

GEOSTRATEŠKO I GEOPOLITIČKO ZNAČENJE GOLANSKE VISORAVNI ZA DRŽAVU IZRAEL

GEOSTRATEGIC AND GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL

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S obzirom na razmjerno nepovoljan geostrateški položaj u odnosu na okolne i često neprijateljske zemlje, izraelska vanjska politika uglavnom je uvjetovana dinamičnim zbivanjima u regiji. Dinamika se ogleda u nekoliko vojnih invazija na Izrael, pobunama palestinskog stanovništva, mnogobrojnim terorističkim napadima i čestim uzvraćanjima izraelskih snaga radi dostizanja zadovoljavajućega sigurnosnog stanja. U tom kontekstu, službeni Tel Aviv često je prisiljen pronaći ravnotežu između praktičnih vojno-obrambenih i sigurnosnih potreba te reputacije Izraela u međunarodnoj zajednici, uz prilagodbu realnostima svojega neposrednoga geopolitičkog okruženja. Izrael je tijekom „Šestodnevnog rata“ u lipnju 1967. okupirao veći dio Golanske visoravni. Taj je događaj u idućim desetljećima generirao s jedne strane pojačanu sigurnost sjevernih granica države s obzirom na iznimnu geostratešku vrijednost regije, a s druge negodovanje dijela međunarodne zajednice, osobito nakon 1981. kad je donesen zakon o proširenju jurisdikcije Države Izrael na taj okupirani prostor. Kontrola nad ovom regijom znatno je utjecala na geostrateški položaj Izraela, ali i stvorila geopolitički kompleksnu situaciju, osobito u kontekstu odnosa sa susjednom Sirijom. U radu se, uz geografski prikaz Golanske visoravni i historijsko-geografske aspekte, analiziraju geostrateške odrednice izraelske okupacije visoravni, kao i geopolitičke perspektive toga područja.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Golanska visoravan, Izrael, Sirija, okupacija, geostrategija, geopolitika

Given the relatively unfavourable geostrategic position in the surrounding of often hostile countries, Israeli foreign policy was largely conditioned by almost constant and dynamic developments in the region. These dynamics were manifested in the form of several military invasions of Israel, riots by the Palestinian population, numerous terrorist attacks and frequent retaliations by Israeli forces with the aim of achieving a satisfactory security situation. In this context, the official Tel Aviv has often been forced to find a good balance between practical defensive and security needs and Israel's reputation in the international community, while constantly adapting to the realities of its immediate geopolitical environment. The Israeli occupation of most of the Golan Heights during the Six Day War in June 1967 was an event that, in this context, generated an increased security of the country's northern borders in the following decades, given the region's exceptional geostrategic value, but also the opposition the international community to the occupation, especially after 1981 when a law was passed to extend the jurisdiction of the State of Israel to the said occupied territory. Control over this

region has significantly affected the favourableness of Israel's geostrategic position, but it has also created a geopolitically complex situation, especially in the context of relations with Syria, a neighbouring country. In addition to the geographical presentation of the Golan Heights and historical-geographical aspects, the paper analyses the geostrategic determinants of the Israeli occupation of the plateau, as well as the geopolitical perspectives of the area.

KEY WORDS: Golan Heights, Israel, Syria, occupation, geostrategy, geopolitics

UVOD

Od svojega proglašenja 1948. godine do danas, Izrael je prešao put od mlade države koja se bori za opstanak u kulturološki i politički neprijateljskom okruženju arapskih i muslimanskih zemalja do regionalno snažnoga geopolitičkog čimbenika na čitavom Bliskom istoku. U desetljećima borbe za opstanak, sigurnost i međunarodnu afirmaciju, izraelska je država uz diplomatski i geopolitički jaku poziciju ostvarila niz pobjeda u oružanim sukobima koje su joj omogućile i geostrateške prednosti, osobito u kontekstu povremenog zauzimanja graničnih teritorija s kojih je bila ugrožavana. U tom se smislu mogu razlučiti dva nerijetko suprotstavljena politička pristupa u povijesti izraelske države s obzirom na to da njezine granice i sigurnost – pristup koji je težio za ekspanzijom teritorija ne samo iz sigurnosnih nego i iz ideoloških razloga (narrativ o „Velikom Izraelu“¹ svojstven desnici) te pristup utvrđivanja granica prema međunarodnom pravu i postizanja mira s palestinskim Arapima i okolnim zemljama. Iako su oba pristupa proizašla iz suprotstavljenih unutarnjopolitičkih ideoloških stavova u Izraelu, njihova je primjena u pojedinim razdobljima uglavnom bila posljedicom realnih vanjskopolitičkih čimbenika i političkog pragmatizma.

Primjerice, izraelski protuudar tijekom Rata za neovisnost (1947. – 1949.) proširio je granice predviđene planom UN-a i Rezolucijom 181, te se može reći da su one plod prvog pristupa u njegovoj inicijalnoj inačici, kroz teritorijalno ostvarenje židovske države koja bi bila održiva u sigurnosnom i obrambenom smislu. No, u tom se slučaju ne može govoriti o širenju teritorija nauštrb druge suverene države, već isključivo u okvirima postojećega izraelsko-palestinskoga te-

¹ „Veliki Izrael“ (heb. *Erets Yisrael Hashlema*) – iredentistička težnja prema širenju granica Izraela na teritorije koji se poklapaju s povijesnim granicama Davidova Kraljevstva Izraela od približno 1000. g. pr. Kr. Trenutačno značenje ovoga pojma podrazumijeva međunarodno priznatu Državu Izrael, plus teritorije pod izraelskom kontrolom (Zapadna obala, pojas Gaze i Golanska visoravan). Prije osnivanja Države Izrael, dio židovskih nacionalista pod ovim je pojmom podrazumijevao čitavo područje britanskog mandata nad Palestinom, što uključuje i dijelove današnjeg Jordana (URL 8).

INTRODUCTION

From the proclamation of its independence in 1948 to the present day, Israel has evolved from a young state struggling to survive in a culturally and politically hostile environment of the surrounding Arab countries to a regionally strong geopolitical factor in the Middle East. In decades of struggle for survival, security and international affirmation, the Israeli state, in addition to its diplomatic and geopolitically strong position, has achieved a number of victories in armed conflicts which gave geostrategic advantages to it, especially in the context of occasional occupation of border territories. In this sense, one can distinguish two often opposing political approaches in the history of the state of Israel with regard to its borders and security – the approach that sought to expand territories not only for security but also for ideological reasons (narrative of ‘Greater Israel’¹ inherent in the policy of the right-wing parties), and the approach of establishing borders under international law and achieving peace with the Palestinian Arabs as well as the surrounding countries. Although both approaches stemmed from opposing domestic political ideological views in Israel, their application in certain periods was mainly due to real foreign policy factors and political pragmatism.

For example, the Israeli counterattack during the War of Independence 1947-1949 extended the boundaries previously envisaged by the UN Plan and Resolution 181, and can be said to be the result of the first approach through the territorial realization of a Jewish state that would be sustainable in terms of security and defence. However, in this case there was no expansion of territories to the detriment of another sovereign state, but only within the existing Israeli-Palestinian territorial duality. The Arab rejection of the UN resolution and its

¹ ‘Greater Israel’ (Heb. *Erets Yisrael Hashlema*) - an irredentist tendency to expand the borders of Israel to territories that coincide with the historical borders of the Kingdom of David of Israel from approx. 1000 BC. The current definition of this term implies the internationally recognized state of Israel, plus territories under Israeli control (West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights). Prior to the founding of the State of Israel, part of Jewish nationalists considered the entire area of the British mandate in the Palestine, including parts of present-day Jordan, as Israel (URL 8).

ritorijalnog dualiteta, pri čemu su arapsko odbijanje UN-ove rezolucije i plana o osnutku židovske i palestinske države, kao i agresija arapskih zemalja na tada novoproglašenu Državu Izrael, omogućili Izraelu političko-teritorijalnu afirmaciju vojno zauzetih područja.

Drugi pristup prevladao je nakon niza oružanih sukoba i posljedičnoga izraelskog zauzimanja palestinskog teritorija ili teritorija susjednih neovisnih arapskih država. U mnogim takvim slučajevima Izrael je nastojao „pacificirati“ svoje okruženje i ostvariti određenu razinu sigurnosti vodeći se načelom „zemlja za mir“² i vraćajući vojno zauzeti teritorij u zamjenu za mirovni sporazum. Međutim, takav vanjskopolitički pristup najčešće nije bio dugoročno rješenje s obzirom na to da su vraćeni teritoriji s vremenom ponovno postajali ishodištem terorističkih aktivnosti te povremenih napada na Izrael (SHERMAN, 2019.). Idealizam navedenog načela stoga je u znatnoj mjeri napušten nakon 2000. godine i izbijanja druge intifade, kada je većina Izraelaca postala sigurna da im Palestinci za okupiranu zemlju neće odgovoriti mirom (HAVEL, 2013.)

Prostor Golanske visoravni jedno je od spornih područja koja su zauzele izraelske snage tijekom ratova s arapskim zemljama, a koje je još uvijek pod kontrolom Izraela. Riječ je o povišenom bazaltnom platou sjeveroistočno od izraelske granice, inače suverenom sirijskom teritoriju, koji su izraelske snage okupirale 1967., tijekom tzv. „Šestodnevog rata“, a koji do danas nije vraćen Siriji (Sl. 1.). Izraelske su snage u posjedu oko 1150 km² ove visoravni, a politika službenog Izraela spram ovoga područja specifična je zbog njegove iznimne geostrateške važnosti i obrambenih aspekata koji se tiču dugoročne sigurnosti sjevernih granica Izraela. Upravo zbog topografije Golanske visoravni Sirija ima povoljan vojno-geografski položaj u odnosu na Izrael ne samo u ratnim sukobima, već i u širem kontekstu prisutnosti utvrđenoga sirijskog topništva koje je s

plan to establish both Jewish and Palestinian state in the area, and the aggression of Arab countries to the then newly proclaimed state of Israel, enabled Israel to politically affirm the occupied territories.

The second approach, on the other hand, prevailed after a series of armed conflicts and the consequent Israeli occupation of the territories of neighbouring independent Arab states. In many such cases, Israel sought to ‘pacify’ its environment and achieve a certain level of security, guided by the ‘land for peace’² principle and returning the occupied territories in exchange for a peace agreement. However, such foreign policy approach usually did not bring long-term results, given that the returned territories would often become the source of terrorist activities and occasional military attacks on Israel (SHERMAN, 2019). The idealism of this principle was therefore largely abandoned after 2000 and the outbreak of the second Intifada, when most Israelis became convinced that the Palestinians would not reciprocate the peace for the return of the occupied territory (HAVEL, 2013).

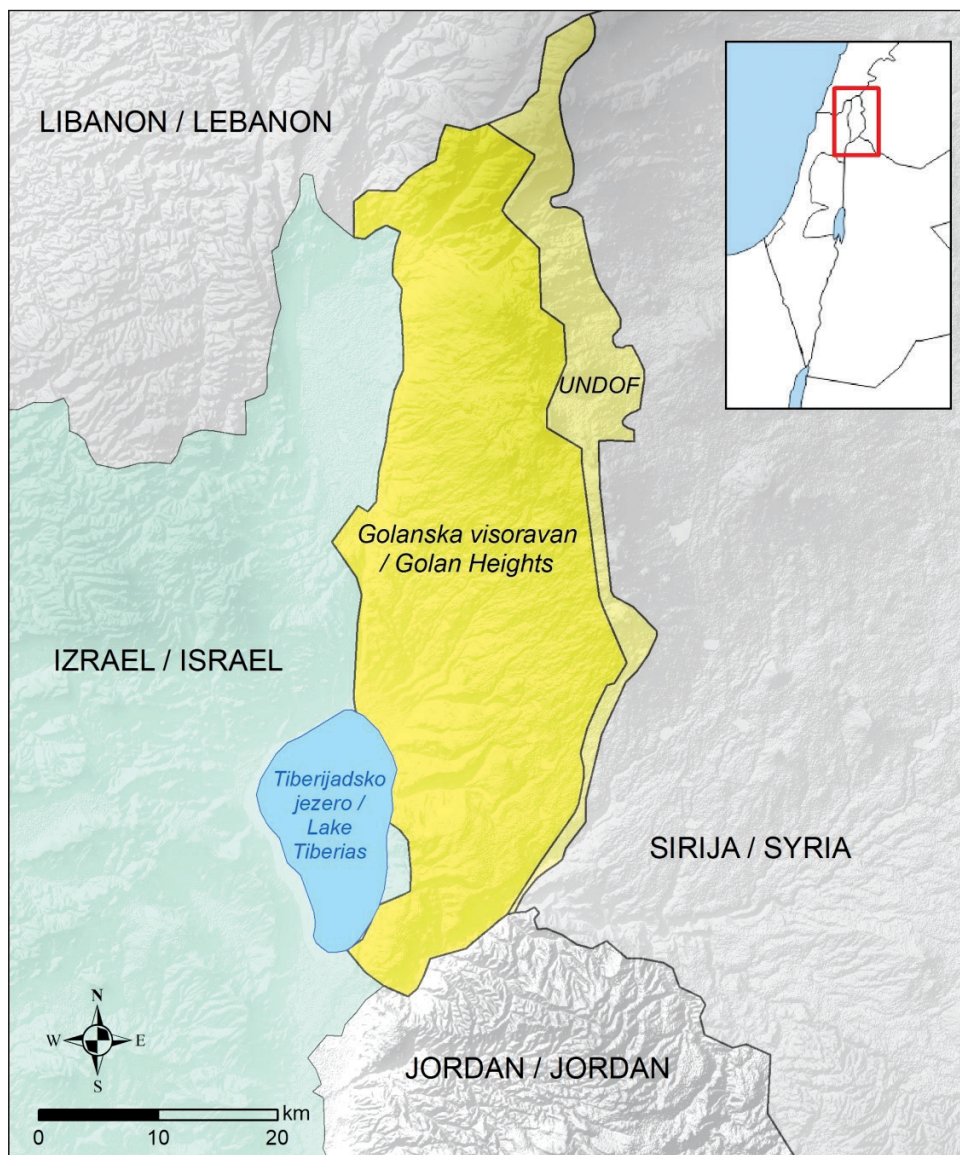
The Golan Heights area is one of the disputed areas occupied by the Israeli forces during the wars with Arab countries, which is still under Israeli control. It is an elevated basalt plateau northeast of the Israeli border, a sovereign Syrian territory occupied by Israel in 1967 during the so-called ‘Six Day War’, which has not been returned to Syria to this day (Fig. 1). Israeli forces hold about 1,150 km² of this plateau, and the official Israel’s policy towards this area is specific due to its exceptional geostrategic importance and the aspects of defence arising from it, concerning the long-term security of Israel’s northern borders. It was the topography of the Golan Heights that gave Syria a favourable military-geographical position in relation to Israel not only during wartime, but also in the broader context of the presence of fortified Syrian artillery which had a topographical advantage and often threatened the settlements in northern Israel. In this sense, for objective reasons the official Israel

² „Zemlja za mir“ – načelo postizanja sporazuma koje se temelji na povlačenju Izraela s okupiranih područja arapskih teritorija, uključujući i Palestinu, u zamjenu za mir i priznanje Izraelu prava na postojanje (URL 9). Ovo načelo potvrđeno je Rezolucijom 242 Vijeća Sigurnosti UN-a, te u kontekstu Golanske visoravni predstavlja službenu poziciju Sirije (MARK, 2002.).

² ‘Land for Peace’ - the principle of reaching an agreement based on the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine, in exchange for peace and recognition of Israel’s right to exist (URL 9). This principle is confirmed by UN Security Council Resolution 242, and in the context of the Golan Heights it represents the official position of Syria (Mark, 2002.).

povišenih pozicija imalo topografsku prednost te ugrožavalo naselja na sjeveru Izraela. U tom smislu, politika Izraela iz objektivnih razloga nije bila sklona žuriti se s vraćanjem Golana Siriji, već se, štoviše, kretala prema većoj integraciji okupirane regije. Drugi važan geostrateški aspekt bila je vodoopskrba Države Izrael koja velikim dijelom ovisi o izvorima na Golanskoj visoravni, a koja je namjerama Arapske lige da skrenu vodene tokove bila izravno ugrožena u prvoj polovici 1960-ih. Navedeni čimbenik u to je vrijeme bio od presudne geostrateške važnosti za Izrael uzimajući u obzir aridni karakter bliskoistočnog prostora i ograničenja vodnih resursa. U takvim

was not inclined to rush the return of the Golan to Syria, but was constantly making moves in the opposite direction - towards a greater integration of the occupied region with Israel. Another important geostrategic aspect was the water supply of the state of Israel, which largely depended on springs in the Golan Heights, and which was directly jeopardized by the Arab League's intentions to divert water flows in the first half of the 1960s. In that time, this factor was of crucial geostrategic importance for Israel, given the arid character of the Middle East and the limitations of water resources. In such natural conditions, namely, water is a first-class geostrategic resource that significant-



SLIKA 1. Geografski položaj Golanske visoravni s okolnim državama i područjem razdvajanja pod nadzorom UN-a (UNDOF)

FIGURE 1 Geographical position of the Golan Heights with surrounding countries and the UN-controlled area of separation (UNDOF)

prirodno-geografskim uvjetima, naime, voda je prvorazredni geostrateški resurs koji u znatnoj mjeri uvjetuje političke poteze država.

Izraelske snage u posjedu su većine teritorija Golanske visoravni od tzv. „Šestodnevno rata“ 1967. Od sirijskih vojnih snaga razdvojene su zonom razdvajanja nepravilnog oblika na području istočnog dijela visoravni, uspostavljenom Sporazumom o prekidu vatre postignutim nakon Jomkipurskog rata 1974., a koju nadziru snage UN-a u sklopu misije UNDOF (*United Nations Disengagement Observer Force*) radi dugoročnog nadzora prekida vatre. Navedena zona uspostavljena je na sirijskoj strani crte primirja, a izraelske i sirijske snage s obje strane zone razdvajanja sporazumom su ograničene na maksimalno 75 tenkova i 6000 vojnika u prvih 10 kilometara od zone. Također, obje strane obvezale su se da neće postavljati raketne sustave zemlja-zrak u pojasu od 25 kilometara (MARK, 2002.).

Nedugo nakon zauzimanja visoravni, Izrael je pokrenuo „izraelifikaciju“ Golana, uklanjajući napuštena naselja izbjeglih sirijskih Arapa te stvarajući preduvjete za kolonizaciju visoravni židovskim stanovništvom. Godine 1981. posebnim zakonom o civilnoj jurisdikciji Izrael širi svoju vlast na prostor visoravni iako se taj čin formalno-pravno ne smatra aneksijom (SHELEFF, 1994.). Zemlje članice UN-a većinom su kritizirale taj zakon s obzirom na to da primjenom u praksi predstavlja *de facto* aneksiju te je Vijeće sigurnosti UN-a donijelo i posebnu Rezoluciju 497 kojom se čin širenja izraelske civilne vlasti smatra ilegalnim te se traži opoziv navedenog zakona (MARK, 2002.). No, službeni je Izrael procijenio da je negodovanje međunarodne zajednice cijena koju je voljan platiti za dugoročno očuvanje sigurnosti i opstojnosti te obranu države, osobito na području njezinih sjevernih granica. Dodatni utjecaj na takvu odluku vezan je i uz povijesnu povezanost židovskog naroda s područjem Golanske visoravni te činjenicom da su rane teritorijalne vizije uspostave Države Izrael u Palestini teritorijalno obuhvaćale i navedeni prostor. Unatoč tome, politika službenog Izraela u pojedinim razdobljima bila je otvorena za mirovni sporazum i povlačenje s Golanske visoravni uz uvjet dugoročnih sigurnosnih jamstava, te

ly conditions the political moves of countries.

Israeli forces have held most of the territory of the Golan Heights since 1967. They are separated from the Syrian military by an irregularly shaped separation zone in the eastern part of the plateau, established by the ceasefire agreement reached after the 1974 Yom Kippur War, and overseen by the UN forces as part of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) mission with the aim of long-term ceasefire control. The zone was established on the Syrian side of the ceasefire line, and Israeli and Syrian forces on both sides of the separation zone were limited by agreement to a maximum of 75 tanks and 6,000 troops within the first 10 kilometres of the zone. In addition, both sides are obliged not to install surface-to-air missile systems within 25-kilometer radius (MARK, 2002).

Shortly after the occupation of the plateau in 1967, Israel initiated an ‘Israelization’ of the Golan, removing the abandoned settlements of Syrian Arab refugees, and creating the preconditions for the colonization of the plateau by the Jewish population. In 1981, by a special law on civil jurisdiction, Israel extended its authority to the area of the plateau, although this act is not formally and legally considered an annexation (SHELEFF, 1994). The UN member states have largely criticized the law for *de facto* annexation in practice, and the UN Security Council passed a special resolution 497 declaring the act of expanding Israeli civilian rule to the Golan Heights illegal and calling for the law to be repealed (MARK, 2002). However, the official Israel estimated that the indignation of the international community is the price it is willing to pay for the long-term preservation of security and the sustainable defence of the state, especially in the area of its northern borders. An additional influence on such a decision is related to the historical connection of the Jewish people with the area of the Golan Heights, and the fact that the early Zionist territorial visions of the territory of the state of Israel in Palestine included this area. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the policy of the official Israel was in some periods open to a peace agreement and withdrawal from the Golan Heights, subject to long-term security guarantees, and negotiations have been held on several occasions since the 1990s. However, all of the negoti-

su se od 1990-ih do danas nekoliko puta vodili pregovori uz posredništvo trećih zemalja. Kako pregovori nisu uspjeli, trajni sporazum do sada nije postignut. Trenutačna je, pak, tendencija izraelske politike zadržavanje kontrole nad Golanom, snažnija politička i gospodarska integracija regije s ostatkom države i čekanje povoljnih geopolitičkih okolnosti za međunarodnu afirmaciju pripajanja regije Izraelu. U tom kontekstu valja spomenuti i da je u ožujku 2019. administracija američkog predsjednika Donalda Trumpa priznala Golansku visoravan kao suvereni dio izraelskog teritorija, a taj se čin najvećega američkog saveznika može smatrati „vjetrom u leđa“ dugoročnoj političkoj „izraelifikaciji“ Golana unatoč protivljenju ostatka međunarodne zajednice. Bivši premijer Izraela Benjamin Netanyahu početkom 2021. izjavio je da će Golanska visoravan „ostati dio Države Izrael“ u svakom slučaju (URL 1).

U radu se analiziraju historijsko-geografski i geostrateški aspekti izraelske okupacije Golanske visoravni. Prvi dio rada sadrži pregled općih geografskih značajki te historijsko-geografski pregled istraživano područja. Drugi dio rada obrađuje problematiku geostrateškog značenja Golanske visoravni za suvremeni Izrael. Strateško-obrambena vrijednost visoravni, kao i vodni resursi te izvori koji napajaju rijeku Jordan bili su od ključne važnosti za sigurnosnu i gospodarsku politiku Izraela nakon okupacije visoravni, pa je ovim dvama aspektima posvećena posebna pozornost, uz osvrt na njihovu relevantnost danas. U konačnici, analiziraju se trenutačne geopolitičke perspektive te se nastoje donijeti zaključci o političkoj budućnosti Golanske visoravni.

Geografska obilježja Golanske visoravni

Golanska visoravan (heb. *Ramat Ha-Golan*, arap. *Al-Jawlān*) povišeni je bazaltni plato na području razgraničenja Sirije, Izraela, Libanona i Jordana ukupne površine 1860 km² (od čega dio pod okupacijom i upravom Izraela zauzima približno 1150 km²), izduljen u smjeru sjever-jug u duljini od oko 62 km te poprečne širine od 12 do 26 km u smjeru istok-zapad. Omeđen je planinom Hermon i gorjem Antilibanon na

ations have failed, and a lasting agreement has not been reached to this day. The current tendency of Israeli policy is to maintain control over the Golan, as well as to achieve a stronger political and economic integration of the region with the rest of the country, and to wait for favourable geopolitical circumstances for the international affirmation of the region's annexation to Israel. In this context, it is worth mentioning that in March 2019 the administration of the US President Donald Trump recognized the Golan Heights as a sovereign part of Israeli territory, and this act of the greatest Israelially can be considered a 'wind at the back' of long-term political 'Israelization' of the area, regardless to the criticisms of the rest of the international community. The former Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, stated in early 2021 that the Golan Heights would 'remain part of the state of Israel' in any case (URL 1).

The paper analyses the historical-geographical and geostrategic aspects of the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights. The first part of the paper contains an overview of general geographic features, and a historical-geographical overview of the research area. The second part of the paper deals with the geostrategic significance of the Golan Heights for modern Israel. The strategic and defence value of the plateau, as well as the water resources and sources that supply the Jordan River, were of key importance for Israel's security and economic policy after the occupation of the plateau, so special attention is paid to these two aspects, with a view on their contemporary relevance. Ultimately, current geopolitical perspectives are analysed and conclusions are drawn about the political future of the Golan Heights.

Geographical features of the Golan Heights

The Golan Heights (Hebrew: *Ramat Ha-Golan*, Arabic: *Al-Jawlān*) is an elevated basalt plateau situated in the bordering area of Syria, Israel, Lebanon and Jordan, with a total area of 1860 km². It extends 62 km in a north-south direction, and has a transverse width of 12 to 26 km in an east-west direction. It is bordered by Mount Hermon and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains in the north, the Hula Valley, the Jordan River and the Sea of Gali-

sjeveru, dolinom Hula, rijekom Jordan i Galilejskim morem (Tiberijadskim jezerom) na zapadu, rijekom Yarmouk na jugu te suhim riječnim koritom (vadijem) Ruqqad na istoku (Sl. 1.). Geološki, riječ je o području koje se sastoji od dvije različite zone – planinskog područja jurskih vapnenaca sedimentnog podrijetla i bazaltne zaravni vulkanskog podrijetla. Prosječna visina Golanske visoravni je oko 1000 m/nv, s najvećim nadmorskim visinama na sjeveru i sjeveroistoku gdje je najviša točka planina Hermon (2814 m), a najnižim duž rijeke Yarmouk na jugu (oko 400 m/nv), te na jugozapadu gdje se područje spušta prema Galilejskom jezeru (-200 m/nv). Na zapadu je visoravan jasno omeđena eskarpanima visine do 500 m koji se spuštaju prema dolini rijeke Jordan. Raščlanjenost reljefa najizrazitija je na sjeveru, te se smanjuje prema jugu i jugozapadu gdje je prostor uglavnom reljefno blaži i zaravnjen.

Prema Köppenovoj klasifikaciji, prostor Golana većinom pripada klimatskom podtipu Csa, tipičnom za Sredozemlje, s vrućim ili vrlo vrućim te suhim ljetima i blagim, vlažnim zimama. Manji dio teritorija na sjeveru regije pripada podtipu Csb (s toplim ljetima), te u najvišim planinskim zonama Hermona prelazi u podtipove Dsb i Dsc (hladne klime s toplim i suhim ljetima). Golanska visoravan u cjelini prima više oborina od okolnih, razmjerno suših područja, a godišnja količina oborina raste prema sjeveroistoku. Najviše zone zimi su prekrivene snijegom, a viškovi vode prihranjuju rijeke na rubnom području visoravni, osobito rijeku Jordan, pružajući Državi Izrael značajne količine godišnjih vodnih resursa. Viša područja planine Hermon primaju najviše oborina (više od 1300 mm/g) između listopada i travnja (HARTMANN, 2008.).

U hidrogeografskom smislu, najvažnije sastavnice Golanske visoravni su izvori rijeka Banias i Dan, a vodom s Golana posredno se napajaju i tokovi Hasbani i Yarmouk koji protječu rubnim područjem uz samu visoravan. Banias, Hasbani, Dan i Yarmuk su glavni pritoci gornjeg toka rijeke Jordan koja utječe u Galilejsko more. Prema procjenama, otprilike trećina vode u navedenom jezeru potječe s Golanske visoravni (MARK, 2002.).

lee (Lake Tiberias) in the west, the Yarmouk River in the south, and the dry riverbed (wadi) Ruqqad in the east (Fig. 1). Geologically, it is an area consisting of two different zones - a mountainous area of Jurassic limestone of sedimentary origin, and a basalt plateau of volcanic origin. The average altitude of the Golan Heights is about 1,000 m, with the highest altitudes in the north and northeast where the highest point is Mount Hermon (2,814 m), and the lowest along the Yarmouk River in the south (about 400 m), and in the southwest where the area descends towards the Sea of Galilee (200 m above sea level). To the west, the plateau is bordered by escarpments up to 500 m high that descend towards the Jordan River valley. The dynamics of the relief is most pronounced in the north, and decreases towards the south and southwest, where the area is flatter.

According to Köppen's classification, the Golan area mostly belongs to the Csa climate subtype, typical in the Mediterranean, with hot or very hot and dry summers and mild, humid winters. A small part of the territory in the north of the region belongs to the subtype Csb (with warm summers), and in the highest mountain zones of Hermon the climate changes into the subtypes Dsb and Dsc (cold climates with warm and dry summers). The Golan Heights as a whole receive more precipitation than the surrounding, relatively arid areas, and the annual amount of precipitation increases to the northeast. The highest zones are covered with snow in winter, and the excess of water from precipitation replenishes the rivers on the edge of the plateau, especially the Jordan River, providing the state of Israel with significant amounts of annual water resources. The higher areas of Mount Hermon receive most of its annual precipitation (over 1,300 mm) between October and April (HARTMANN, 2008).

The most important hydrologic components of the Golan Heights are the springs of the rivers Banias and Dan, and water from the Golan also flows into the Hasbani and Yarmouk streams that flow through the peripheral area along the plateau itself. The Banias, Hasbani, Dan, and Yarmuk are the main tributaries of the upper stream of the Jordan River which flows into the Sea of Galilee. It is estimated that around one third of the wa-

Na području izraelskog nadzora Golanske visoravni danas živi samo približno 47 000 stanovnika, od čega oko 20 500 židovskih doseljenika te oko 26 500 ostalih od kojih su većina arapski Druzi (URL 4). U odnosu na površinu visoravni, gustoća stanovništva je približno 40 st./km², što je čini jednom od najrjeđe naseljenih regija pod izraelskom kontrolom. Najveće naselje i upravno središte izraelskog dijela Golanske visoravni židovski je grad Katzrin, sagrađen 1970. godine s približno 6400 stanovnika, koji je okružen poljoprivrednim zajednicama. Od zauzimanja visoravni 1967. do 2010. godine, broj židovskih naselja porastao je na 32. Prema podacima sirijske vlade (URL 5), nakon izraelske okupacije u lipnju 1967. Golansku je visoravan napustilo oko 100 000 sirijskih državljana. Izrael je potom planski srušio više od stotine sirijskih sela i farmi na visoravni, te je zemlja dodijeljena židovskim doseljenicima. Neposredno nakon Šestodnevnog rata, na okupiranom dijelu visoravni ostalo je približno 12 000 sirijskih državljana u ukupno šest sela, većinom arapskih Druza (MARK, 2002.). Istočno od crte razdvajanja, u sirijskom dijelu Golana koji obuhvaća približno 600 km², smješteno je 40-ak sirijskih gradova i sela od kojih je najveći Kuneitra (HARRIS, 1977.).

Historijsko-geografski pregled

Da bi se bolje razumjeli čimbenici izraelske okupacije Golanske visoravni, nužno je sagledati navedeni prostor iz historijsko-geografske perspektive. Posebno je važno razmotriti povijesnu povezanost Židova s Golanskom visoravni, kao i niz događaja iz novije povijesti koji su ovoj regiji dali pogranični karakter u okvirima službenih granica bliskoistočnih država.

Prema dostupnim povijesnim zapisima i arheološkim ostacima, organizirane zajednice i naselja židovskog naroda na području Golanske visoravni postojali su već početkom 1. tisućljeća prije Krista. U to vrijeme visoravan je nazivana *Bašan*, što je toponim koji se spominje i u starozavjetnim knjigama Biblije (npr. Knjiga Brojeva 21:33, Ponovljeni zakon 3:4, Jošua 9:10 itd.; URL 2), a visoravan je kontinuirano naseljena Židovima pod vlastitim ili tuđinskim vladarima.

ter in this lake originates from the Golan Heights (MARK, 2002).

Currently, around 47,000 people live in the area of Israeli control of the Golan Heights. About 20,500 are Jewish settlers, and about 26,500 belong to other groups, with the highest share of the Arab Druze people (URL 4). The population density is about 40 inhabitants per square km, which makes the Golan Heights one of the least populated regions under Israeli control. The largest settlement and administrative centre of the Israeli part of the Golan Heights is the Jewish city of Katzrin, built in 1970 with a total population of about 6,400, surrounded by agricultural communities. From the occupation of the plateau in 1967 to 2010, the number of Jewish settlements increased to a total of 32. According to the Syrian government (URL 5), after the Israeli occupation in June 1967, about 100,000 Syrian citizens left the Golan Heights. Israel then systematically demolished over a hundred Syrian villages and farms on the plateau, and the land was allotted to Jewish settlers. Immediately after the Six Day War, about 12,000 Syrian citizens remained in the occupied part of the plateau in a total of six villages, mostly Arab Druze (MARK, 2002). East of the dividing line, in the Syrian part of the Golan, which covers about 600 km², there are about 40 Syrian towns and villages, the largest of which is Kuneitra (HARRIS, 1977).

Historical-geographic overview

In order to achieve a better understanding of all the factors of the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights, it is necessary to look at this area from a historical-geographic perspective. It is especially important to consider the historical connection of the Jewish people with the Golan Heights, as well as a series of events from recent history that have given this region a borderland character within the official political division of the Middle East.

According to available historical records and archaeological remains, organized communities and settlements of the Jewish people in the Golan Heights existed as early as the beginning of the first millennium BC. At that time the plateau was called *Bashan*, a toponym also mentioned in the

O tome svjedoči i činjenica da je arheološkim istraživanjima na Golanu do sada utvrđeno 25 lokacija s ostacima sinagoga iz različitih povijesnih razdoblja, zaključno sa sredinom 7. stoljeća poslije Krista (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018.). U antičkom razdoblju područjem vladaju Rimljani koji su za taj prostor preuzeli grčki naziv *Gaulantius*. Grčki toponim etimološki je vezan uz drevno naselje Golan koje se spominje u Bibliji (Ponovljeni zakon 4:43) kao grad u regiji Bašan. Početkom srednjeg vijeka prostor Golana je pod upravom Bizanta, da bi 636. godine područje osvojili Arapi nakon pobjede Kalifa Omara nad Bizantincima. Taj događaj bio je ujedno i kraj kontinuiteta organiziranih židovskih naselja na Golanskoj visoravni koja se u nadolazećem razdoblju islamizira te se ondje kroz nadolazeća stoljeća u većoj ili manjoj mjeri doseljavaju različite etničke skupine poput Druza, Turaka, Sudanaca, Turkmena, Alavita i samarijskih Arapa (URL 3).

Od 16. do 20. stoljeća Golanska je visoravan u sastavu Osmanskog Carstva. U to se vrijeme ponovno uspostavlja židovska prisutnost na visoravni. Skupine Židova 1880-ih kupuju dijelove zemljišta i ondje s većim ili manjim uspjehom pokušavaju uspostaviti svoje zajednice (URL 3). Riječ je o razdoblju prve *aliye*, tj. prvog vala useljavanja Židova u Svetu zemlju, potaknutog pogromima nad Židovima u Ruskom Carstvu. Godine 1880. istaknuti britanski aktivist i ideolog Sir Laurence Oliphant³ objavio je djelo „Zemlja Gileadska“ (heb. *Erez ha-Gilad*, engl. *The Land of Gilead*) u kojemu je opisao dugoročni plan za masovno židovsko naseljavanje Golanske visoravni (GVATI, 1985.). Plan se počeo ostvarivati nakon 1885., kad su članovi židovskih zajednica „Stari Jišuv“ (heb. *haYishuv haYashan*) iz grada Safeda na sjeveru današnjeg Izraela osnovali društvo Beit Yehuda te nekoliko puta kupovali zemlju na Golanu i osnovali zajednice, ali s relativno skromnim uspjehom trajne naseljenosti. Značajniji potezi u tom smjeru bili su oni imućnoga židovskog bankara, baruna Edmonda Jamesa de Rotschilda, koji je između 1891. i 1894.

³ Laurence Oliphant (1829. – 1888.) – britanski političar, pisac, putopisac i kršćanski cionist. Težio je uspostavi židovske države u Palestini s ciljem „ispunjenja proroštva i dolasku kraja svijeta“ (URL 11).

Old Testament books of the Bible (e.g., Numbers 21:33, Deuteronomy 3:4, Joshua 9:10, etc; URL 2), and the plateau was continuously inhabited by the Jews under their own or under foreign rulers. This is evidenced by the fact that archaeological excavations in the Golan have so far identified 25 sites with the remains of synagogues from different historical periods, ending in the middle of the 7th century AD (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018). In the ancient period, it was ruled by the Romans, who took over the Greek name *Gaulantius* for the area. The Greek toponym is etymologically related to the ancient settlement of Golan mentioned in the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:43) as a city in the region of Bashan. At the beginning of the Middle Ages, the area of the Golan was under Byzantine rule, and in 636 it was conquered by the Arabs after the victory of Caliph Omar over the Byzantines. This event was also the end of the continuity of organized Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights, which in the following period was Islamized, and there in the following centuries to a greater or lesser extent settled various ethnic groups such as Druze, Turks, Sudanese, Turkmen, Alawites and Samaritan Arabs (URL 3).

From the 16th to the 20th century, the Golan Heights was ruled by the Ottoman Empire. At that time, the Jewish presence was re-established on the plateau in the 1880s, when groups of Jews bought pieces of land and tried to establish their communities there with greater or lesser success (URL 3). This is the period of the first *aliyah*, i.e. the first wave of immigration of Jews to the Holy Land, prompted by pogroms against them in the Russian Empire. It should be noted that in 1880, the prominent British activist and ideologue Sir Laurence Oliphant³ published *The Land of Gilead*, in which he described a long-term plan for the mass Jewish settlement of the Golan Heights (in Hebrew: *Erez ha-Gilad*) (GVATI, 1985). The plan began to materialize after 1885, when members of the Jewish communities of *Old Yishuv* (Heb. *HaYishuv haYashan*) from the northern Israeli city of Safed founded the Beit Yehuda Society and at-

³ Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888) - British politician, writer, travel writer and Christian Zionist. He sought to establish a Jewish state in Palestine with the goal of 'fulfilling the prophecy and the coming of the end of the world' (URL 11).

kupio 150 km² zemljišta radi naseljavanja Židova na Golanu (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018.).

Godine 1916., nakon poraza Otomanskog Carstva u Prvom svjetskom ratu, Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo i Francuska potpisali su tzv. Sporazum Sykes-Picot⁴ kojim je dogovorena podjela bivših osmanlijskih teritorija u područja pod britanskom i francuskom upravom. Godinu dana kasnije, britanska je vlada usvojila tzv. Balfourovu deklaraciju,⁵ kojom je izjavila da podržava ideju da se na području povijesne Palestine zasnjuje država židovskog naroda (KRAMER, 2017.). Na međunarodnoj konferenciji u San Remu 1920. odlučeno je da Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo i Francuska neće anektirati navedene teritorije, već će im biti povjereni na upravljanje. Na konferenciji je potvrđena i Balfourova deklaracija, što se može smatrati temeljem prava Židova na vlastitu državu u Palestini u kontekstu međunarodne zajednice. Načelno je odlučeno i da će granica između britanskoga i francuskoga mandatnog područja prolaziti sredinom Galilejskog mora te da će na sjeveru britansko mandatno područje obuhvaćati većinu Golanske visoravni. No, 1924. godine Britanci taj prostor međusobnim dogovorom ipak prepuštaju na upravljanje Francuskoj. Pritom valja istaknuti da je Cionistički⁶ pokret još 1919. proglasio pravo buduće židovske države na prostoru Golana, te je navedeni dogovor Francuske i Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva u cionističkim kru-

tempted to buy land in the Golan on several occasions in order to establish communities there, but with relatively modest success of permanent settlement. Significant moves in this direction were those of the wealthy Jewish banker, Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, who bought 150 km² of land between 1891 and 1894 with the aim of settling Jewish people in the Golan Heights (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018).

In 1916, after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the United Kingdom and France signed the so-called Sykes-Picot Agreement⁴ which agreed on the division of former Ottoman territories into areas under British and French rule. A year later, the British government adopted the so-called Balfour Declaration⁵, confirming its support of the idea of establishing a state of the Jewish people in the territory of historic Palestine (KRAMER, 2017). At an international conference in San Remo in 1920, it was decided that the UK and France would not annex the territories, but would be entrusted with their management, and at the same conference the Balfour Declaration was confirmed. This is considered to be the basis for the right of the Jewish people to their own state in Palestine. It was also generally decided that the border between the British and French mandates would run through the middle of the Sea of Galilee, and that in the north the British mandate would cover most of the Golan Heights. However, in 1924, the British ceded the area to France by mutual agreement. It should be noted that the Zionist⁶ movement in 1919 pro-

⁴ Sporazum Sykes-Picot – tajni sporazum između Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva i Francuske sklopljen 1916. radi definiranja njihovih sfera utjecaja u slučaju podjele Osmanskog Carstva. Ugovor su inicirali britanski diplomat Mark Sykes i njegov francuski kolega François Georges-Picot. Prema sporazumu, u sferu utjecaja Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva ulaze prostori koji obuhvaćaju današnji južni dio Izraela i Palestine, te Jordan i južni Irak, kao i dodatno područje koje uključuje luke Haifu i Akru. Za Francusku je predviđena kontrola nad područjem današnje jugoistočne Turske, sjevernog Iraka, te Sirije i Libanona (URL 12).

⁵ Balfourova deklaracija – pismo koje je tadašnji britanski ministar vanjskih poslova Arthur Balfour uputio vodi židovske zajednice u Engleskoj, Lordu Rothschildu, 2. studenog 1917., u kojemu izjavljuje da britanska vlada podupire prijedlog stvaranja židovske države u Palestini (HAVEL, 2013.).

⁶ Cionizam – židovski nacionalni pokret kojemu je zadaća bila stvaranje židovske države u Palestini, pradomovini Židova (hebr. *Eret Jisrael*). Nazvan po brdu Cion (Sion) u Jeruzalemu (danas Har Cion), nekadašnjoj lokaciji jebusejskoga grada koji je započeo kralj David; u metonimijskom smislu, Cion označava cijelo kraljevstvo Izraelovo. Korijeni su cionizma u višestoljetnoj povezanosti Židova i judaizma u dijaspori s povijesnom Palestinom i Jeruzalemom (URL 10).

⁴ Sykes-Picot Agreement - a secret agreement between the United Kingdom and France concluded in 1916, with the aim of defining their spheres of influence in the event of the division of the Ottoman Empire. The agreement was initiated by British diplomat Mark Sykes and his French counterpart François Georges-Picot. Under the agreement, the UK sphere of influence includes areas that include present-day southern Israel and Palestine, as well as Jordan and southern Iraq, as well as an additional area that includes the ports of Haifa and Accra. For France, on the other hand, control over the area of today's southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, and Syria and Lebanon was planned (URL 12)

⁵ Balfour Declaration - A letter sent by the then British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to the leader of the Jewish community in England, Lord Rothschild, on 2 November, 1917, stating that the British government supports the proposal to create a Jewish state in Palestine (HAVEL, 2013).

⁶ Zionism - a Jewish national movement whose task was to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the ancestral home of the Jewish

govima dočekan s negodovanjem (RAM, 2019.). Slično nezadovoljstvo izazvao je i administrativni potez britanske uprave kojim je izdvojeno oko 75 % Palestine istočno od Jordana, te je ondje osnovan Transjordan (buduća Hašemitska Kraljevina Jordan). Dugoročno, u skladu s navedenim dogovorom, završetkom francuskog mandata 1946. visoravan je u cijelosti ušla u sastav novonastale države Sirije, pri čemu su međunarodno priznate granice mandatnih područja iz 1923., a ne one iz 1920. (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018.).

Nakon masovnog stradavanja židovskog naroda u holokaustu tijekom Drugoga svjetskog rata, većina židovskih zajednica ujedinila se u stavu o potrebi stvaranja države kao jamca opstanka. Država Izrael proglašena je 14. svibnja 1948., dan nakon završetka britanskog mandata u Palestini, na temelju objavljene UN-ove Rezolucije 181 kojom je predviđena podjela dotadašnje Mandatne Palestine na židovsku i arapsku državu, uz Jeruzalem pod međunarodnom upravom. U Deklaraciji o neovisnosti Izrael je definiran kao židovska država, jedna od rijetkih „nacionalnih demokracija“ u svijetu (HAVEL, 2016.).

S obzirom na to da ni palestinski Arapi ni ostatak muslimanskog svijeta nisu prihvaćali stvaranje židovske države na teritoriju Palestine te su jednoglasno odbacili rezoluciju, dan nakon proglašenja Izraela zemlje članice Arapske lige⁷ objavile su mu rat i izvršile invaziju na novoproglašenu državu (HAYHURST, 2004.). Izrael su zajedničkim snagama istodobno napali Egipat, Transjordanija (Jordan), Sirija, Libanon i vojne postrojbe iz Iraka. Sirijske snage napale su s Golanske visoravni izraelska naselja južno od Galilejskog mora, a nakon toga i prostor između jezera i doline Hula, te su zauzele novoproglašeni izraelski teritorij duž rijeke Jordan (MARK, 2002.). Nakon početnih vojnih uspjeha arapskih zemalja i primirja koje je Izraelcima poslužilo za pregrupiranje snaga, Izrael je u protuudaru zauzeo područja veća od onih

⁷ Arapska liga – formalnog naziva „Liga arapskih država“ (arap. *Jāmi'a ad-duwal al-'Arabiyya*) regionalna je organizacija koja okuplja 22 zemlje arapskog svijeta u sjevernoj Africi i zapadnoj Aziji radi ostvarivanja bliskije suradnje između zemalja članica te promicanja interesa arapskog svijeta u međunarodnoj zajednici. Osnovana je u Kairu (Egipat) 22. ožujka 1945., kada je okupila prvih šest zemalja članica – Egipat, Irak, Libanon, Saudijsku Arabiju, Siriju i Transjordaniju (URL 13).

claimed the right of the future Jewish state to the Golan Heights, and the agreement between France and the UK was greeted with disapproval in Zionist circles (RAM, 2019). Similar dissatisfaction was caused by the administrative move of the British administration, which separated about 75% of Palestine east of the Jordan and founded Transjordan (the future Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan). In the long run, the outcome of this agreement was such that by the end of the French mandate in 1946, the plateau became part of the newly formed state of Syria, with internationally acclaimed borders of the 1923 mandate areas, and not those from 1920 (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018).

After the suffering of the Jewish people in the Holocaust during World War II, most Jewish communities united in the view of the need to create a state as a guarantee of survival. The state of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May, 1948, the day after the end of the British mandate in Palestine, on the basis of previously published UN Resolution 181, which provided for the division of Mandate Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state, with Jerusalem under international administration. In the Declaration of Independence, Israel is defined as a Jewish state, one of the few 'national democracies' in the world (HAVEL, 2016).

Since neither the Palestinian Arabs nor the rest of the Muslim world accepted the creation of a Jewish state on Palestinian territory and unanimously rejected the resolution, the day after Israel was declared, the Arab League⁷ member states declared war on it and invaded the newly proclaimed country (HAYHURST, 2004). Israel was jointly attacked by Egypt, Transjordan (Jordan), Syria, as well as by military units from Iraq. Dur-

people (Hebrew Erec Jisrael). Named after Mount Zion in Jerusalem (now Har Zion), the former location of the Jebusite city occupied by King David; in metonymic terms, Zion denotes the whole kingdom of Israel. The roots of Zionism are in the centuries-old connection of Jews and Judaism in the diaspora with historical Palestine and Jerusalem (URL 10)

⁷ The Arab League - formally known as the League of Arab States (Arabic: *Jāmi'a ad-duwal al-'Arabiyya*) is a regional organization that brings together 22 countries of the Arab world in North Africa and West Asia with the aim of achieving closer cooperation between member countries and promoting interests of the Arab world in the international community. It was founded in Cairo (Egypt) on 22 March, 1945, when it brought together the first 6 member countries - Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Transjordan (URL 13).

predviđenih rezolucijom UN-a i planom o dvije države (osim teritorija predviđenog za židovsku državu, zauzeo je i približno 60 % teritorija koji je trebao sačinjavati arapsku državu u Palestini). Do srpnja 1949. dogovorene su crte prekida vatre s okolnim arapskim zemljama, koje su postale granicama tadašnjega Izraela (MAĐOR-BOŽINOVIĆ, 2015.). Iako je izraelska vojska u prethodnom protuudaru uspjela potisnuti libanonske i palestinske snage iz sjevernog Izraela, sirijske snage uspjele su se tom prigodom oduprijeti te su se povukle s okupiranog područja na Golansku visoravan tek nakon postignutog sporazuma o prekidu vatre i uspostave demilitariziranih zona (MARK, 2002.).

U godinama nakon rata za neovisnost Izraela, na granici Izraela i Sirije nastavljeni su konflikti oko crte razgraničenja između dviju zemalja. Golanska je visoravan postala u tom razdoblju ključnom utvrđenom vojnom zonom sirijske vojske. Povišen položaj Golana davao je sirijskim snagama stratešku prednost i dobar pregled područja doline Jordana i Tiberijadskog jezera na području sjevernog Izraela, a povremeni sukobi i incidenti često su rezultirali i topničkom vatrom prema civilnim ciljevima u židovskim naseljima na sjeveru države. Visoravan sa sirijskim vojnim položajima predstavljala je ne samo strateški slabu točku u scenariju svake buduće invazije na Izrael, već i konstantnu prijetnju za židovske naseobine na sjeveru države, osobito za kibuce, čiji su predstavnici zahtijevali da se čitav prostor pacificira (RAM, 2019.).

U šestodnevnom ratu u lipnju 1967., nakon preventivnog udara izraelske vojske na snage okolnih arapskih zemalja uslijed bojazni od novoga arapskog pokušaja invazije i uništenja židovske države, Izrael je ostvario enorman vojni uspjeh osvojivši u samo nekoliko dana površinu od preko 67 000 km². Uz Sinajski poluotok, Zapadnu obalu, stari Jeruzalem i pojas Gaze, izraelska je vojska tada zauzela i oko dvije trećine Golanske visoravni, a većina borbene moći Egipta, Sirije i Jordana bila je značajno neutralizirana, osobito u zračnom borbenom segmentu (OREN, 2002.; MOHAMMAD, 2017.). Valja istaknuti da se tijekom prvih četiriju dana rata Sirija nije željela miješati u sukob, ali je Damask odluku

ing the invasion, Syrian forces attacked Israeli settlements south of Lake Tiberias from the Golan Heights, and then the area between the lake and the Hula Valley, and occupied the newly declared Israeli territory along the Jordan River (MARK, 2002). After the initial military success of the Arab countries and a signed truce that the Israelis used to regroup their forces, Israel counterattacked and conquered the area quite larger than the one suggested by the UN resolution and the two-state division plan (in addition to the territory provided for the Jewish state, it occupied about 60% of the territory which was supposed to constitute the Arab state in Palestine). By July 1949, ceasefire lines were agreed with the surrounding Arab countries, which became the acclaimed borders of Israel (MAĐOR-BOŽINOVIĆ, 2015). Although the Israeli army managed to push the Lebanese and Palestinians out of northern Israel in a previous counterattack, Syrian forces managed to resist and withdrew from the occupied territory to the Golan Heights only after an agreement was reached on a ceasefire and the establishing of demilitarized zones (MARK, 2002).

In the early years following the Israeli War of Independence, conflicts continued on the border between Israel and Syria over the demarcation line between the two countries. The Golan Heights became a key fortified military zone of the Syrian army in that period. The elevated position of the Golan provided Syrian forces with a strategic advantage and a good view of the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel, and occasional clashes and incidents often resulted in artillery fire on civilian targets in Israeli settlements in the north of the country. The plateau with Syrian military positions posed not only a strategically weak point in the scenario of any future invasion of Israel, but also a constant threat to the settlements in the north, especially kibbutzim, whose representatives demanded that the entire area be pacified (RAM, 2019).

In the 'Six Day War' in June 1967, after a preemptive strike by the Israeli army on forces of the surrounding Arab countries that had begun to concentrate near Israeli borders during previous months with the likely goal of a new attempt to invade and destroy the Jewish state,

promijenio zbog lažnih informacija o skorom slomu Izraela te glasina da su egipatske snage već u predgrađima Tel Aviva. Nakon toga, sirijsko je topništvo s Golanske visoravni započelo sporadično granatirati sjeverni Izrael, a sirijsko zrakoplovstvo bombardiralo je židovska naselja u Galileji. U protunapadu izraelskih zrakoplova na sirijske zračne baze uništena je većina sirijskih borbenih letjelica, nakon čega su izraelske kopnene postrojbe okupirale visoravan. Uključenje Sirije u sukob poslužilo je kao povod za okupaciju koja je, pak, bila motivirana u prvom redu sigurnosnim i obrambenim razlozima. Od kraja Šestodnevog rata 1967. i zauzimanja Golanske visoravni, Izrael je na Golanu uspostavio optimalnu crtu obrane države, te je u potpunosti neutralizirana prijetnja za sjeverna naselja na području Galileje. Novom *de facto* granicom Izraela i Sirije postala je crta postignutog prekida vatre, odnosno tzv. „ljubičasta linija“ (OREN, 2002.).

Odjel za naseljavanje Židovske Agencije već je u prosincu 1967. (pola godine nakon okupacije) razradio ambiciozan plan naseljavanja Golanske visoravni, kojim je židovska populacija trebala dosegnuti 50 000 unutar razdoblja od 10 godina. Izgradnja židovskih naselja na Golanskoj visoravni započela je 1970-ih, pod tadašnjom izraelskom vojnom upravom (HARRIS, 1977.). No, brojke predviđene planom još uvijek nisu realizirane, iako je izraelifikacija Golana dosegla vrlo visok stupanj.

Egipat i Sirija, čije su vojne snage u međuvremenu obnovljene uz pomoć SSSR-a, 6. listopada 1973. iznenada su koordinirano napali Izrael sa sjevera i juga, prekršivši tada važeće granice postignute mirovnim sporazumima, radi vraćanja teritorija Sinajskog poluotoka i Golanske visoravni te, ako se ukaže prilika, konačnog uništenja Države Izrael. Nakon početnih uspjeha agresora, Izrael je mobilizirao glavninu snaga i zaustavio napredovanje egipatskih i sirijskih postrojbi. Iako su sirijske snage u prvim danima ofenzive zauzele pojedine dijelove Golanske visoravni zahvaljujući nadmoći u ljudstvu i oklopnim vozilima, IDF ih je u protuudaru odbacio na početnu crtu mirovnog razgraničenja (HAVEL, 2013.). Štoviše, izraelska je vojska u protuudaru uspjela zauzeti i dodatne dijelove sirijskoga teritorija na

Israel achieved enormous military success. In just a few days, the Israeli armed forces captured an area of over 67,000 km². In addition to the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, ancient Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army then occupied about two-thirds of the Golan Heights, and most of the combat power of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan was significantly neutralized, especially in the air combat segment (OREN, 2002; MOHAMMAD, 2017). It should be noted that during the first four days of the war, Syria did not want to interfere in the conflict, but Damascus changed its decision due to false information about the imminent collapse of Israel, and rumours that the Egyptian forces are already in the suburbs of Tel Aviv. Subsequently, Syrian artillery from the Golan Heights began sporadically shelling northern Israel, and Syrian air force bombed the Jewish settlements in Galilee. In a counterattack by Israeli aircrafts on Syrian air bases, most Syrian fighter jets were destroyed, after which Israeli ground forces occupied the plateau. Syria's involvement in the conflict served as a pretext for the occupation, which was truly motivated primarily by security and defence reasons. After the end of the Six Day War in 1967 and the occupation of the Golan Heights, Israel established an optimal line of defence on the Golan, and the threat to the northern settlements in the Galilee area was almost completely neutralized. The new *de facto* border between Israel and Syria became the line of the achieved ceasefire, i.e. the so-called 'Purple line' (OREN, 2002).

As early as December 1967 (half a year after the occupation), the Jewish Agency Settlement Department worked out an ambitious plan for settling the Golan Heights, according to which the Jewish population was to reach 50,000 within a period of 10 years. Construction of Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights began in the 1970s, under the then Israeli military administration (HARRIS, 1977). However, the figures provided for in the plan have not yet been realized, although the Israelization of the Golan has reached a very high level.

On 6 October, 1973, Egypt and Syria, whose military forces had since been rebuilt with the help of the Soviet Union, coordinated a sudden

istočnom dijelu visoravni. Potkraj svibnja 1974., pod pokroviteljstvom SAD-a postignut je sporazum o prekidu vatre te je Rezolucijom 350 Vijeća sigurnosti UN-a uvedena zona razdvajanja pod nadzorom mirovnih snaga te organizacije (UNDOF – *United Nations Disengagement Observer Force*). Tom su se prigodom izraelske snage povukle na crtu razdvajanja uspostavljenu 1967., a naknadno zauzeta područja ostala su pod zaštitom UNDOF-a (MARK, 2002.).

Iznimna geostrateška važnost Golanske visoravni i nespремnost Sirije na dugoročnu pacifikaciju i priznanje Izraela potaknuli su službeni Izrael na „izraelifikaciju“ cijelog područja koja je provedena u tri faze (RAM, 2019.): 1. većinom je protjerano sirijsko arapsko stanovništvo koje je ostalo na Golanu, uz iznimku 6500 Druza koji su povijesno smatrani lojalnima Izraelu; 2. pod nadzorom stručnjaka uklonjena je većina naselja i objekata koji su pripadali sirijskim Arapima. Paralelno, inicirano je naseljavanje židovskog stanovništva i izgradnja novih naselja, uz naglašavanje povijesnog narativa tisućljetne povezanosti prostora Golana sa židovskim narodom; 3. Golanska je visoravan turistički vrednovana, te je postala omiljeno odredište velikog broja Izraelaca tijekom godine.

Izrael je 14. prosinca 1981. proglasio i civilnu nadležnost nad okupiranim dijelom Golanske visoravni, čime je ovo područje pripojeno iako aneksija nije službeno proglašena; u Knesetu⁸ je donesen i ratificiran poseban zakon (Zakon o Golanskoj visoravni) kojim se izraelska vlast i zakoni primjenjuju i na to područje. Iako riječ „aneksija“ nije doslovno upotrijebljena u tekstu zakona (s obzirom na to da međunarodna zajednica ne priznaje pripajanje teritorija osvojenih ratnim djelovanjem), ovaj je čin u međunarodnoj zajednici, kao i u dijelu pravne struke, smatran upravo pripajanjem teritorija (v. MAOZ, 1994.). Posljedično, Rezolucija 497 Vijeća Sigurnosti UN-a proglasila je zakon ništavnim te međunarodna zajednica i dalje smatra okupirane dijelove

⁸ Kneset (heb. *Ha' kneset* – „okupljanje, skup“). Jednodomno zakonodavno tijelo Izraela. Kneset izglasava sve zakone, te odabire predsjednika i premijera, odobrava vladu i nadgleda njezin rad. Sjedište Kneseta je u četvrti Givat Ram u zapadnom Jeruzalemu (URL 14).

attack on Israel from the north and south, violating the then-valid borders reached by peace agreements, with the aim of regaining the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights, and, if an opportunity arises, the final destruction of the state of Israel. After the initial successes of the aggressors, Israel mobilized the bulk of its forces and halted the advance of Egyptian and Syrian troops. Although Syrian forces occupied certain parts of the Golan Heights in the first days of the offensive thanks to their superiority in manpower and armoured vehicles, the IDF counterattacked and pushed them to the starting line of peace demarcation (HAVEL, 2013). Moreover, the Israeli army managed to occupy additional parts of Syrian territory in the eastern part of the plateau. At the end of May 1974, a ceasefire agreement was reached under the auspices of the United States, and the UN Security Council Resolution 350 introduced a separation zone under the auspices of the United Nations peacekeeping force (UNDOF). On that occasion, Israeli forces withdrew to the dividing line established in 1967, and subsequently occupied areas remained under the UNDOF protection (MARK, 2002).

The exceptional geostrategic importance of the Golan Heights and Syria's unwillingness to long-term pacification and recognition of Israel prompted the official Israel to 'Israeliize' the entire area in three phases (RAM, 2019): 1. the Syrian Arab population remaining in the Golan was mostly expelled, with the exception of 6,500 Druze who have historically been considered loyal to Israel; 2. under the supervision of experts, most of the settlements and facilities that belonged to the Syrian Arabs were systematically removed. In parallel, the settlement of the Jewish population and the construction of new settlements were initiated, emphasizing the historical narrative of the millennial connection of the Golan Heights with the Jewish people; 3. The Golan Heights has become a favourite tourist destination of many Israelis throughout the year.

On 14 December 1981, Israel declared civilian jurisdiction over the occupied part of the Golan Heights, making the area annexed although the annexation was not officially declared; a special law (the 'Golan Heights Law') was passed and ratified

Golanske visoravni integralnim dijelom sirijsko-golanske teritorija. Također, od 1996. Opća skupština UN-a naknadno je potvrdila još četiri rezolucije u kojima se Golanskoj visoravni potvrđuje međunarodni status okupiranog teritorija. Ovu okupaciju dio međunarodne zajednice smatra legitimnom u okvirima Povelje UN-a o pravu na samoobranu, posebno imajući u vidu da je ona posljedica protuudara nakon izvršene agresije na Državu Izrael dva puta. Također, izglasavanje navedenog zakona bilo je, kako se čini, motivirano ponajprije obrambenim i sigurnosnim, a ne ekspanzionističkim motivima, s obzirom na izrazitu obrambeno-stratešku vrijednost Golanske visoravni (INBAR, 2008.).

Prema međunarodnom pravu, Golanska visoravan trenutno se smatra sirijskim teritorijem pod izraelskom okupacijom te je Izrael u tom smislu obavezan Četvrtom ženevskom konvencijom koja definira pravila o zaštiti civilnog stanovništva na okupiranim područjima. Međutim, od trenutka okupacije do danas, Izrael je prekršio niz odredbi navedene konvencije, poglavito u vidu protjerivanja sirijskih Arapa s Golanske visoravni te izgradnje ilegalnih židovskih naselja na tom području. Zbog navedenog, međunarodna zajednica nije priznala izraelsku *de facto* aneksiju Golana iz 1981. sve do 2019. godine. Tada je, naime, administracija američkog predsjednika Donalda Trumpa službeno priznala izraelsku aneksiju Golana, ali je navedeni postupak u ostatku međunarodne zajednice dočekan s jednoglasnim protivljenjem (URL 18).

Valja spomenuti da su, uz iznimku posredovanih pregovora nakon navedenih sukoba, od 1990-ih Izrael i Sirija nekoliko puta stupili u posredan ili izravan diplomatski kontakt radi razmatranja mogućnosti sklapanja trajnog mira. Pregovori su bili najkonkretniji u mandatu Laburističke stranke pod vodstvom Yitzaka Rabina, čija je politika bila fleksibilnija te spremnija na kompromis u odnosu na stranku Likud koja je bila na vlasti u Izraelu u prethodnom mandatu (INBAR, 2008.). No, ključni problem u postizanju dogovora bio je, kako se čini, sigurnosne naravi za Državu Izrael koja je bilo kakvu opciju vraćanja Golana Siriji uvjetovala vrlo jasnim i konkretnim sigurnosnim jamstvima, normalni-

in the Knesset⁸, which applies the Israeli civil government and laws to the area as well. Although the word ‘annexation’ is not used literally in the text of the law (bearing in mind that the international community does not recognize the annexation of war-torn territories), in the international community, as well as in the legal profession, this act was considered an annexation (see MAOZ, 1994). Consequently, the UN Security Council Resolution 497 declared the law null and void and the international community continues to consider the occupied parts of the Golan Heights an integral part of Syrian territory. In addition, since 1996, the UN General Assembly has ratified four more resolutions reaffirming the Golan Heights’ international status as an occupied territory. Part of the international community considers this occupation legitimate within the framework of the UN Charter on the Right to Self-Defense, especially bearing in mind that it was a consequence of the counterattack after the aggression against the state of Israel on two occasions. Moreover, the enactment of this law seemed to be motivated primarily by defence and security, not expansionist motives, given the exceptional defensive and strategic value of the Golan Heights (INBAR, 2008).

Under international law, the Golan Heights is currently considered Syrian territory under Israeli occupation, and Israel is bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention, which defines rules for the protection of civilians in the occupied territories. However, from the moment of occupation until today, Israel has violated a number of provisions of the said convention, especially in the act of expulsion of Syrian Arabs from the Golan Heights, and the construction of illegal Jewish settlements in the same area. Because of all of the above, the international community has never recognized Israel’s *de facto* annexation of the Golan in 1981, that is, until March 2019. At that time, the administration of the US President Donald Trump declared the official recognition of the Israeli annexation of the Golan, but the said procedure was met with unan-

⁸ The Knesset (Heb. *Ha 'kneset* - “gathering”). The unicameral legislature of Israel. The Knesset passes all laws, elects the president and the prime minister, approves the government and oversees its work. The seat of the Knesset is in the Givat Ram district of West Jerusalem (URL 14)

zacijom odnosa i priznanjem vlastite države od Sirije – drugim riječima, uvjetima na koje Sirija nije pristala bez prethodnih ustupaka i jamstava Izraela. Preliminarni razgovori održani su nakon Konferencije u Madridu 1991., s naglaskom na uređenje sigurnosnih pitanja koje bi omogućilo i olakšalo povlačenje Izraela s prostora Golanske visoravni. No, nisu postignuti nikakvi konkretni dogovori osim međusobne suglasnosti da bi visoravan, kao i nedefinirani pojasevi teritorija zapadno i istočno od nje trebali biti demilitarizirani ili definirani kao zone s ograničenim vojnim snagama (HOF, 1997.).

Godine 1994. i 1995., na razini veleposlanstava te uz aktivno posredništvo SAD-a, vođeni su pregovori u Washingtonu. Izrael je tom prigodom načelno pristao na povlačenje s Golanske visoravni u okvirima mirovnog sporazuma koji bi uključio neka ključna pitanja – uvjete povlačenja (dubinu, rok, odnos između faza povlačenja i normalizacije odnosa) te suglasnost o sigurnosnim aspektima. Razgovori su nastavljeni 1996., te su se 1999./2000., u vrijeme vlade izraelskog premijera iz redova Laburističke stranke, Ehuda Baraka, dvije države najviše približile sporazumu. Iako se Sirija složila s većinom sigurnosnih aspekata na kojima je Izrael inzistirao, tadašnji sirijski predsjednik Hafez al-Asad odbio je sporazum zbog zahtjeva Izraela da zadrži manji pojas zauzetog teritorija, sjeverno od Tiberijadskog jezera. Pregovori su ponovno obnovljeni 2008. pod pokroviteljstvom Turske, ali također bez značajnijeg uspjeha (URL 6). U posljednjem desetljeću Sirija je poprište građanskog rata u kojemu sudjeluje niz frakcija, uz posredno i izravno uključenje regionalnih (Iran) i globalnih aktera (Ruska Federacija, SAD), te je postizanje sporazuma s Izraelom u tom smislu palo u drugi plan.

Gestrateški aspekti Golanske visoravni

Gestrateška važnost Golanske visoravni za Izrael u prvom se redu očituje kroz geografski položaj u odnosu na granične teritorije okolnih država, odnosno topografiju i nadmorsku visinu. Visoravan, naime, omogućuje pregled širih prostora južnog Libanona, sjevernog Izraela i velikog dijela južne Sirije te, u tom smislu, nadzor

imous opposition in the rest of the international community (URL 18).

It should be noted that, with the exception of mediated negotiations following these conflicts, Israel and Syria have entered into direct or indirect diplomatic contact several times since the 1990s with a goal to consider the possibility of concluding a lasting peace. The negotiations were most concrete in the mandate of the Labour Party led by Yitzhak Rabin, whose policy was more flexible and more willing to compromise than the one of the Likud party that was in power in Israel in the previous term (INBAR, 2008). But the key issue in reaching an agreement seemed to be of security nature for the state of Israel, which made any option to return the Golan to Syria conditional on very clear and concrete security guarantees, normalization of relations and Syrian recognition of the country. Syria did not agree to such an arrangement without previous concessions and guarantees from Israel. Preliminary talks were held after the 1991 Madrid Conference, with an emphasis on regulating security issues that would enable and facilitate the withdrawal of Israel from the Golan Heights. However, no concrete agreements were reached other than mutual agreement that the plateau, as well as the undefined belts of territory west and east of it, should be demilitarized or defined as zones with limited military forces (HOF, 1997).

In 1994 and 1995, negotiations were held in Washington, at the embassy level and with the active mediation of the United States. On those occasions, Israel generally agreed to withdraw from the Golan Heights within the framework of a peace agreement that would include some key issues - withdrawal conditions (depth, timeframe, withdrawal phases and normalization of relations), and agreement on security aspects. The talks continued in 1996, and in 1999/2000, during the government of the Israeli Prime Minister from the Labour Party, Ehud Barak, the two countries came closest to an agreement. Although Syria agreed with most of the security aspects that Israel insisted on, then-Syrian President Hafez al-Assad rejected the agreement because of Israel's request to keep a smaller patch of the occupied territory north of Lake Tiberias under its control. Negotiations resumed in 2008 under the auspices of Turkey, but

nad njom pruža značajnu prednost u vojnom i obrambenom smislu. Drugi važan geostrateški aspekt su vodni resursi, s obzirom na to da je na Bliskom istoku voda jedan od ključnih geostrateških resursa zbog njezine relativne oskudnosti. U tom smislu, Golanska visoravan kao područje koje prima značajne količine vode i napaja gornji tok rijeke Jordan donedavno je bila od iznimnoga gospodarskog značaja Izraelu za dostupnost pitke vode, kao i vode za navodnjavanje, posebice ako se uzme u obzir da vojni potencijal države u znatnoj mjeri ovisi o njezinu gospodarskom potencijalu. U kontekstu dostupnosti porječja Jordana kao osovine napajanja stanovništva i gospodarstva, vodoopskrba Izraela bila je 1960-ih izravno ugrožena planom arapskih zemalja da skrenu tokove dvaju od ukupno triju pritoka rijeke Jordan (Banias i Hasbani) prema kanalu Yarmouk, kako bi spriječili dotjecanje vode u Galilejsko more i time osujetili dovršetak izraelskoga nacionalnog projekta navodnjavanja (MURAKAMI, 1995.).

Geostrateški gledano, i topografija i vodni resursi Golanske visoravni ključ su kako za sigurnost Izraela tako i za njegov neometan razvoj. Oba navedena elementa treba stoga sagledati iz perspektive njihove vrijednosti za dugoročnu sigurnost države Izrael.

Vojno-obrambeni aspekt

U razmatranju geostrateške važnosti Golanske visoravni u kontekstu vojno-obrambenog aspekta vrlo je važno osvrnuti se na koncepte izraelske vojne strategije i odnos Izraela prema nedostatku strateške dubine. Izrael 1953. godine mijenja koncept glavne vojne strategije tako što napušta „obrambeno-napadačku“ strategiju usvojenu četiri godine ranije tijekom prvoga Arapsko-izraelskog rata i zamjenjuje je „napadačko-obrambenom“ strategijom (OREN I DR., 2013.). Ovakve promjene potaknuo je izraelski vojni vrh, koji je smatrao da su utvrđivanje i obrana dugoročno skupi u odnosu na napade na neprijateljskom teritoriju. Drugi izazov razmatran 1950-ih bio je vrlo ranjiv i nepovoljan oblik teritorija države koji su u slučaju invazije okolne neprijateljske države mogle relativno lako presjeći. U kasnijim razdobljima Izrael uvodi koncept „proširenih

also without significant success (URL 6). In the last decade, Syria has been torn by a civil war involving a number of factions, with the direct and indirect involvement of regional (Iran) and global actors (Russian Federation, USA), and reaching an agreement with Israel has been set aside.

Geostrategic aspects of the Golan Heights

The geostrategic importance of the Golan Heights for Israel is primarily manifested through the factor of geographical position in relation to the bordering territories of the surrounding countries, combined with the factor of topography and altitude. Namely, the plateau enables an overview of the wider areas of southern Lebanon, northern Israel and a large part of southern Syria, and in that sense, its control provides a significant advantage in military and defence terms. Another important geostrategic aspect is water, bearing in mind that it is one of the key geostrategic resources in the Middle East due to its relative scarcity. Until recently, the Golan Heights as an area that receives significant amounts of water and supplies the upper Jordan River has been of exceptional economic importance to Israel for the availability of drinking water as well as irrigation water, especially given the fact that the country's military potential depends on its economic potential. In the historical context of the Jordan Basin's availability as a supply axis for the population and the economy, Israel's water supply was directly threatened in the 1960s by Arab countries' plan to divert two of the three tributaries of the Jordan River (Banias and Hasbani) to the Yarmouk Canal in order to prevent the water to supply the Sea of Galilee and thus disrupt the completion of the Israeli National Irrigation Project (MURAKAMI, 1995).

In geostrategic terms, both the topography and water resources of the Golan Heights are key to Israel's defence and its economic development. Both of these elements should therefore be viewed from the perspective of their value for the long-term security of the State of Israel.

Military-defensive aspect

In considering the geostrategic importance of the Golan Heights in the context of the military

granica“ što je označavalo prelazak „crvene linije“ neprijateljskih zemalja u smislu u kojem je to za Izrael moglo značiti izravnu ugrozu. To je uključivalo sve aktivnosti susjednih neprijateljskih zemalja za koje je procijenjeno da su prijetnja i da ih treba ukloniti preventivnim udarima (OREN I DR., 2013.).

Izduljen oblik izraelskoga državnog teritorija u pravcu sjever-jug, uz posljedičnu uskost od 137 km na najširem do 14 km na najužem dijelu, stavio je pred Izrael izazov nedostatka strateške dubine. U vojnom smislu strateška se dubina odnosi na udaljenosti između prvih crta vojnog djelovanja do ključnih civilnih ili vojnih središta. U hipotetičkim ratnim okolnostima cilj je pomaknuti područja vojnih djelovanja što dalje od takvih središta. S obzirom na malu dubinu teritorija, neki koncepti izraelske vojne strategije uključivali su odvratanje, preventivne udare i tehnološku nadmoć nad neprijateljem. Za pomicanje borbe na neprijateljski teritorij najviše se zalagao bivši izraelski premijer David Ben-Gurion, upravo kako bi spriječio eventualni neprijateljski utjecaj na izraelsku infrastrukturu na uskom teritoriju i presijecanje državnog teritorija (EISENKOT, SIBONI, 2019.). Uz to, promovao je izrazito brzo vojno djelovanje kako bi se izbjegao pritisak na ekonomiju države i umanjio međunarodni pritisak na Izrael zbog korištenja sile. Izraelska okupacija i kontrola Golanske visoravni i, svojedobno, Sinajskog poluotoka rezultat su upravo uzimanja u obzir navedenog „koncepta dubine“, odnosno širenja vojnog djelovanja na područja izvan međunarodno priznatih granica Izraela. Iz istog je razloga tijekom mirovnih pregovora Izrael zahtijevao demilitarizaciju Golana i Sinaja.

Golanska je visoravan zbog svoje topografije i geografskog položaja iznimno važna za sigurnost sjevernog Izraela. S obzirom na dosadašnju nemogućnost postizanja sporazuma sa Sirijom kojim bi se osigurala demilitarizacija Golana, kao i na trenutačnu političku klimu u državi, jasno je da srednjoročni planovi Izraela uključuju daljnji vojni i civilni nadzor nad visoravni, te je stoga važno sagledati topografiju visoravni kao ključni vojno-obrambeni aspekt.

Prosječna nadmorska visina okupiranog dijela

and defense, it is very important to look at the concepts of Israeli military strategy and its attitude towards the lack of strategic depth. In 1953, Israel changed the concept of major military strategy by abandoning the ‘defensive-offensive’ strategy adopted 4 years earlier during the first Arab-Israeli war, and replacing it with an ‘offensive-defensive’ strategy (OREN ET AL., 2013). Such changes were prompted by the Israeli military leadership, which considered fortification and defense to be costly in the long run compared to attacks into enemy territory. Another challenge considered during the 1950s was the very vulnerable and unfavourable shape of the territory of the country, which in the event of an invasion could be relatively easily intersected by the surrounding enemy countries. In later periods, Israel introduced the concept of ‘expanded borders’ which meant crossing the ‘red line’ of enemy countries in the sense that it could mean a direct threat to Israel. This included all activities of neighbouring enemy countries, which, following an assessment, were considered a threat and were to be eliminated by preventive strikes (OREN ET AL., 2013).

The elongated shape of Israel’s state territory in a north-south direction, with a consequent narrowness of 137 km at its widest to 14 km at its narrowest, has posed a challenge to Israel’s lack of strategic depth. In military terms, strategic depth refers to the distance between the front lines of military action to key civilian or military centres. Under hypothetical war circumstances, the goal is to move areas of military action away from such centres. Given the scarce depth of the territory, some concepts of Israel’s military strategy included deterrence, pre-emptive strikes, and technological superiority over the enemy. Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion has shown the greatest commitment to moving the fight to enemy territory, with the aim of preventing possible hostile influence on Israeli infrastructure in narrow territory and crossing state territory (EISENKOT, SIBONI, 2019). In addition, he promoted extremely rapid military action, in order to avoid pressure on the state’s economy and reduce international pressure on Israel to use force. The Israeli occupation and control of

Golanske visoravni varira od 200 m nv u blizini Galilejskog mora do preko 1200 m na sjevernom dijelu i padinama planine Hermon. Visoravan pruža pregled i vizualni pristup prostoru Galileje na zapadu (dolina Hula), južnog Libanona na sjeverozapadu te unutrašnjosti Sirije s glavnim gradom Damaskom na istoku i sjeveroistoku, što je ključ njezine strateške važnosti. Prije 1967., sjever Izraela bio je topografski inferioran i posebno ranjiv upravo zbog sirijskih topničkih položaja na Golanskoj visoravni koji su imali izniman pregled čitave doline Hula i izraelskih gradova i sela na prostoru Tiberijadskog bazena, što je omogućavalo ne samo povremenu topničku vatru prema civilnim ciljevima u krugu 10 km, nego i značajnu prednost u situacijama otvorenoga ratnog sukoba. Stoga je razumljivo oklijevanje Izraela da vrati Golansku visoravan Siriji, s obzirom na vlastitu povoljnu stratešku poziciju nakon okupacije, uključujući topnički domet sirijskoga glavnoga grada Damaska koji je od izraelskih položaja udaljen samo 60 km (HARRIS, 1977.).

Pozicioniranje i utvrđenje crte obrane IDF-a na Golanskoj visoravni daje izraelskim snagama izrazitu topografsku prednost u slučaju napada iz pravca unutrašnjosti Sirije. To je vidljivo iz razlika u nadmorskoj visini na istočnoj crti razdvajanja – primjerice, jedna od golanskih uzvisina pod izraelskim vojnim nadzorom, Mt. Avital, visine je 1204 m, dok je teren prema unutrašnjosti Sirije prosječne visine između 700 i 800 m nv, zbog čega je kontrola ove crte izrazito važna za izraelske kopnene snage. Ovakvi uvjeti pružaju odličnu obrambenu prednost s obzirom na preglednost unutrašnjosti Sirije i smjera potencijalnog napada. S druge strane, visoravan prirodno zadobiva funkciju svojevrsnoga „bedema“ prema još nižem području sjevernog Izraela na zapadu, onemogućujući neprijateljskoj vojnoj sili pregled izraelskog teritorija te prisiljavajući bilo kakve neprijateljske snage na kretanje nižim terenom gdje su u potpunosti izložene izraelskim položajima (EILAND, 2009.).

Također, trenutačni položaji izraelskih snaga duž niza uzvišenja na istočnom dijelu Golanske visoravni topografski je najpovoljnija moguća obrambena crta obrane protiv eventualne vojne

the Golan Heights and, at one time, the Sinai Peninsula are the result of taking into account the aforementioned ‘concept of depth’, i.e. the expansion of military action to areas outside the internationally recognized borders of Israel. For the same reason, during the peace talks, Israel demanded the demilitarization of the Golan and Sinai.

In the context of the mentioned advantages of topography and geographic position, the Golan Heights is extremely important for the security of northern Israel. Given the current impossibility of reaching an agreement with Syria to ensure the demilitarization of the Golan, as well as the current political climate in the country, it is clear that Israel’s medium-term plans include further military and civil control of the plateau, and therefore it is important to consider the topography as a defensive aspect.

The average altitude of the occupied part of the Golan Heights varies from 200 m above sea level near the Sea of Galilee to over 1,200 m in the northern part and the slopes of Mount Hermon. The plateau provides an overview and visual access to the area of Galilee in the west (the Hula Valley), southern Lebanon in the northwest, and the interior of Syria with the capital Damascus in the east and northeast, which is the key to its strategic importance. In the period before 1967, northern Israel was topographically inferior and particularly vulnerable precisely because of the Syrian artillery positions on the Golan Heights which had an exceptional view of the entire Hula Valley and Israeli towns and villages in Tiberias Basin, allowing not only occasional artillery fire on civilian targets, but also a significant advantage in situations of open war conflict. Therefore, it is understandable that Israel is reluctant to return the Golan Heights to Syria, given its favourable strategic position after the occupation, including the artillery range of the Syrian capital Damascus, which is only 60 km from Israeli positions (HARRIS, 1977).

The positioning of the IDF’s line of defence on the Golan Heights gives Israeli forces a distinct topographical advantage in the event of an attack from Syria. This is evident from the differences in altitude on the eastern dividing

invazije s istoka i sjeveroistoka. Takav bi, naime, hipotetski napad prisilio agresora da se prilagodi topografiji i kanalizira snage između uzvišenja s kojih bi i brojčano inferiorne obrambene snage mogle odbiti napad ili, pak, dobiti na vremenu prije nego što stigne potrebno pojačanje. Takav scenarij se, uostalom, već dogodio tijekom Jomkipirskog rata u listopadu 1973. kad je, zahvaljujući terenskoj prednosti, 177 izraelskih tenkova uspjelo zaustaviti silu od ukupno 1500 sirijskih tenkova, i to dovoljno dugo za mobilizaciju i slanje dodatnih obrambenih snaga. Tom se prigodom pokazalo da bilo kakav kopneni napad s istočne/sjeveroistočne strane nema povoljne izgleda bez zauzimanja uzvišenja koja su trenutačno pod izraelskim nadzorom (INBAR, 2019.).

Iz navedenih razloga, a s obzirom na povijest vojnih agresija na Izrael, jasno je inzistiranje izraelskih vlada na dvjema mogućim opcijama u geopolitičkom smislu:

- 1) zadržavanju Golanske visoravni pod svojom kontrolom po cijenu daljnje kompromitacije svojega položaja u međunarodnoj zajednici
- 2) povlačenju s visoravni i vraćanju visoravni Siriji uz međunarodna jamstva demilitarizacije područja ili snažnije pozicioniranje međunarodnih mirovnih snaga na tom prostoru, ali po cijeni rizika gubitka nadzora nad sigurnosnom situacijom.

Hidropolitiki aspekti

U aridnim regijama dostupnost ograničenih količina vode prvorazredno je političko pitanje, a nadmetanje pojedinih nacija za kontrolu nad vodom u tom se smislu može smatrati posebnim aspektom geopolitike koji su pojedini autori nazivali i hidropolitikom (WATERBURY, 1979.; ESCUDERO, 2018.). Kako je navedeno, Golanska visoravan sadrži značajne vodne resurse koji su u razmjerno suhoj klimi bliskoistočnoga prostora iznimno važni za vodoopskrbu stanovništva i gospodarstva. U vremenu nakon Šestodnevno rata pa sve do početka 2000-ih o vodnim resursima Golanske visoravni u znatnoj je mjeri ovisila vodoopskrba Države Izrael, što je jedna od ključnih činjenica iz kojih proizlazi geostrateška

line - for example, the elevation of one of the Golan peaks under Israeli military control, Mt. Avital, is 1,204 m, while the terrain towards the interior of Syria is on average between 700 and 800 meters above the sea level, which is why the control of this line is extremely important for the Israeli ground forces. Such conditions provide an extraordinary defensive advantage given the visibility of the interior of Syria and the direction of a potential attack. On the other hand, the plateau naturally acquires the function of a kind of 'bulwark' towards even lower area of northern Israel in the west, preventing the enemy military force from surveilling Israeli territory and forcing any enemy forces to move to lower terrain where they are fully exposed to Israeli positions (EILAND, 2009).

Thus, the current position of the Israeli forces along a series of elevations in the eastern part of the Golan Heights is topographically the most favourable line of defence against a possible military invasion from the east and northeast. A hypothetical attack would force the aggressor to adapt to the topography and channel their forces between the elevations from which even outnumbered defensive forces could repel the attack or gain time before the necessary reinforcements arrive. Such a scenario, after all, already occurred during the Yom Kippur War in October 1973, when, due to terrain advantage, 177 Israeli tanks managed to stop a force of a total of 1,500 Syrian tanks, and hold them off long enough to allow IDF to mobilize and send additional troops. On that occasion, it turned out that any ground attack from the east / northeast side does not have a favourable prospect without capturing the elevations that are currently under Israeli control (INBAR, 2019).

For these reasons, and given the history of military aggression against Israel, it is clear that all Israeli governments insist on two possible options in geopolitical terms:

- 1) keeping the Golan Heights under Israeli control at the cost of further compromising its position in the international community, or
- 2) withdrawal from the plateau and returning it to Syria with international guarantees of de-

važnost ove regije.

Uz značajnu godišnju količinu oborina, na Golanskoj visoravni više je od 200 izvora od kojih su neki stalni, a neki povremeni. Ondje su i brojni tokovi, većinom periodični, dok se od stalnih tokova važnošću i obujmom vode ističu Gilbon, Mehushim, Zawitan, Yehuddia i El Al. Velik dio ovih izvora kaptiran je za potrebe naselja na samom Golanu (KEARY, 2013.).

Za vodoopskrbu Izraela posebno je bila važna rijeka Jordan zapadno od visoravni, a čiji gornji tok utječe u Tiberijadsko jezero (Galilejsko more). Rijeka se znatnim dijelom napaja vodom putem pritoka koji izvire na području Golanske visoravni, a zbog vrlo skromnih vodnih resursa Izrael se u prošlosti koristio gotovo cijelim površinskim tokom za vodoopskrbu i navodnjavanje.

Upravo je ovaj aspekt bio predmetom dodatnih tenzija oko visoravni, s obzirom na antagonizam židovske države i njezinih arapskih susjeda. Naime, godine 1964. Izrael je dovršio projekt tzv. „Nacionalnog vodonosnika“ (*National Water Carrier*) koji je dovodio vodu iz Tiberijadskog jezera prema obali i dalje prema jugu države. Po količini vode, vodonosnik je poštovao „Zajednički plan za vodu u dolini Jordana“ (*The Jordan Valley Unified Water Plan*, odnosno tzv. *Johnstonov plan*)⁹ iz 1955., kojim je trebalo biti uređeno korištenje vodnih resursa u porječju Jordana. Iako su se u početku načelno slagale s planom, arapske su zemlje ocijenile da neće podržati nijedan plan koji bi omogućio bilo kakav gospodarski ili društveni razvoj Izraela. Stoga je na sastanku zemalja članica Arapske lige 1964. dogovoren plan kojim je trebalo sabotirati izraelski, tek dovršeni, vodonosnik inženjerskim pothvatima, skretanjem vodenih tokova Baniasa i Hasbanija prema kanalu Yarmouk, kako njihove vode ne bi utjecale u Jordan. Time bi kapacitet izraelskog

militarization of the area or stronger positioning of international peacekeeping forces in the area, but at the cost of the risk of losing control of the security situation.

Hydropolitical aspects

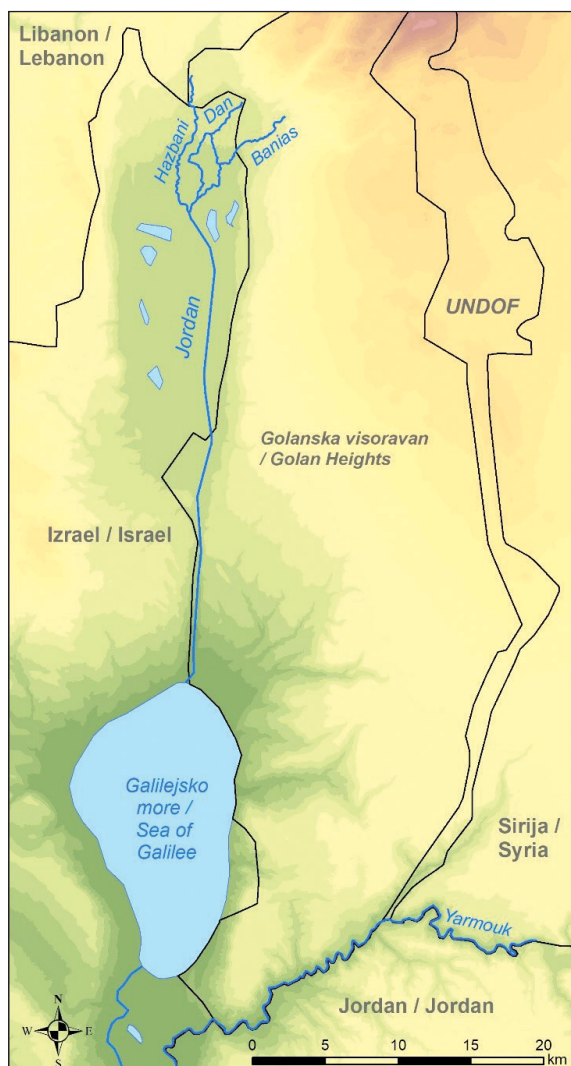
In arid regions, the availability of limited quantities of water is a first-class political issue, and the competition of individual nations for control over water in this sense can be considered a special aspect of geopolitics which some authors called *hydropolitics* (WATERBURY, 1979; ESCUDERO, 2018). As already mentioned, the Golan Heights contain significant water resources that are extremely important for the supply of the population and the economy in the relatively dry climate of the Middle East. In the period from the Six Day War until the beginning of the 2000s Israel's water resources largely depended on the water from the Golan Heights, which was one of the key factors that gave this plateau geostrategic importance.

With a significant annual amount of precipitation, there are more than 200 springs on the Golan Heights, some of which are permanent and some occasional. There are also numerous streams, mostly periodic, but also some permanent ones among which Gilbon, Mehushim, Zawitan, Yehuddia and El Al stand out given their significant volume of water. Many of these springs have been used for the needs of settlements on the Golan (KEARY, 2013).

The Jordan River, with its upper course flowing into Lake Tiberias, used to be the most important component of Israel's water supply. The river is largely supplied with water through tributaries that spring in the Golan Heights, and due to very modest water resources, Israel was using almost the entire surface flow for water supply and irrigation.

It is precisely this aspect that was the cause of additional tension regarding the plateau, given the antagonism between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbours. Namely, in 1964, Israel completed the so-called *National Water Carrier*, a project which brought water from Lake Tiberias to the coast and further towards the south of the

⁹ *Zajednički plan za vodu u dolini Jordana* (engl. *The Jordan Valley Unified Water Plan*) – poznat i kao „Johnstonov plan“ bio je plan za zajedničko upravljanje vodnim resursima sliva rijeke Jordan. Plan je inicirao i razvio američki veleposlanik Eric Johnston između 1953. i 1955. po uzoru na sličan razvojni plan doline Tennessee u SAD-u. Plan su odobrili tehnički odbori za vodoopskrbu svih zemalja s pristupom slivu Jordana – Izraela, Jordana, Libanona i Sirije. Iako je Arapska liga odbila plan, Jordan i Izrael vodili su politiku uvažavanja odredbi o korištenju količina vode kolike su im prema planu pripadale (URL 15).



SLIKA 2. Kartografski prikaz gornjeg toka rijeke Jordan i Galilejskog mora u odnosu na Golansku visoravan
 FIGURE 2 The map of the upper Jordan area and Lake Tiberias with regards to the position of the Golan Heights

vodonosnika bio smanjen za 35 %, a sveukupna vodoopskrba države za 11 % (SHLAIM, 2000.). Nakon što su arapske zemlje započele tehničku izvedbu ovoga plana, Izrael je takvu diverziju doživio kao ugrozu svojih temeljnih prava te je iskoristio incidente u demilitariziranom području kako bi zračnim napadima spriječio izvedbu ovih projekata (OREN, 2002.).

HOF (1997.) razlučuje nekoliko ključnih hidrogeografskih elemenata koji su potkraj 20. stoljeća bili važni za Izrael u geostrateškom smislu, a koji su u tom kontekstu bili ključni i za eventualno postizanje sporazuma između Izraela i Sirije: izvor i rijeku Baniyas, golanske površinske vode, rijeku Jordan i Tiberijsko jezero. U međuvremenu su, razvojem i izgradnjom desalinizacijskih tehnologija u Izraelu, navedeni vodni resursi iz-

country. In terms of water quantities, the carrier complied with the *Jordan Valley Unified Water Plan*⁹ from 1955, whose aim was to regulate the use of water resources in the Jordan basin. Although they initially agreed with the plan, the Arab countries decided that they would not support any plan that would enable any economic or social development of Israel. Therefore, at a meeting of Arab League member states in 1964, a plan was agreed to sabotage the Israeli newly completed water carrier project by engineering ventures of diverting the Baniyas and Hasbani watercourses toward the Yarmouk Canal so that their waters would not supply the Jordan river. In theory, this would reduce the capacity of the Israeli water carrier by 35% and the overall water supply of the state by 11% (SHLAIM, 2000). After the Arab countries embarked on the technical implementation of this plan, Israel saw this diversion as a threat to its fundamental rights, and used incidents in the demilitarized zone as a pretext to engage in a series of air strikes in order to prevent the implementation of the Arab countries' plan (OREN, 2002).

HOF (1997) distinguished several key hydrogeographic elements of utmost importance for Israel in geostrategic terms, which were in this context crucial for the eventual agreement between Israel and Syria: the source and the stream Baniyas, the surface waters of the Golan, the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. In the meantime, with the development and the construction of desalination facilities in Israel, the mentioned water sources have ceased to be of national importance.

The upper stream of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee are the main hydrological elements in the northern part of Israel (Fig. 2). Until 1967 the upper reaches of the Jordan river were also

⁹ The Jordan Valley Unified Water Plan - also known as the "Johnston Plan", was a plan for the joint management of water resources in the Jordan River Basin. The plan was initiated and developed by the U.S. Ambassador Eric Johnston between 1953 and 1955 following the example of a similar development plan for the Tennessee Valley in the United States. The plan was approved by the technical committees for water supply of all countries with access to the Jordan basin - Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Although the Arab League eventually rejected the plan, Jordan and Israel pursued a policy of respecting the provisions on the use of the amount of water they were entitled to according to the plan (URL 15).

gubili nacionalni značaj.

Gornji dio toka rijeke Jordan koji uključuje i Galilejsko more osnovni su hidrografski elementi u području sjevernog dijela Izraela (Sl. 2.). Gornji tok Jordana do 1967. ujedno je bio granica između Izraela i Sirije, a okupacija navedenog područja onemogućila je Siriji korištenje 22 milijuna metara kubičnih vode godišnje, što joj je bilo zajamčeno Johnstonovim planom iz 1955. (HOF, 1997.). Pritisak na razmjerno oskudne količine vode povećavao se porastom broja stanovnika u većem dijelu porječja, što je s jedne strane stavljalo Izrael u razmjerno rigidan položaj što se tiče eventualnog prijedloga povratka na političke granice i ponovnog pristupa Siriji vodnim resursima ove rijeke. Naime, povijesno se godišnja količina vode u Jordanu smanjila s 1,3 mlrd. m³ na samo 70 – 100 milijuna m³ (URL 7). Sve veći pritisak stanovništva i gospodarstva na rijeku i sve njezine pritoke stvarao je pat poziciju i tendenciju kratkoročno jednostranih poteza. Takve okolnosti prisiljavale su Izrael i ostatak regije koji pripada porječju da u doglednoj budućnosti pronađu kakvo-takvo zajedničko rješenje (AVIRAM I DR., 2020.), što je u geopolitičkom smislu službenom Izraelu reduciralo manevarski prostor. Zbog toga je Izrael od 2000-ih počeo intenzivno razvijati nova rješenja za vodoopskrbi svojeg teritorija. Uz to što je jedna od vodećih zemalja u pročišćavanju i ponovnoj uporabi otpadnih voda za potrebe poljoprivrede, Izrael je danas i jedna od rijetkih zemalja u svijetu koje glavnu pitke vode dobivaju desalinizacijom morske vode. Značajnije korištenje desalinizacije počelo je 2000. godine s 50 mil. m³ dnevno, dok se, prema planovima, do 2030. predviđa dobivanje 1100 milijuna m³ dnevno (URL 20).

Prema trenutno dostupnim podacima, u Izraelu se tri četvrtine vode u kućanstvima dobiva desalinizacijom vode iz Sredozemnog mora, a u planu je izgradnja novih postrojenja koja će omogućiti potpunu neovisnost o vodama iz tekućica, eliminirajući ovisnost o porječju Jordana. Potkraj 2021. Izrael je potpisao sporazum s Jordanom kojim će se provoditi razmjena vode za električnu energiju kojom raspolaže Jordan, a koju generira iz tamošnjih solarnih elektrana. Trenutačno se približno 6 % vode dobivene de-

the border between Israel and Syria, and the occupation of the area prevented Syria from using 22 million cubic meters of water per year, which was guaranteed by Johnston's 1955 plan (HOF, 1997). The pressure on relatively scarce water resources kept increasing with population growth in much of the basin, putting eventually Israel in a relatively rigid position on a possible proposal to return to political borders and re-access Syria's water resources. Namely, in the last several decades the annual amount of water in the Jordan river has decreased from 1.3 billion cubic meters to only 70-100 million (URL 7). The growing pressure of the population and the economy on the river and all its tributaries created a stalemate and a tendency to short-term unilateral moves. Such circumstances, however, used to be a factor which pressured Israel and the rest of the region belonging to the basin to find some kind of common solution in the foreseeable future (AVIRAM ET AL., 2020), reducing the nation's geopolitical maneuverability. This prompted Israel to begin with the intensive development of alternative solutions for the water supply of its territory from the early 2000s. In addition to being one of the leading countries in the treatment and reuse of agricultural wastewater, Israel is today one of the few countries that obtain most of its drinking water by desalination of seawater. Significant use of desalination began in 2000 with 50 million m³ of water from desalination plants per day and, according to the existing plans, by 2030 this figure is expected to reach 1100 million m³ per day (URL 20).

According to the currently available data, around 3/4 of household water in Israel is obtained by desalination of water from the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, the country plans to construct new desalination facilities which would enable its complete independence in water supply, eliminating the need to rely on the Jordan basin. At the end of 2021, Israel signed an agreement with Jordan to exchange water for electricity available to Jordan, which it generates from solar power plants there. Currently, about 6% of the water obtained by desalination is pumped to Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. These are, in essence, completely new geostrategic circum-

salinizacijom crpi prema Jordanu i Palestinskoj samoupravi. Ovo su, zapravo, potpuno nove geostrateške okolnosti u odnosu na one kakve su vladale neposredno nakon Šestodnevnog rata 1967. godine. Tada je, iz planinskih vodonosnika zapadne obale i Golanske visoravni, Izrael dobivao približno 60 % ukupne količine vode (URL 20, URL 21). Ovakvim razvojem situacije smanjuje se hidropolitika važnost Golanske visoravni, a u kontekstu postojećih odnosa sa susjednim većinom aridnim zemljama razvijenost desalinizacijske infrastrukture novi je adut u rukama Države Izrael.

Geopolitičke perspektive Golanske visoravni

U kontekstu unutarnjopolitičkih stavova i pozicija pojedinih stranaka u Izraelu prema pitanju Golanske visoravni, u godinama nakon okupacije stav lijevih i desnih političkih opcija bio je razmjerno ujednačen. Iako se izraelska kontrola nad ovim područjem uglavnom vezuje uz stranke desne, nacionalističke orijentacije poput Likuda, valja istaknuti kako su na istoj liniji što se tiče Golana dugo vremena bile i lijeve opcije. Tako je, primjerice, stajalište Laburističke stranke 1970-ih bilo usmjereno izgradnji novih naselja i kolonizaciji židovskog stanovništva na visoravni (KUMARASWAMY, 1999.). Balansirajući između stavova međunarodne zajednice i rizika geostrateške prirode, međutim, pojedine su vlade bile spremne na ustupke i eventualno vraćanje Golanske visoravni Siriji, no uz vrlo čvrsta i konkretna jamstva. Hipotetičkim sporazumom na kakav bi Izrael bio spreman bilo bi dogovoreno povlačenje izraelske vojske s Golana u zamjenu za mir, uspostavljanje normalnih diplomatskih i gospodarskih odnosa te priznanje Države Izrael, no navedeni pokušaji u tom smjeru bili su neuspješni. U međuvremenu, još jedna invazija na Izrael (1974.) te izrazito političko-geografski dinamizam Bliskog istoka u određenom su smislu učvrstili izraelski stav o strateškoj potrebi zadržavanja kontrole nad Golanom (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018.). Izrael je u međuvremenu usmjerio svoje diplomatske napore prema SAD-u, tražeći da mu američka administracija službeno prizna suverenost nad Golanskom visoravni. Takav sce-

stances in relation to those that prevailed immediately after the six-day war in 1967. At that time, Israel received about 60% of the total amount of water from the mountain aquifers of the West Bank and the Golan Heights (URL 20, URL 21). These circumstances mean the decreased hydro-political importance of the Golan Heights, and in the context of the existing relations with the neighbouring arid countries, the development of desalination infrastructure becomes a new trump card in the hands of the state of Israel.

Geopolitical perspectives of the Golan Heights

In the context of internal political attitudes and positions of individual parties in Israel towards the Golan Heights, in the years after the occupation, the attitude of left and right political options was relatively uniform. Although Israeli control over the area is largely tied to right-wing parties such as the Likud, it should be noted that left-wing options have long been on the same line regarding the Golan. For example, the position of the Labour Party in the 1970s was directed towards the construction of new settlements and the colonization of the Jewish population on the plateau (KUMARASWAMY, 1999). Balancing between the official position of the international community on the matter and the risks of a geostrategic nature, however, some governments were ready to make concessions and possibly return the Golan Heights to Syria, but with very firm and very concrete guarantees. A hypothetical agreement on what Israel would be prepared for would be to withdraw the Israeli army from the Golan in exchange for peace, establish normal diplomatic and economic relations and recognize the state of Israel, but all the attempts towards reaching these conditions were so far unsuccessful. Meanwhile, another invasion of Israel (1974) and the remarkable political-geographical dynamism of the Middle East strengthened the Israel's stance on the strategic need to retain control of the Golan (HAUSER, ZARFATI, 2018). Israel, meanwhile, focused its diplomatic efforts on the United States, demanding that the U.S. administration officially recognizes its sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Such a scenario occurred

narij ostvario se u ožujku 2019. kada je američki predsjednik Donald Trump priznao izraelsku jurisdikciju nad Golanom. Unatoč negodovanju ostatka međunarodne zajednice koja je osudila odluku Trumpove administracije kao suprotnu međunarodnom pravu, ovaj je potez u Izraelu dočekan kao važan korak u ostvarivanju izraelskih geostrateških interesa u regiji i dugoročnoj „izraelifikaciji“ visoravni.

U posljednjih desetak godina, pitanje statusa Golanske visoravni treba sagledati i iz perspektive općega geopolitičkog preslagivanja u bliskoistočnoj regiji nakon „Arapskog proljeća“, što se posebno odrazilo na unutarnje prilike u Siriji. Naime, godine 2011. i građanskih nemira usmjerenih protiv režima sirijskog predsjednika Bašara al-Asada i nasilnog suzbijanja prosvjeda, izbio je višegodišnji složeni sukob između nekoliko frakcija – službena Sirija i njezini saveznici, pobunjenička „Slobodna sirijska vojska“ i druge skupine umjerene opozicije, Islamska Država Iraka i Levanta (ISIL), manje džihadističke skupine (npr. Al-Nusra Front) i Kurdsko-arapske Sirijske Demokratske Snage (SDF). U sukob su se u manjoj ili većoj mjeri izravno uključili i SAD, Rusija, Iran, Turska i Izrael, pri čemu je SAD aktivno pomagao umjerenu opoziciju, Rusija i Iran službenu sirijsku vladu i predsjednika Asada, dok je Turska ušla u sukob sa sirijskim Kurdima.

Službeni stav Izraela u Sirijskom građanskom ratu je stroga neutralnost. Drugim riječima, Izrael se, za razliku od svojega ključnog saveznika SAD-a, nije svrstao na stranu pobunjenika niti je otvoreno pozivao na odstupanje Asada s vlasti u Siriji. Štoviše, Asad je u nekim krugovima izraelske politike percipiran kao „manje zlo“, odnosno prepreka jačanju islamističkih skupina u neposrednom izraelskom susjedstvu. To je pridonijelo pasivnoj izraelskoj politici prema cjelokupnoj problematici sukoba u Siriji. S druge strane, nakon 2013. kad su se u sirijski rat na strani sirijskog predsjednika izravno uključili Iran i Hezbollah, Izrael je zauzeo aktivniju ulogu (neslužbene ratne operacije manjeg opsega, ograničene na prostor jugozapadne Sirije, istočno od Golanske visoravni). Razlog za to je bojazan od jačanja uloge Irana blizu izraelskih granica, odnosno sprječavanje opskrbe Hezbollaha iranskim

in March 2019 when the US President Donald Trump recognized Israeli jurisdiction over the plateau. Despite the outrage of the rest of the international community, which condemned the Trump administration's decision as contrary to international law, the move was hailed in Israel as an important step in pursuing Israel's geostrategic interests in the region and long-term political 'Israelization' of the plateau.

In the last ten years, the issue of the status of the Golan Heights should be viewed from the perspective of the general geopolitical rearrangement in the Middle East region after the 'Arab Spring', which had a special impact on the internal situation in Syria. Namely, in 2011, after the civil unrest directed against the regime of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and the violent suppression of protests, a long and complex armed conflict broke out between several factions – the official Syria and its allies, the rebel Free Syrian Army and other moderate opposition groups, the terrorist Islamic state of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), smaller jihadist groups (e.g. Al-Nusra Front) and the Kurdish-Arab Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The United States, Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Israel also became more or less directly involved in the conflict, with the United States actively assisting the moderate opposition, Russia and Iran helping the official Syrian government and President Assad, while Turkey entered into conflict with the Syrian Kurds.

Israel's official position in the Syrian civil war is strict neutrality. In other words, Israel, unlike its key U.S. ally, did not side with the rebels or openly call for Assad to step down from power in Syria. Moreover, Assad is perceived in some circles of Israeli politics as a 'lesser evil', i.e. an obstacle to the strengthening of some of the Islamist groups in the immediate Israeli neighbourhood. This has contributed to a relatively passive Israeli policy towards the overall issue of the conflict in Syria. On the other hand, after Iran and Hezbollah were directly involved in the Syrian war on the Syrian president's side in 2013, Israel took a more active approach (unofficial small-scale war operations, limited to south-western Syria, east of the Golan Heights). It was motivated by fears of strengthening of the Iran's role near Israel's borders, as well

naoružanjem. Ta se politika očitovala u povremenim zračnim napadima na Hezbolah i iranske dobrovoljce, kao i sanitetskoj pomoći ranjenicima među pobunjeničkim snagama, uključujući i pripadnicima različitih pobunjeničkih skupina, koji su povremeno prevoženi i liječeni u izraelskim bolnicama. Razlog za takvo postupanje je procjena situacije – Iran i Hezbolah su dugoročne strateške prijetele za državu Izrael, dok ISIL i druge slične ili umjerenije grupacije predstavljaju tek taktičku prijetnju koja nije izravna. Stoga između Izraela i spomenutih skupina u jugozapadnoj Siriji postoji međusobno tiho „savezništvo“ u kojemu je ključni cilj Izraela da navedene skupine drže položaje istočno od Golanske visoravni i time spriječe kontakt iranskih dobrovoljaca i Hezbolaha s tim područjem (MALMWIG, 2016.).

Iz navedenog je jasno da je sukob u Siriji koji je u velikoj mjeri obilježen sektaškim neprijateljstvom između sunita i šijita u određenom smislu bio povoljna okolnost za Izrael, s obzirom na skretanje fokusa islamskog svijeta sa židovske države. Štoviše, zaoštavanje odnosa između dviju najbrojnijih islamskih vjeroispovijesti posredno je pomoglo normalizaciji odnosa pojedinih zaljevskih zemalja s Izraelom (Ujedinjeni Arapski Emirati i Bahrein), s obzirom na to da je jačanje utjecaja šijitskog Irana u regiji percipirano kao zajednička prijetnja kako židovskoj državi tako i interesima sunitskih država na Bliskom istoku. Pitanje odnosa Izraela i Sirije privremeno je zakratko obnovljeno početkom 2020., kad su se pojavile špekulacije o tome da Sirija planira pregovarati s Izraelom radi uspostave gospodarskih odnosa, kako bi si olakšala gospodarske sankcije koje joj je nametnuo SAD. No, takav je scenarij uklonio sirijski predsjednik Asad koji je javno izjavio da ne planira nikakve razgovore s Izraelom sve dok Izrael ne pokaže spremnost vratiti Siriji okupirano područje Golanske visoravni (URL 17).

S obzirom na opću situaciju u vrlo nestabilnoj bliskoistočnoj regiji, kao i geostratešku vrijednost visoravni u sigurnosnom smislu, vidljiv je nastavku *status quo*, odnosno zadržavanja Izraela na Golanu. Perspektivu novih pokušaja sporazuma dodatno onemogućuje i spomenuto preslagivanje odnosa na Bliskom istoku te vrlo složena

as by the consequent intentions to prevent Iran from supplying Hezbollah with weapons. This approach included the occasional airstrikes on Hezbollah and Iranian volunteer forces, as well as medical assistance to the wounded members of various rebel groups. The reason for this was previous assessment of the situation - Iran and Hezbollah are long-term strategic threats to the state of Israel, while ISIL and other similar extremist or more moderate groups are only a tactical threat that is not immediate. Thus, a temporary 'quiet alliance' occurred between Israel and some of the mentioned rebel groups, in which Israel's key goal is for these groups to hold positions east of the Golan Heights and thus prevent Iranian volunteers and Hezbollah from coming into contact with the area (MALMWIG, 2016).

Following the above, it is clear that the conflict in Syria, which was largely marked by sectarian enmity between Sunni and Shia factions of Islam, was in a sense a favourable circumstance for Israel, given the shift of focus of the Islamic world away from the Jewish state. Moreover, the strained relations between the two largest Islamic denominations have indirectly helped to normalize relations between Israel and some Gulf states (United Arab Emirates and Bahrain), as the strengthening of Shiite Iran's influence in the region is perceived as a common threat to both the Jewish state and the interest of the Sunni Arab countries in the Middle East. The issue of Israel-Syria relations was temporarily briefly renewed in early 2020, when speculation emerged that Syria was planning to reopen the negotiations with Israel with the aim of establishing economic relations, in order to ease the economic sanctions imposed on it by the United States. But such a scenario was rebuffed by Syrian President Assad, who has publicly stated that he does not plan any talks with Israel until Israel shows readiness to return the occupied Golan Heights area to Syria (URL 17).

Given the general situation in the very unstable Middle East region, as well as the geostrategic value of the plateau in terms of security, the continuation of the 'status quo' of the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights, is evident. The prospect of new attempts at an agreement is further hampered by the aforementioned instabilities in the

situacija u Siriji koja osnažuje odlučnost izraelskih unutarnjopolitičkih čimbenika za trajnim zadržavanjem Golana u svojim rukama.

ZAKLJUČAK

Na temelju razmatranja glavnih geostrateških prednosti Golanske visoravni u svjetlu postojećega geopolitičkoga karaktera šire regije mogu se donijeti zaključci o trenutačnoj važnosti Golana za Izrael, kao i perspektivama navedene visoravni u odnosima Izraela sa Sirijom. O takvim perspektivama djelomice se može stvoriti realna slika i na temelju opisanih historijsko-geografskih obilježja.

S obzirom na vojno-obrambenu vrijednost Golanske visoravni, može se zaključiti da bi povlačenje Izraela s navedenog područja bilo kratkoročno i dugoročno rizično za Izrael. Nadzor nad visoravni, naime, pruža Izraelu ključnu obrambenu prednost koja je i dokazana s obzirom na to da je sirijsko-izraelska granica od 1974. do danas uglavnom mirna. Trenutačno razgraničenje duž uzvisina na istočnom dijelu visoravni najpovoljnija je moguća obrambena crta protiv eventualne vojne invazije s istoka, odnosno iz smjera sirijske unutrašnjosti. Također, vojna prisutnost na Golanu pruža Izraelu dodatni nadzor nad kretanjima u južnom Libanonu, posebice ako se ima u vidu razmjerno nedavna povijest i uloga Hezbolaha za sigurnost sjevernih granica države.

U hidropolitikom kontekstu, Golanska je visoravan u razdoblju nakon Šestodnevnog rata bila od vitalnog značaja za vodoopskrbu Izraela imajući u vidu ne samo to da je riječ o regiji s najviše padalina u odnosu na okolni prostor, već i da voda s visoravni izravno napaja Jordan i Galilejsko more. Od tada je izraelska vodoopskrbna infrastruktura već značajno prilagođena situaciji potpune izraelske kontrole vodnih resursa koji izravno ili neizravno potječu s Golanske visoravni. S obzirom na geopolitičku nestabilnost regije, Izrael je razvojem tehnologije desalinizacije od 2000-ih do danas u najvećoj mjeri umanjio ovisnost vlastitoga gospodarstva o vodi s Golanske visoravni i, općenito, iz kopnenih voda. Činjenica da se danas čak tri četvrtine vode u izrael-

Middle East and the very complex situation in Syria, which strengthens the determination of Israeli domestic political factors to keep the Golan in their hands permanently.

CONCLUSION

Based on the consideration of the main geostrategic advantages of the Golan Heights in the light of the existing geopolitical characteristics of the wider region, conclusions can be drawn about the current importance of the plateau for Israel, as well as the prospects of the plateau in Israel's future relations with Syria. A realistic image of such perspectives can be partly created on the basis of the described historical and geographical features.

Given the defensive military value of the Golan Heights, it can be concluded that withdrawing Israel from the area would be risky for Israel in the short and long term. Namely, the control over the plateau provides Israel with a key defensive advantage, which was proven having in mind that the Syrian-Israeli border has been mostly peaceful since 1974. The current demarcation along the hills in the eastern part of the plateau is the most favourable possible line of defence against a possible military invasion from the east, i.e. from the direction of the Syrian interior. Moreover, the military presence in the Golan provides Israel with additional control over developments in southern Lebanon, especially given the relatively recent history and role of Hezbollah for the security of the country's northern borders.

In the hydropolitical context, in the period after the Six Day War, the Golan Heights was a vital area for Israel's water supply given not only the fact that it is the region with the most rainfall relative to the surrounding area, but also that the plateau water directly feeds the Jordan river and the Sea of Galilee. Since then, the Israeli water supply infrastructure has already significantly been adapted to the situation of full Israeli control of water resources originating directly or indirectly from the Golan Heights. Given the political instability of the region, from the 2000s onwards, Israel opted to extensively develop the technology of desalination, which has resulted in the overall reduction on the

skim kućanstvima dobiva desalinizacijom nova je okolnost u geostrateškom značenju visoravni. Politički, historijsko-geografski i vojno-obrambeni aspekti prevladali su u odnosu na hidropolitiku važnost regije.

Aktualne geopolitičke prilike u regiji potvrđuju skepsu o mogućnosti postizanja sigurnosnih uvjeta koji bi u dogledno vrijeme omogućili stvaranje uvjeta u kojima bi bilo realno vraćanje Golanske visoravni Siriji. Takvi uvjeti podrazumijevali bi geopolitičku stabilizaciju regije i normalizaciju odnosa koja, s obzirom na karakter Bliskog istoka kao geopolitičke regije, trenutačno nije realna. Međunarodno priznata granica sa Sirijom na Jordanu iz geostrateške perspektive nije dostatna da se može smatrati „branjivom“ granicom te je daljnja okupacija Golanske visoravni jedino realno obrambeno-sigurnosno jamstvo i opcija za Izrael. Vrlo složena situacija u Siriji onemogućuje bilo kakve nove konkretne pregovore dviju strana i dodatno učvršćuje Izrael na svojoj sadašnjoj poziciji što se tiče visoravni. Također, opća nestabilnost bliskoistočnoga „shatterbelta“ i tradicionalno neprijateljstvo i nesklonost arapskih režima i, posebice, Irana kao rastuće regionalne sile u odnosu na Izrael čine bilo kakav scenarij općeg mira i sigurnosti zasad iluzornim, te se u tom smislu može tvrditi da je izgledan nastavak izraelske okupacije ovoga prostora.

dependency of its economy on the water originating in the Golan Heights, as well as other existing water resources. The fact that $\frac{3}{4}$ of water in the Israeli households comes from desalination plants represents a new circumstance in the geostrategic significance of the plateau, giving the defensive and historical aspects more importance than the hydropolitical ones. The current geopolitical situation in the region confirms the scepticism about the possibility of achieving security prerequisites that would in the foreseeable future enable the creation of conditions in which the return of the Golan Heights to Syria would be realistic. Such prerequisites would imply geopolitical stabilization of the region and normalization of relations, which, given the character of the Middle East as a geopolitical region, are currently not realistic. From a geostrategic perspective, the internationally recognized border with Syria on the Jordan River is insufficiently secure to be considered a 'defensible' border, and further occupation of the Golan Heights is the only real defence and security guarantee and option for Israel. The very complex situation in Syria prevents any new concrete negotiations between the two sides and further strengthens Israel in its current position regarding the plateau. In addition, the general instability of the Middle Eastern 'shatter-belt' and the traditional hostility and reluctance of the Arab regimes and, especially, of Iran as a growing regional power vis-à-vis Israel make any scenario of general peace and security illusory for the time being. Thus, it can be said that a continuation of the Israeli occupation of this area in the following years is the most likely scenario.

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