

## “Secret Talks” between Israel, Jordan and Syria Regarding “The Stabilization of Borders”?

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According to Israel’s Intelligence DebkaFile: *“Israel, Jordan and Syria have embarked on secret discussions for the stabilization of their borders in southern Syria by restoring the status quo ante that reigned on the Golan prior to the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011.”*

The Debka report –which remains to be confirmed and corroborated — quotes intelligence sources from Washington and Moscow. It is highly unlikely that Damascus would have entered into direct bilateral talks with Tel Aviv. The procedure may in fact be envisaged to encroach upon Syria’s sovereignty in the Golan heights.

According to Debka:

” A vanguard of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has arrived on the Syrian side of the Golan. It has taken up position at its former Fawwar Camp base 4km east of Quneitra, which it evacuated during the Syrian fighting. The main body of the force, around 1,000 UN soldiers and 70 observers, is expected soon, to take up the task of reconstituting the former demilitarized zone that separated Israel and Syria under the 1974 armistice agreement.

This DMZ runs 80km along the Hermon range up to the Lebanese border in the north and down to the Israel-Syrian-Jordanian triangle in southern Syria up to the Jordanian border. In the 25km long Golan strip, between half a kilometer and 10 deep, the IDF and Syrian army were originally limited as to the number of soldiers and types of weaponry they are allowed to maintain. The strip will revert to Syrian civil administration under UNDOF control, and the Israeli-Syrian border crossing point will be reopened in the Quneitra area under the joint supervision of UN, Israeli and Syrian officers.

The military arrangements are still in discussion and changes may be introduced to this format.

The parties with varying degrees of involvement in the restoration of the UN-controlled DMZ on the Golan border are, therefore, the incoming Trump administration, Moscow, Damascus, Amman, Abu Dhabi and Jerusalem. Russia, Jordan and the Emirates have gained relevance for the first time as a result of changes in the strategic balance engendered by the Syrian war.

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