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ISRAEL: The Israelis appear to be reinforcing their hold on the Golan Heights. [Redacted]

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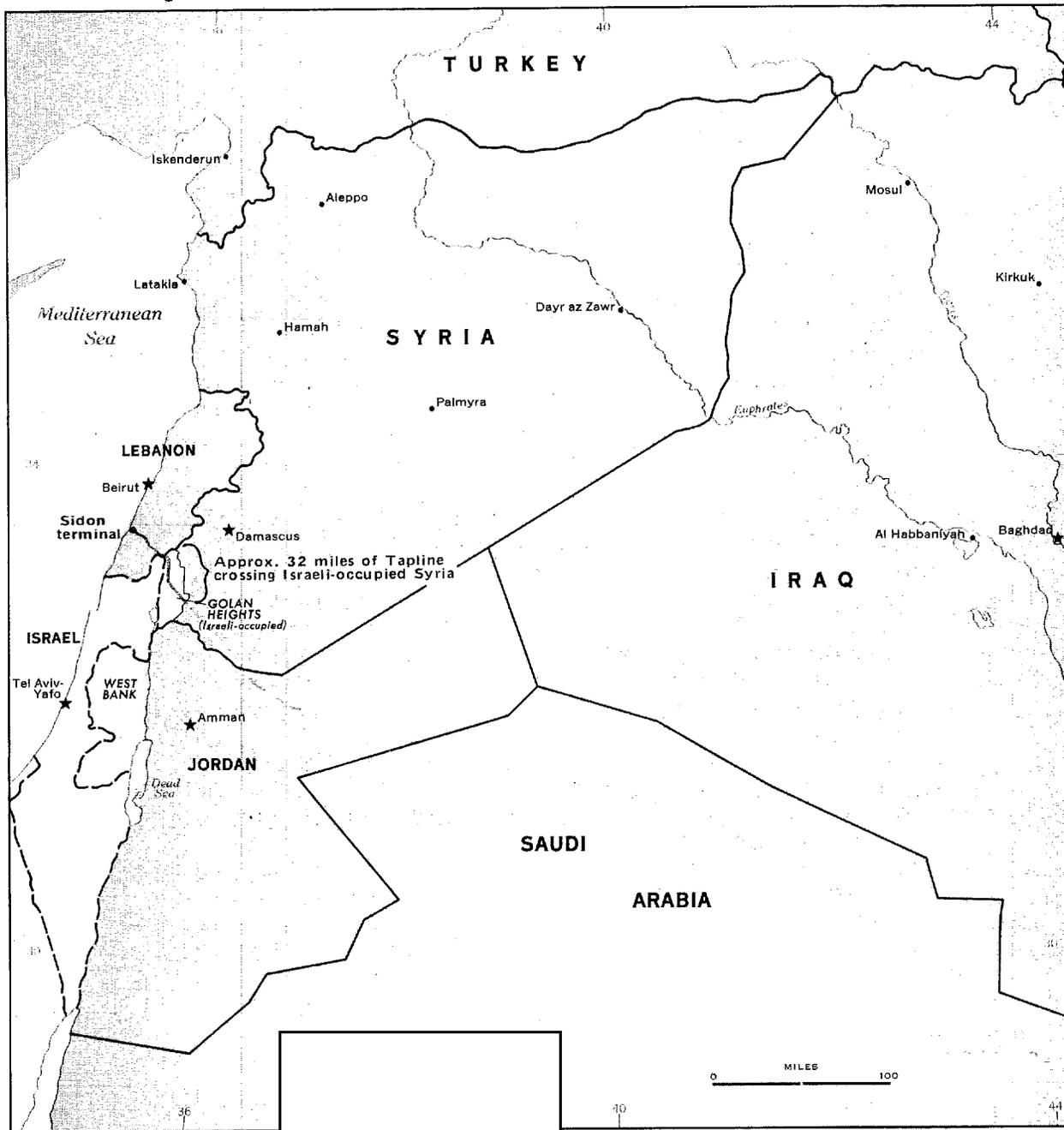
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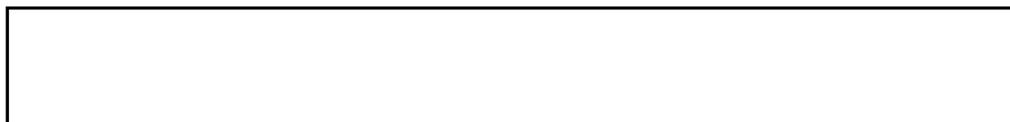
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Israel Claiming Transit Fees for Tapline Segment Crossing Golan Heights



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ISRAEL: ISRAEL APPEARS TO BE REINFORCING ITS HOLD ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS BY ASKING FOR OIL PIPELINE TRANSIT FEES.

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[REDACTED]

THE ISRAELI DEPUTY FINANCE MINISTER HAS ASKED THE US-OWNED TAPLINE COMPANY TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF TRANSIT FEES FOR THAT PORTION OF THE PIPELINE CROSSING ISRAELI-OCCUPIED SYRIA. THE PIPELINE HAD BEEN CLOSED FOR NINE MONTHS BUT REOPENED IN JANUARY AFTER THE COMPANY AGREED TO PAY HIGHER FEES TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES IT CROSSED. THE DEPUTY MINISTER SAID THAT QUESTIONS CONCERNING ISRAEL'S RIGHTS TO TRANSIT FEES HAD BEEN RAISED RECENTLY IN THE ISRAELI PARLIAMENT. THE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE NOTED THE ABSENCE OF ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE TERRITORY THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM SYRIA IN THE 1967 WAR, BUT THE DEPUTY MINISTER CALLED THIS POSITION "UNACCEPTABLE" AND ASKED FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AFTER CONSIDERATION BY TAPLINE MANAGEMENT.

ISRAELI INTENTIONS IN RAISING THE ISSUE OF TRANSIT FEES AT THIS TIME MAY GO BEYOND THE QUESTION OF REVENUE, ESTIMATED TO BE \$3-4 MILLION PER YEAR. THE FINANCIAL CLAIM MAY BE DESIGNED SUBTLY TO REINFORCE ISRAEL'S POSITION THAT IT WILL RETAIN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS IN ANY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. COMPANY OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT THE DEPUTY MINISTER MADE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SINAI, WHERE THE ISRAELIS ARE CONDUCTING AFFAIRS UNDER ESTABLISHED EGYPTIAN LAWS, AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, WHICH HE SAID MUST BE CONSIDERED "PART OF ISRAEL" FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES.

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