturbances, including demographic reshuffling and regional or sectarian realignments, which would complicate the Syrian government’s efforts to maintain control. As for Israel, there is no indication that it will cease its policies that exacerbate these divisions.

It might be argued that, in response to Israel’s divisive efforts, there is a reliance on the cohesive Syrian national resistance to counter them, which constitutes a significant asset for President al-Sharaa’s administration. Additionally, other states are competing to preserve Syria’s territorial unity and to expand their influence for their own strategic interests, as these divisive efforts conflict with Arab, regional, international and global positions calling for the enforcement of Syrian sovereignty over its lands and for the new administration to be empowered to fulfill its role in maintaining regional security and combating “terrorism.” Ultimately, the outcome depends on the resilience of the Syrian people and the interactions of multiple external actors.

There is no doubt that all of this carries significant weight. However, the more pressing problem, which must be anticipated, is that Israel pursues an audacious policy to overcome any obstacles in its path, leveraging its exceptional strategic capabilities while flouting international norms. This enables Israel to advance its expansionist and divisive agendas, which no actor can practically restrain, especially in light of US complicity or, at the very least, tacit acquiescence. Benjamin Netanyahu has been entirely candid in defying anyone opposing these objectives. In an interview with the Israeli channel i24NEWS on 14/8/2025, he affirmed his belief in the concept of “Greater Israel.”⁶⁰ During the interview,

⁵⁹ Yaron Friedman, Sharaa’s nightmare is on the verge of realization, and a push could topple his regime, *The Jerusalem Post*, 18/8/2025, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-864506>

⁶⁰ “Netanyahu to i24NEWS: Israel would have hit Iran’s nuclear sites with or without US support,” i24News English channel, site of YouTube, 12/8/2025, <https://youtu.be/u8xhaxo2JJY?si=go5VxzqpO69RFXi1>



“the interviewer, Sharon Gal, gave Netanyahu the jewelry, which he said was for his wife Sara, describing it as ‘the map of the Promised Land.’ When asked if he ‘connects to the vision,’ the prime minister replied: ‘Very much so.’” Subsequent research “revealed that that Gal’s company website sells pendants in the shape of ‘Greater Israel,’ with their outline including parts of Egypt, all of Jordan and Lebanon, as well as parts of Syria and Iraq.”⁶¹

When this brief and unequivocal statement, made on the record and not excerpted out of context, is considered alongside similar statements by other Israeli officials and the myriad plans and maps depicting “Greater Israel” (*Eretz Yisrael Hashlema*), the pattern becomes clear. For instance, one such map appears beneath the menorah on an Israeli coin, a 10-agorot piece, as shown in the following image.⁶² Taken together, these sources provide compelling evidence that Israeli expansion in the neighborhood, and within this framework the establishment of the Druze and Kurdish entities (the Salahuddin/ David’s corridor) under the auspices of “Greater Israel,” is not merely a matter of personal opinions or theoretical proposals. Rather, it constitutes an unambiguous expression of Israel’s official position and its overarching policy approach.



Israeli 10-Agorot coin תורוגא
Tashnav 5756 (Hebrew calendar) / 1996 CE

⁶¹ Liza Rozovsky, Israel’s Neighbors Riled After Interviewer Gifts Netanyahu ‘Greater Israel’ Jewelry, *Haaretz*, 19/8/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-08-19/ty-article/.premium/israels-neighbors-riled-after-interviewer-gifts-netanyahu-greater-israel-jewelry/00000198-bea3-d15a-a3bd-bfa311a60000>

⁶² The aforementioned coin is in the possession of the author of this paper.

Eighth: The Syrian Regime's "Realistic" Options Regarding Israeli Partition Attempts

The current Syrian context is characterized by Israeli interventionist challenges and escalating political and field assertiveness. The balance of power continues to favor Israel, while official Syrian statements repeatedly emphasize the avoidance of direct military confrontation. In this environment, the "realistic" options available to the Syrian regime to counter Israeli attempts to partition Syria appear to converge under the overarching objective of "repelling Israel's successive incursions." These incursions aim both to annex additional Syrian territories and to protect separatist structures within the country. These options can be grouped into two main spheres:

- ▶• Domestic: The Syrian government is expected to close off pretexts for Israeli intervention. This includes efforts to heal the rift that has emerged with religious, sectarian and ethnic minorities, and to build bridges of trust and understanding with them under the framework of national unity, territorial integrity and the security of all components. It also involves protecting these minorities from being caught in the crossfire, thereby preventing Israel from intervening under the guise of humanitarian, propaganda, relief or logistical pretexts, which could escalate into security, political or economic actions.
- ▶• External: Leveraging existing relationships between Damascus and various Arab states, Türkiye, the US and others to generate effective pressure that constrains Israeli interference in Syrian affairs.

In addition to these two domains, a new possibility has emerged with the establishment of relations between the new Syrian administration and Russia. This development could allow both sides to move beyond past obstacles and open a new chapter in reorganizing their relationship, in a manner that enables the exchange of gains and the balancing of mutual interests. In return for the presence of Russian military bases along the Syrian coast and in Qamishli, as well as a set of economic agreements covering sectors such as phosphates, oil, gas and infrastructure, the Damascus government could capitalize on Russia's role in several key areas, most notably:

- ▶• Utilizing the close relations between Israel and Russia to enhance the international pressure mechanisms mentioned earlier.
- ▶• Restructuring outstanding debts.
- ▶• Reinstating Russian military patrols in southern Syria to counter Israeli incursions and attacks.
- ▶• Involving Russia in the delivery of humanitarian aid from the occupied Golan to Sweida, in cooperation with the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), if Israel remain intransigent, to prevent the relief route from becoming a politically driven corridor under Israeli control.



- ▶• Leveraging Russia’s membership in the UN Security Council to condemn Israel’s continued aggression against Syria and to block potential resolutions that may target the Syrian regime on various issues.

Moreover, there is an opportunity to assess Russia’s capacity to de-escalate tensions in Alawite-majority regions, particularly after the formation, on 27/8/2025, of “The Political Council of Central and Western Syria,” encompassing Latakia, Tartus, Homs, and parts of rural Hama. This development could produce yet another fissure within the Syrian state, potentially manifesting as a separatist region under the guise of a federal system.

Conclusion

The strategic framework adopted by Israel toward Syria, expressed through partition-oriented schemes and prospective visions, reveals a coherent and continuous narrative. Within this framework, Israel instrumentalizes minority groups as a “Trojan horse” to advance its own objectives, foremost among them the rejection of Syria’s transformation into a strong, cohesive state exercising full sovereignty over its entire territory. As this study has shown, such rejection represents only the tip of the iceberg of the broader construct fashioned by Zionism and Israel to shape both Syria’s present and its future.

An examination of developments indicates that Israel’s partitioning apparatus has operated at full capacity in the post-Assad era, achieving several successes with tangible strategic and operational effects. Most notably, these include:

- ▶• Neutralizing Syria’s military capability, which safeguards the country and resists partition.
- ▶• Occupying areas of eastern Golan, potentially serving as a forward base to extend occupation or to establish Druze and Kurdish entities.
- ▶• Fracturing the domestic front and destabilizing internal conditions, resulting in territories slipping from Syrian state sovereignty under the influence of support for separatist tendencies among Druze and Kurds. This development clearly constitutes a potential precursor to Syria’s fragmentation.

A tragic scenario is unfolding in Syria, one that cannot be ignored, as all its elements are shocking and marked by the blood of the Syrian people, while Israel realizes some of its long-standing ambitions. This underscores the imperative of reinforcing Syria’s domestic front, in concert with supportive Arab and international efforts, to enable Syrians to determine their national destiny, rebuild their war-weary state, strengthen security and stability, and safeguard the country’s unity and territorial integrity, not solely for Syria, but for regional and global peace and security.