

ISRAEL-SYRIA: Tel Aviv gave wide publicity yesterday to its reinforcement of the Golan front as the Syrians and Israelis exchanged mortar, tank, and artillery fire for the 22nd consecutive day. The Israeli move apparently was designed to warn Damascus against any renewal of offensive action and to reassure the home front of Israel's military preparedness.

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According to an Israeli spokesman, Syrian shells struck two Israeli civilian settlements--Ramot Magshimim and Nov--causing some damage but no casualties. Syrian shelling of civilian targets will heighten pressure within Israel to strike back harder at targets in Syria. The Israeli press, while continuing to praise the "great restraint" shown by Israel's forces in the face of "the Syrian provocations," is viewing the escalating situation on the northern front with alarm.

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Damascus, whose forces are in a position to launch an attack with little or no warning, apparently believes it must maintain military pressure on the Golan front to support its negotiating aims. Israel views this pressure as a military threat, however

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One result of this prolonged period of growing tension has been that the chances of miscalculation by both sides have increased, and that a minor incident might lead to a major outbreak of fighting.

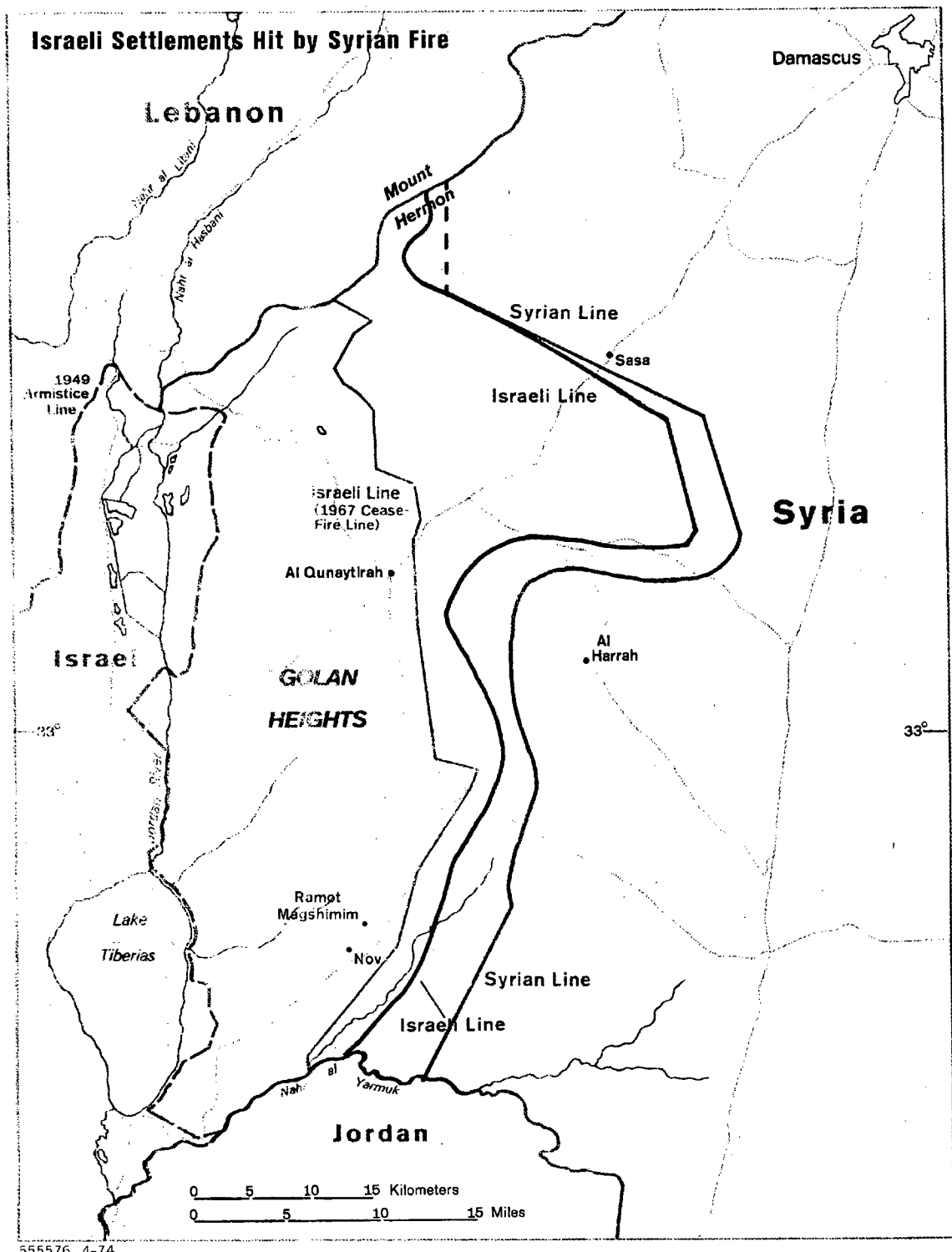
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*ISRAEL: The preliminary report issued late yesterday by the five-member Agranat Commission, which investigated Israeli shortcomings connected with the October war, praised Prime Minister Meir for doing in a responsible manner everything she could. It also cleared Defense Minister Dayan of direct responsibility, in view of the advice and information given him by Chief of Staff Elazar and intelligence chief Zeira.

Elazar, while rejecting the commission's accusations, promptly announced his resignation, which has been accepted by the cabinet. The others named will probably follow suit.

Placing the blame squarely on the military, the preliminary report recommended that Elazar and Major General Gonen, commander of the Egyptian front at the start of the war, be suspended from active duty pending the commission's final report, which is expected late this month or early next. The report further recommended removing General Zeira as intelligence chief and dismissing other senior military intelligence officers, including Brigadier General Shalev, Zeira's deputy for estimates.

The report will only partially mollify the government's critics, who are likely to charge the commission with turning a blind eye to the larger question of fixing political responsibility for the October failings. The opposition may also criticize the commission for seemingly making a scapegoat of the military, which may itself react bitterly to the report. [REDACTED]

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*Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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