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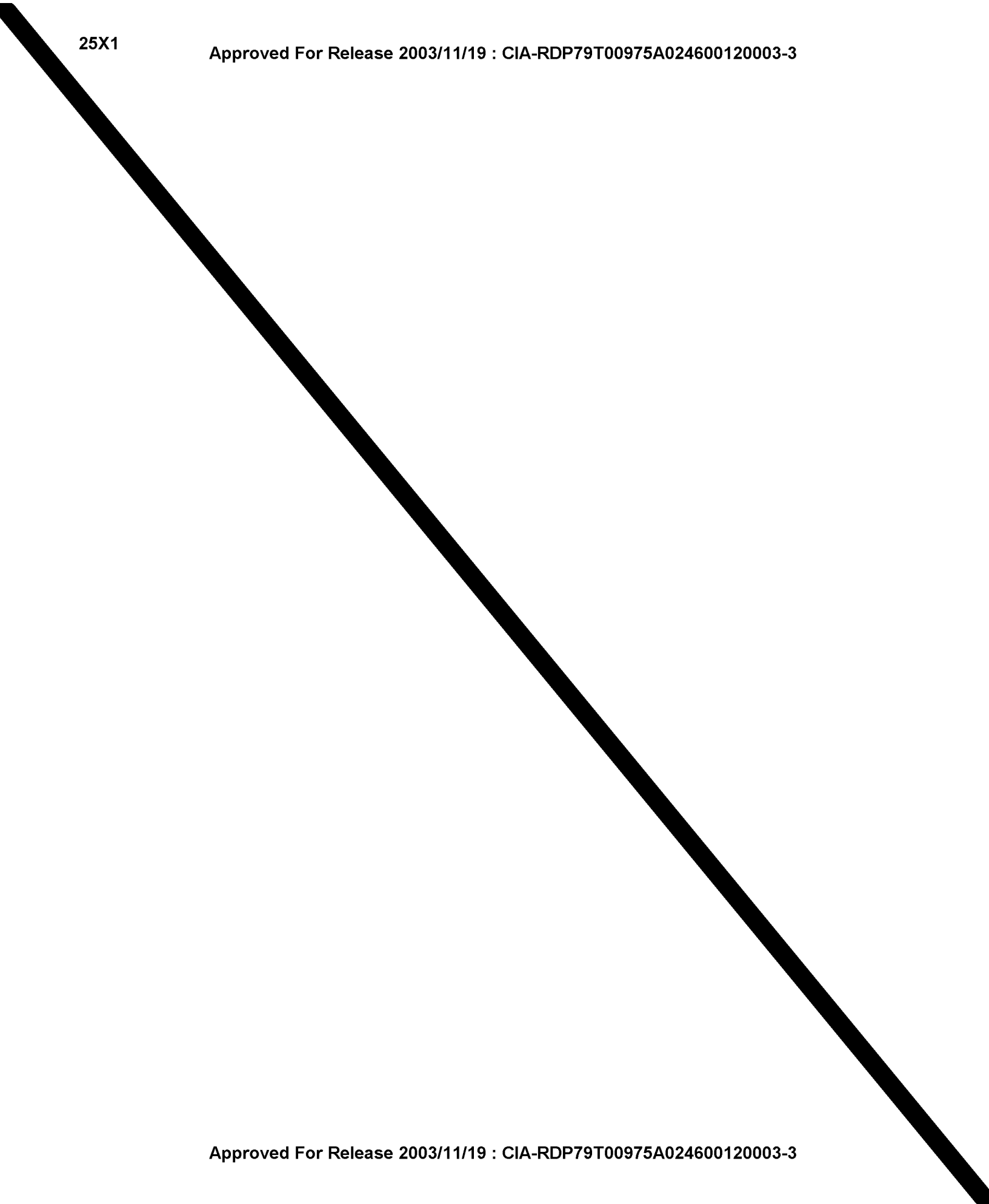

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ISRAEL: Prime Minister Meir expected to continue in office after fall elections.

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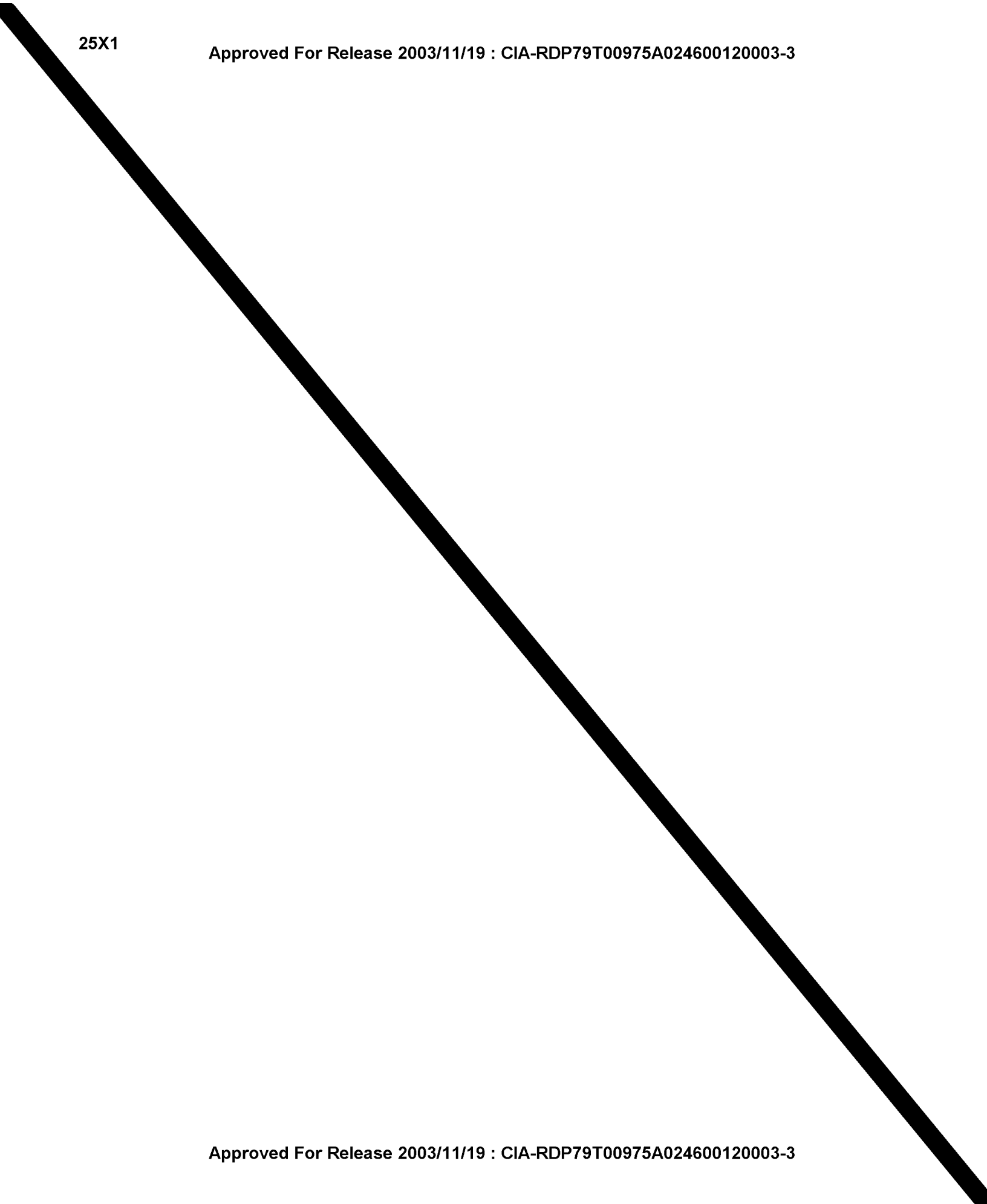

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ISRAEL: PRIME MINISTER MEIR IS EXPECTED SOON TO ANNOUNCE HER WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE AFTER THE FALL ELECTIONS.

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ISRAELI POLITICIANS AGREE THAT MRS. MEIR WOULD LIKE TO RETIRE FROM PUBLIC LIFE. SHE IS CONCERNED THAT HER HEALTH MIGHT DETERIORATE AND AFFECT HER PERFORMANCE IN OFFICE, AND SHE WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO HER FAMILY'S PLEAS TO QUIT. THIS PERSONAL DESIRE, HOWEVER, IS OUTWEIGHED BY A DEEPER CONCERN OVER THE EFFECTS OF HER RETIREMENT ON THE LABOR PARTY.

FINANCE MINISTER SAPIR AND DEFENSE MINISTER DAYAN--TWO PARTY RIVALS AND POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS TO THE PREMIERSHIP--HAVE SERIOUS POLICY DIFFERENCES. HER ADVISERS AND FRIENDS ARE WARNING HER THAT THE LOSS OF HER LEADERSHIP WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THE PARTY. THUS, ALTHOUGH HER PERSONAL REASONS STILL COULD RESULT IN A DECISION TO RETIRE, SHE IS NOT EXPECTED TO RISK THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF INTRA-PARTY SQUABBLING AND PARTY LOSSES IN THE OCTOBER ELECTIONS.

THE MAJOR OFFICE SEEKERS HAVE INCREASINGLY BEEN PLACING THEIR VIEWS BEFORE THE ELECTORATE IN RECENT WEEKS. A MEIR DECISION TO STAY ON WILL TAKE MUCH OF THE RING OUT OF THEIR FUTURE CAMPAIGN RHETORIC.

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