



NIE 35/36-1-77

MIDDLE EAST MILITARY BALANCE (1977-82)

VOLUME II

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PREFACE

This volume of NIE 35/36-1-77 estimates the balance of Arab and Israeli forces through 1982. Its findings are based upon analysis of a wide range of political, economic, geographic, and demographic, as well as military, factors. The data and analysis contained in Volume I provide the analytical base underlying these findings. The paper is intended to assist US decisionmakers concerned with the major policy issues which are affected by the Arab-Israeli military balance.

Although the basic judgments contained in this document are generally similar to those in NIE 35/36-1-76 (see Principal Judgments) there have been a number of major developments affecting the military situation in the Middle East over the past year. Their impact, as well as possible future developments, have been assessed, but the rapidity and unpredictability of political and military changes in the Middle East make it impossible to fully enumerate all the potential developments which could affect the military balance over the next five years.

There is general agreement within the Intelligence Community that Israel will retain a significant margin of military superiority over its Arab adversaries through the next five years. The Arabs do retain military options, albeit unattractive ones because of the risk they would run of suffering a major defeat by the Israelis. Since the Arabs would probably undertake military operations primarily to achieve political objectives, the possibility of renewed fighting remains strong for the foreseeable future. For Israel, any renewal of fighting would raise the possibility that military success would be achieved at an "unacceptably" high cost in casualties and economic dislocation.



PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS

Israel has increased its margin of military superiority over the Arabs since the 1973 war. It is currently capable of countering any Arab attempt at either a full-scale war or a limited war of attrition and of decisively defeating its opponents on any or all fronts. Israel will retain, and may even somewhat expand, its current margin of military superiority over the next five years despite efforts by the Arabs to improve and expand their armed forces and the potentially greater contributions by peripheral Arab states.

The Arab states might, however, initiate military operations against Israel either in the hope that they would achieve initial military successes and that international pressures would end hostilities at an early stage, or in the hope that in spite of probable military and territorial losses the eventual armistice arrangements would, as in 1973, improve their prehostilities positions.

Perhaps the single most important factor bearing upon Middle Eastern developments is the progress of negotiations toward peace. As long as peace negotiations hold some promise of success, Arab leaders will not be under great pressure to initiate a major military operation against Israel. An impasse, however, could lead to the overthrow of one or more of the key Arab leaders and/or push the Arab states toward exercising a military option involving a phased offensive on three fronts executed in conjunction with a Saudi-imposed oil embargo.

A surprise attack by the Arabs using in-place units could start within days of a decision and be difficult to detect; we would, however, detect a substantial Arab buildup for war, but could not be certain whether or when it would lead to hostilities. The military objectives of such a campaign would be to inflict maximum casualties and disrupt the Israeli economy. On the other hand, evidence of Arab disillusion with the negotiating process coupled with execution of preparatory military moves could induce an Israeli preemptive strike designed to minimize casualties, assert Israel's military superiority, and strengthen Tel Aviv's bargaining position through the occupation of additional territory.

The likelihood that the Arab states could achieve a degree of surprise against Israel similar to that of 1973 has been substantially reduced. Israel has the capacity to provide itself with tactical warning of an impending Arab attack, and it could detect any large enemy force

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buildup in time to achieve strategic warning. The Arabs, on the other hand, despite some improvements, have only limited capabilities to detect an Israeli buildup prior to the initiation of a surprise attack.

Israeli military superiority rests primarily upon qualitative considerations. Additionally, the Arab advantage in numbers of key weapons likely to be employed against Israel is less than that which prevailed in 1973. Israel's weapons inventories have steadily increased and will continue to include higher percentages of more modern, sophisticated items than those of the Arab states. In contrast, the front-line Arab states have reached a plateau in the growth of their armed forces. Indeed, even if the Arabs were to acquire substantially more weapons over the next five years, they would still not appreciably improve their relative arms balance with Israel.

Israel is likely to retain its advantage in weapons technology over the next five years despite the Arab acquisition of new or advanced weapon systems. Although Israel will experience some difficulty in expanding its force structure to support all the new weapons which it is obtaining, it will continue to absorb and exploit new technology more effectively than the Arabs. The Arab states will have particular difficulty in finding the skilled manpower needed to operate and maintain their weapons inventories, and will be necessarily more reliant than Israel upon foreign assistance in supporting those systems which are acquired. Manpower quality is perhaps the most significant component of the Arab-Israeli military balance.

There is very little likelihood that the Arab states will soon be able to narrow significantly Israel's margin of qualitative military superior-

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ity. The Israelis' edge over their Arab opponents is most pronounced in terms of leadership, training, innovation, and motivation.

Aside from the purely military considerations, a number of complex factors affect the Arab-Israeli military balance:

- Mutual suspicions and traditional rivalries continue to inhibit the efficient employment of the Arabs' combined military strength. Despite Saudi Arabian good offices and financial inducements, these underlying antagonisms are likely to persist.
- The Egyptian breach with the USSR has degraded Egyptian military capabilities against Israel, and Cairo could not now wage war as effectively as it did in 1973. In view of the extended delivery times involved, Egyptian efforts to acquire weapons from Western sources, even if successful, are unlikely to begin to show results until the far term of this Estimate.
- Syrian deployment of a fourth of its combat maneuver brigades to Lebanon has lowered combat readiness and weakened Syrian defenses in the critical Golan Heights. No termination of the Lebanese deployment seems imminent, and yet even if concentrated along the Lebanese-Israeli border, the Syrian expeditionary forces would be incapable of defending Lebanon from a determined Israeli attack.
- There has been an overall trend toward increased military cooperation between Syria and Jordan, but the prospects for establishment of a joint military command appear remote. Nevertheless, joint defensive capabilities may improve somewhat.
- Rapid expansion and improvement of the Iraqi armed forces make them a more significant factor in any future hostilities. The degree of Iraq's involvement, however, would be conditioned by the status of its relations with Syria, the extent of its preoccupation with internal dissidents, and Baghdad's perception of the threat posed by Iran.
- Libya has continued to amass an impressive arsenal of modern weapons which represent a potential source of resupply and replacement equipment for Arab forces. Logistic constraints and distance from the battlefield, however, would tend to lessen the effectiveness of Libya's contribution to the war effort.

The Soviets are likely to support the Arabs in a future Middle East conflict with a swift and massive resupply of materiel to selected Arab belligerents. Any introduction of their own combat forces would be constrained by the Soviets' limited existing capabilities for rapidly deploying the necessary forces and equipment. They could introduce

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air, air defense, or specialized ground combat units, but not in sufficient time or numbers to alter militarily the outcome. By 1982, an increased capacity for airlifting heavy loads of military equipment will enable them to introduce rapidly a somewhat larger and more capable specially configured task force. If such improved, airlifted Soviet forces were able to stiffen Arab resistance and prolong the conflict, sufficient time might become available for the subsequent sealift and insertion of major conventional Soviet ground forces. Despite this, deployment of Soviet combat units to the Middle East, either before or during a war, is considered unlikely, primarily because of the risks the USSR would face of a direct confrontation with the US.

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SECTION I. THE CURRENT MILITARY BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

1. In assessing the current Arab-Israeli military balance, a variety of complex factors should be taken into account. Several relate to the uneven and erratic development of Arab military capabilities over the past year. Others are concerned with fluctuations in Arab political relationships, which have an important bearing on the scope and size of the potential Arab military threat over the near term. Finally, the potential impact of Arab-Israeli negotiations—or failure to negotiate—must be considered.

2. Outlined below is a brief description of the key factors which have a significant impact on the current Arab-Israeli military balance. This section sets the stage for a detailed assessment of current Arab-Israeli capabilities to undertake various military missions. These sections form the basis for an overall assessment of current Arab-Israeli military options, utilizing both conventional or special weapons, and the key uncertainties which affect these judgments.

A. Key Factors Bearing on the Current Military Balance

The Impact of the Rift With Moscow on Egypt's Military Capabilities

3. *Capabilities.* Egypt's military posture took on a new dimension over the past year as a result of the breach in relations with the Soviet Union. Major factors in President Sadat's decision to abrogate the treaty of friendship in March 1976 were the failure of the USSR to replace all of Egypt's war losses and the sharp cutback in Soviet deliveries of arms and spare parts since the 1973 war—particularly since mid-1975. These factors, compounded by Israel's continued military buildup and modernization, have degraded Egypt's relative military capabilities against Israel to the point where Cairo could not wage war against its principal adversary as effectively today as it did in 1973.

4. This decrease in relative military capabilities, however, does not preclude Egypt, together with other

Arab states, from undertaking military action to achieve political objectives. The Egyptians could currently mount a strong defense against an Israeli attack or sustain offensive action for a few days to achieve limited objectives in the Sinai. It is doubtful that they could support prolonged military action with the weapons and equipment now on hand.

5. *Arms Diversification.* The reduction in Soviet arms supplies and the requirement to maintain a credible military readiness posture have given added impetus to Egypt's search for new sources of arms. Sadat began this process in earnest in 1974 in an attempt to release Egypt from its sole dependence on the Soviets.

6. The prospects that Egypt's military capabilities will improve significantly over the next few years, however, are bleak. Cairo has not been able to find adequate alternatives to the Soviets as a major source of arms. In addition, the purchase of Western arms will improve Egypt's capabilities only over a period of many years. Moreover, the United States is not likely to provide significant levels of military assistance during this period, despite improved relations between Washington and Cairo.

7. Thus, at least for the short term, Egypt probably will continue to seek some assistance from Moscow and its East European client states in order to maintain its Soviet arms inventory at as high a level of operational readiness as possible, even as it concludes new contracts with West European producers. Unless the Soviets give some relief, particularly on spare parts, the armed forces will continue to experience shortages of materiel. The USSR now delivers only a very limited amount of military supplies to Egypt under prewar contracts.

8. The only nations presently capable of producing major items of combat materiel for export to Egypt are the countries of Western Europe, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, China and North Korea. In some Western countries, however, the proposed sale of sophisticated offensive arms to a Middle East belligerent has stirred sharp internal debate and has

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prevented or delayed approval. Moreover, the Asian countries cannot satisfy Egypt's requirement for advanced new weapon systems, particularly for high-performance aircraft and air defense systems, although they are helping Cairo maintain present capabilities. Furthermore, Cairo's dependence on Arab financing, coupled with its own indecision on new arms purchases, has created additional problems.

9. *Conversion Process.* Although Egypt has made a limited number of arms agreements over the last two years with various countries in Western Europe for weapons and spare parts, the conversion from Soviet-designed equipment to other types will be a lengthy process. Acquisitions of new equipment will continue to be delayed by the uncertainty of monetary assistance from wealthy Arab states. In addition, numerous technical difficulties will have to be overcome in order for materiel from West European, US, and other suppliers to be integrated into the Egyptian logistics system, and Egyptian military personnel will need additional training to become proficient in the operation of new weapons and equipment.

10. Delivery of arms already ordered will continue throughout 1977 and 1978, but this materiel will not be sufficient to satisfy requirements—especially for fighter aircraft, tanks, APCs, and artillery—during this time. Even if new contracts are signed immediately, substantial additional deliveries of West European arms could not be made before 1980.

11. The materiel which is retained in use will place greater demands on the maintenance system as stockpiles of Soviet-made repair parts are reduced. Several measures have been taken to deal with these problems. Small numbers of engines and unknown quantities of spare parts for aircraft and armored vehicles have been obtained from China, North Korea, France, and the UK. Guidance systems for various missiles are being replaced by a French firm, while limited numbers of MIG-21 engines are being overhauled in Egypt with assistance from Rolls Royce. Finally, discussions concerning the repowering and upgunning of T-54/55 tanks have been held with Western firms.

12. Measures such as these may eventually enable the Egyptians to maintain a large part of their equipment in serviceable condition and prolong the useful life of some older items. The materiel readiness status of the Egyptian armed forces will temporarily decrease, however, while the conversion to non-Soviet equipment is in progress. More importantly, such

measures will do little to reduce Egypt's growing arms imbalance, both quantitative and qualitative, with Israel.

13. *Possible Increased Soviet Military Aid.* In view of the chilly relations that currently exist between Cairo and Moscow, deliveries of more than marginal quantities of military equipment (either end items or spare parts) appear unlikely, at least in the near term. Neither side seems willing to allow the breach to become irrevocable, however, and a resumption of significant Soviet military aid cannot be ruled out altogether, particularly if Sadat leaves the scene.

14. If the Soviets decide to increase military aid to Egypt, they would have several basic options: limited deliveries of spare parts; limited deliveries of major weapon systems; and massive deliveries of a whole range of armaments. It is probable that the Soviets would exercise the first two options before making a major commitment to reequip the Egyptians.

15. The exercise of the first two options would have at best a marginal impact on Egyptian military capabilities over the next five years because of the deterioration and growing obsolescence of a large part of Cairo's arms inventory. Massive arms deliveries would improve Egyptian military capabilities in an absolute sense, but would not offset Israel's military superiority during the term of this Estimate.

The Effect of Involvement in Lebanon on Syria's Military Capabilities

16. The Syrian army's readiness, combat effectiveness, and overall strategic posture have been affected by the continuing deployment of a fourth of its combat maneuver brigades in Lebanon. Today the negative military consequences of this commitment clearly outweigh the positive. The longterm effect, however, will depend on both the course of intra-Arab relations and the ability of the Syrian army to improve its combat effectiveness by applying the lessons learned in peacekeeping operations in Lebanon.

17. The normal training and exercise cycle of units deployed to Lebanon has been disrupted. Periodic rotation of Syrian forces will lessen the impact on any one group of units, but will spread the effect over a broader segment of the army. The discipline and morale of troops stationed in Lebanon has also declined. Available evidence suggests that the maintenance performed by those units is below the army's relatively low standards. Operations in Lebanon,

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headquarters and air defense operations centers; exchanges of intelligence on Israeli forces; joint defensive contingency planning; adoption of standard communications and terminology; some organizational standardization; exchange visits by military personnel and training teams; reorientation of one Jordanian division from the Syrian border to the Israeli border; and establishment of additional Syrian SAM sites nearer the Jordanian border.

27. Despite the overall trend toward military cooperation, important segments of the Jordanian government, particularly the military, have expressed distrust of the Syrians. Jordan has resisted reported Syrian overtures for full unification and the prospects for the establishment of a joint military command are remote. Although joint contingency planning apparently continues, there are no indications that either side intends to station troops in the other's country prior to hostilities with Israel.

28. Many of the initial objectives of the effort to increase military cooperation have been realized by both sides. In particular, Jordan's image in the Arab world has been refurbished. Assuming a continued stability in the leadership of the two countries, upon which this policy depends, Syria and Jordan will continue to pursue limited military cooperation and coordination. Joint capabilities could thereby be enhanced over the next several years; the military balance vis-a-vis Israel, however, will not be significantly altered in the foreseeable future.

Iraq's Growing Military Capabilities

29. Iraq has significantly improved its military capabilities over the past few years, making it a more important factor in the Arab-Israeli military balance than in the past. The size of the armed forces has increased dramatically, large quantities of sophisticated equipment are being acquired, and training has intensified. Despite these improvements, a shortage of skilled military personnel and poor leadership continue to limit the effectiveness of Baghdad's forces.

30. Since the 1973 war, the Iraqi armed forces have expanded faster than those of any other Arab state. Military manpower has doubled and the number of tanks and fighter aircraft in units has increased by 50 percent. Baghdad's forces have been augmented by one armored and two mountain infantry divisions and five squadrons of MIG-23 fighter aircraft. Moreover, conversion of two infantry divisions to mechanized infantry is complete and a third tank battalion has been added to each armored brigade.

31. To equip its growing armed forces, Baghdad is acquiring sophisticated equipment from both Communist and West European countries. Most of the new equipment has been integrated into combat units. During the past three years, substantial quantities of modern tanks, armored personnel carriers, fighter aircraft, and surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missile systems have been received from the Soviet Union. Purchases from Western Europe—mainly France—include armored cars, helicopters, antitank missiles, and air defense equipment. Iraq has signed a number of large new agreements for additional sophisticated weaponry which will make additional improvements in military capabilities possible.

32. Significant improvements are also being made to the military's logistic system. Baghdad demonstrated the ability to deploy rapidly and support at least five divisions along its western border for four months in 1976. The army has sufficient tank transporters to move the tanks of two armored divisions simultaneously. Moreover, the establishment of a direct rail link with Syria enables Iraq to move a division at a time to Syria by rail. In 1973, a shortage of tank transporters and the lack of a direct rail link with Syria severely restricted Iraq's capability to dispatch significant forces to the Golan front rapidly.

33. Military training on the new weapons has intensified and become more realistic. MIG-23 pilots, for example, are flying two to three times the hours per month being logged by their Egyptian and Syrian counterparts. The army and air force participated in a series of combined arms exercises during 1976 which culminated in the largest and most sophisticated maneuvers ever held by the Iraqi military. Training included both offensive and defensive armor operations; simulated air attacks against ground and air defense units and airfields; as well as air-to-air combat.

34. Although significant improvements in combat capabilities have been achieved, major shortcomings still limit the effectiveness of the armed forces. The most serious weakness is a shortage of skilled manpower. Approximately 70 percent of the population is illiterate and education levels are low in many units. The continued growth of the armed forces is exacerbating these manpower problems. For example, the rapid introduction of the MIG-23 has caused a continuous drain of the best pilots from the MIG-21 squadrons.

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coupled with the slowdown in Soviet arms and spare parts deliveries, forced the Syrians to draw on their war reserves.

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18. The decrease in training, the decline in morale and discipline, substandard maintenance, and the probable drawdown in war reserves all contribute to a lowering of combat readiness and effectiveness. It will require at least three months, and probably as much as half a year, for units returning from Lebanon to correct these deficiencies.

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19. On the plus side, units deployed to Lebanon have gained valuable combat experience. Routine army training tends to be highly compartmentalized and exercise scenarios tend to be stereotyped. The hostilities in Lebanon have been sufficiently protracted to enable the Syrians to test and modify staff procedures, tactical doctrine, and logistics operations. Career officers and NCOs will have the opportunity to incorporate the lessons learned in Lebanon into new standard operating procedures.

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20. At present, from the Syrian perspective, the strategic implications of Syrian deployment in Lebanon are all negative. With a quarter of its combat maneuver brigades in Lebanon, Syrian defenses in the Golan have been weakened, and in certain areas the Syrians are very vulnerable to an Israeli attack. Because of the nature of the peacekeeping operation, Syrian forces in Lebanon are fragmented because they are dispersed around major population centers along the Lebanese coast. Under current circumstances, if hostilities with Israel were to start, providing logistic support to these units would be difficult due to the presence of two mountain chains, the relatively long distances involved, and the absence of forward supply and maintenance depots. The lack of other than limited organic air defense units renders Syrian forces in Lebanon extremely vulnerable to Israeli air attacks.

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21. Even if Syrian forces in Lebanon were concentrated along the Israeli border, they still would not be capable of withstanding a determined Israeli attack. In essence, by dividing their forces between two separated fronts, the Syrians risk subjecting their forces to defeat in the event of renewed hostilities. It would take about one week for Syria to redeploy its forces in Lebanon to the Golan front. A precipitous redeployment would raise serious concern in Israel over the possibility of an Arab attack and could trigger Israeli preemptive action.

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22. It is conceivable that at some future time deployment of significant forces in Lebanon could

become a strategic asset for Syria. If the Syrians could obtain Iraqi or Jordanian contingents to reinforce the front-line Golan positions, Syrian units in Lebanon could be used for offensive operations against Israel. Such a reinforcement would greatly complicate Israeli planning and require the Israelis to upgrade their forces deployed along the Lebanese border. For this reason, such actions would invite Israeli preemption.

23. The civil war in Lebanon has resulted in the virtual disintegration of that country's armed forces, particularly the army. Other than a few forces responsive to Lebanese army headquarters, virtually no accounting of units or personnel is available. Although elements of the air force and navy remained aloof from the fighting, there are no logistics or support systems which would allow these elements to perform as functional units. It is extremely unlikely that an independent Lebanon will develop a confrontationist foreign policy posture or be able to field a viable military force during the period of this Estimate.

Jordanian-Syrian Military Cooperation

24. Discussion of increased military cooperation between Jordan and Syria began in 1975 in the aftermath of the Arab summit conference at Rabat in October 1974. During this period, Jordan began a major diplomatic effort to restore its prestige with the other Arab states. Closer cooperation with Syria would improve Jordan's credentials as an Arab confrontation state and, were it to become involved in hostilities, provide for more effective participation. Efforts to restore Jordan's position as a confrontation state were also intended to increase Amman's influence in Arab councils and encourage greater financial subsidies from other Arab states. Closer ties with Syria were also seen as a way to increase Arab pressure on Israel to be more flexible in negotiations and as a means of exerting a moderating influence on Syria.

25. Syria was anxious to improve relations with Jordan in order to increase its leverage on the Golan front and discourage the negotiation of another Sinai agreement by Egypt. The Syrian desire for closer cooperation may also have been influenced in part by a desire to gain greater access to the West, through Jordanian channels, as Syrian-Soviet relations became increasingly strained.

26. The progress of the relationship has been marked by caution on the part of both states. Concrete results have included: establishment of direct communications between the respective general

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35. Moreover, to ensure the political reliability of the armed forces, the government appoints many senior commanders on the basis of political loyalty, periodically purges suspect personnel, and frequently rotates unit commanders. As a result, many senior commanders are militarily incompetent, purges cause shortages of skilled military officers, and sustained supervision of military programs at division level is limited.

36. Despite these shortcomings, however, Iraq has a greater potential than any other peripheral Arab state to make a significant contribution to an Arab war effort. The level of such participation will be influenced by a variety of factors such as Baghdad's relations with Syria, its continuing concerns with the Iranian military buildup, and the progress it makes in suppressing the lingering Kurdish rebellion.

Libya's Potential Role in Renewed Hostilities

37. Libya's large and well-stocked arsenal of modern weapons has continued to grow since the 1973 war, increasing Tripoli's potential to play a significant role as a source of resupply and replacement equipment in the event of renewed Arab-Israeli hostilities. A large percentage of these arms could be made available for transfer because Tripoli's military procurement has been intended primarily to bolster Arab strategic reserves. President Qadhafi has purchased major categories of weapons, such as tanks, APCs, artillery, and fighter aircraft, similar to those in the inventories of the front-line Arab states so that resupply could be facilitated.

38. Nevertheless, logistic constraints on the rapid movement of significant quantities of Libyan weapons to Arab-Israeli battlefields remain formidable in view of the long distances to be covered, limited transport capabilities, and the likely short duration of the hostilities. The Suez Canal, for example, is some 1,000 km distant from Tobruk, the largest Libyan city in proximity to the Egyptian border. The availability of Egyptian rail cars to move units or equipment could not be assured, and road movement would be complicated by a shortage of tank transporters and the Libyans' inexperience with such an undertaking. Because of the small number of ships immediately available, large quantities of weaponry could not be rapidly sealifted to either Egypt or Syria. Ships carrying weapons would also be subject to Israeli naval and air attack. The condition of the weapons in storage also would affect how much and how quickly arms and equipment would be available for transfer. Although the equipment in depot storage is now

reportedly in good condition, operational maintenance checks are not being conducted.

39. An arrangement to pre-position arms in Egypt or Syria, concluded considerably in advance of the onset of hostilities, would increase the extent and impact of Libyan military aid. The impact would be particularly pronounced in the case of Egypt, in view of Cairo's need for both new weapons and spare parts. Such pre-positioning probably would be detected and would heighten Israeli concern.

40. Over the near term, a Libyan expeditionary force probably would include the equivalent of two brigades, plus a few air defense missile units and fighter aircraft. Libya's commitment would be overshadowed by the substantially larger Iraqi contribution, and its troops would constitute only a small fraction of the total Arab forces facing Israel. In addition, most of the combat elements sent by the Libyans probably would not see action on the front lines, owing to their inadequate training and lack of experience in large-scale combat.

41. Political factors continue to limit the significance of the Libyan arsenals in terms of the Arab-Israeli military balance. Qadhafi's proclivity to employ his bountiful arms stockpiles and oil wealth for widespread mischiefmaking has alienated key Arab leaders. His efforts to oust Sadat have raised military tensions with Egypt. A demand for a voice in the conduct of any future war, likely to accompany any sizable offer of materiel by Qadhafi, would meet considerable resistance and probable rejection by Cairo and Damascus. Verbal skirmishes over the conditions surrounding Libyan aid most likely would only work to limit Tripoli's commitment.

Fluctuations in Arab Political Relationships

42. The Arabs' penchant for quarreling among themselves significantly diminishes their capability for developing a closely coordinated military strategy that would effectively utilize their combined strength. In both the 1967 and 1973 wars with Israel most of the Arabs contributed in varying degrees to the war effort. Participation of the peripheral countries was arranged only at the last moment and provided the principal confrontation states, Syria and Egypt, with less than full support. Traditional rivalries and suspicion between Egypt and Syria have inhibited their ability to achieve the most efficient use of their combined military strength. It is improbable that this deeply entrenched pattern will change much in the near future.

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43. The troubled relationships between Syria and Iraq and between Libya and Egypt provide the most striking examples of political disunity adversely affecting the Arabs' military potential. Given their geographic positions and large inventories of sophisticated weaponry, Libya and Iraq are theoretically in positions to provide their neighbors with significant materiel and logistic assistance. In both instances, however, these potential partners are locked in adversary relationships, which at times have reached an intensity close to that between the Arabs and Israel. In the case of Iraq and Syria, historical rivalry and ideological conflict run so deep that normal diplomatic interchange on a regular basis has been virtually impossible. Although the antagonism between Egypt and Libya is more recent, it also precludes effective military planning and coordination in the near term.

44. Syria and Egypt, having overcome their differences over the second Sinai accord and Syria's intervention in Lebanon, are trying to rebuild the cooperative relationship they shared prior to the October war. Leaders of both countries seemed to have learned from their experiences over the past several years that their primary interests are best served when working in harmony with one another and presenting a united front against Israel. Saudi Arabia has been largely responsible for encouraging the reconciliation between Cairo and Damascus and for encouraging both countries to concentrate their energies on the struggle with Israel. The Saudis, for example, have attempted to mediate the dispute between Egypt and Libya and have played a leading role in efforts to establish order and a political settlement in Lebanon. Despite Saudi good offices and financial inducements, lingering mutual suspicion remains an inhibiting factor in Syrian-Egyptian relations and probably influences the depth and quality of military coordination between the two countries.

Potential Impact of Negotiations on the Military Balance and the Likelihood of War

45. Since the 1973 war, there have been three important interrelated trends in the Middle East:

- Arab moderate forces, working largely in concert, have assumed the ascendancy;
- the Arabs have made a strong commitment to the pursuit of a negotiated peace settlement with Israel; and

— the position of the US in the area has improved dramatically and there has been a sharp decline in the Soviet role, now reduced primarily to arms supply.

46. Whether these trends continue, however, will hinge on the pace and direction of US peace efforts in the months immediately ahead. An impasse would have serious consequences, setting in motion forces that could either lead to the overthrow of one or more of the key Arab leaders, or push the Arabs toward another war with Israel. Arab saber-rattling could, in turn, tempt the Israelis to take preemptive military action.

47. For the present, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia are in broad agreement on the strategic importance of acting in concert to achieve their common objective—the return of all Arab territories lost in the June 1967 war as part of an overall negotiated peace settlement. Given their mutual distrust and somewhat divergent interests, some disagreements over tactics and even strategy seem inevitable. Some differences have already emerged, but thus far the Arabs have been able to keep these in check and prevent them from disrupting their loosely coordinated approach to negotiations.

48. Whether these four states will be able to maintain this flexibility when they face much more difficult decisions is uncertain. They have not developed any well-conceived, long-range negotiating strategy, or even reached general agreement on the main ingredients of a final settlement. Instead, they have dealt with the situation largely on an ad hoc basis.

49. Should negotiations reach an impasse, they might in fact find it easier to agree on a common strategy than if negotiations go reasonably well and they find themselves faced with having to make unpalatable concessions to Israel in order to achieve the settlement they seek.

50. As long as negotiations hold some promise of progress, the Arabs will not be under great pressure to issue threats or to consider military action. But if in their view the US fails to press Israel sufficiently to make territorial concessions, Presidents Sadat and Asad and Kings Husayn and Khalid will feel compelled to adopt a tougher stance to underscore their solidarity and determination to regain Arab territory and/or to protect their domestic positions.

51. Should the Arab leaders conclude that negotiations are getting nowhere or that they must take

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military action to strengthen their internal political positions, a state of tension would develop probably accompanied by Arab war preparations. A surprise attack by the Arabs (i.e., coming without a buildup), while unlikely, could start within days of an Arab decision to exercise one of their military options and would be difficult to detect in advance. By signaling their dissatisfaction with the negotiations through a buildup—possibly including a mobilization—the Arabs would gain a strengthened defensive posture and place Israel in the role of aggressor should it preempt. The latter scenario would probably entail several weeks to a month—possibly longer if Arab feints were involved. While we would detect increased Arab preparations for war, we could not predict with certainty whether or when these would lead to hostilities.

52. Increased Arab preparations for war would lead to a cooling in US-Arab relations and some corresponding improvement in the Soviet position in the Middle East. Sadat, in particular, might be forced to make some dramatic move to paper over his differences with Moscow and reopen the Soviet arms pipeline. Asad, who has carefully avoided tilting very far toward the US, would find it easier to play up Syria's strategic ties with the Soviet Union in hope of obtaining more sophisticated Soviet weapons. Jordan's close relationship with the US could also be strained.

53. The Saudis would face the most difficult dilemma. They have based their strategy on a US-sponsored peace settlement and have sought to wean Egypt and Syria away from the Soviet Union. Because of their commitment to the Arab cause, however, they would probably adopt a tougher policy on oil pricing and feel obliged to finance additional Egyptian and Syrian defense spending to strengthen the Arabs' military credibility.

54. If the Arabs believed that progress through negotiations was becoming unlikely, they would also have to give greater consideration to exercising their military options.



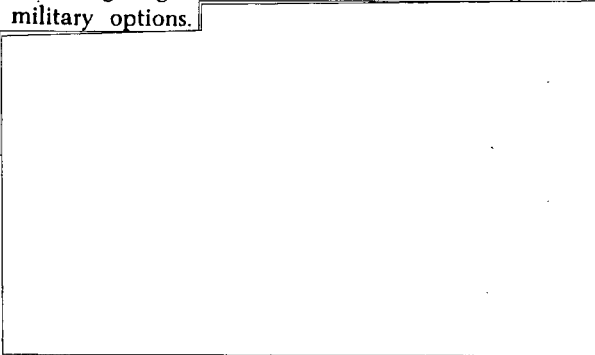
56. Although the Arab states involved have the capability to launch a limited offensive against Israel, they will not do so lightly. They have a sober appreciation of Israel's military superiority and of their own weaknesses and they know that the Israelis would try to dictate the kind of war that was fought in order to deliver a quick and devastating knockout blow. Before the Arabs could fight a war of more than short duration, moreover, Egypt would need to acquire access to an assured source of resupply and Syria would somehow have to extricate its forces from Lebanon. In addition, Jordan still has no modern operational air defense system to protect its ground forces from Israeli aircraft should it become embroiled in another Middle East war.

57. Nor would the Saudis relish having to use their oil weapon. They know that an oil embargo would be a two-edged sword, creating economic problems for Western Europe, Japan, and the US to the benefit of the Soviets.

58. The timing of the Arab states' use of force would probably be dictated in part by their respective domestic pressures, especially in the case of Egypt. Egyptian military leaders are far less optimistic than Sadat about the prospects for peace and reportedly believe that war with Israel could come in early 1978 if peace efforts have not produced some tangible results by then. The Arabs' objectives would be almost exactly the same as in 1973—to provoke a political crisis in the world community, to force the superpowers to intervene and seek a solution, and to bleed Israel. They would want to make such a war as costly as possible for the Israelis by dragging it out, inflicting maximum casualties, and draining the Israeli economy.

59. The use of the oil weapon would go hand in hand with this strategy by raising the specter of worldwide economic dislocations unless the West took prompt action to force Israel to withdraw from Arab territory.

60. A breakdown in negotiations would, in turn, probably prompt the Israelis to accelerate their procurement of military equipment and more sophisticated weapons. And the more the Arabs moved, or appeared to be moving toward war, the more tempted the Israelis would be to strike first. The Israeli military and political leadership is determined to avoid being

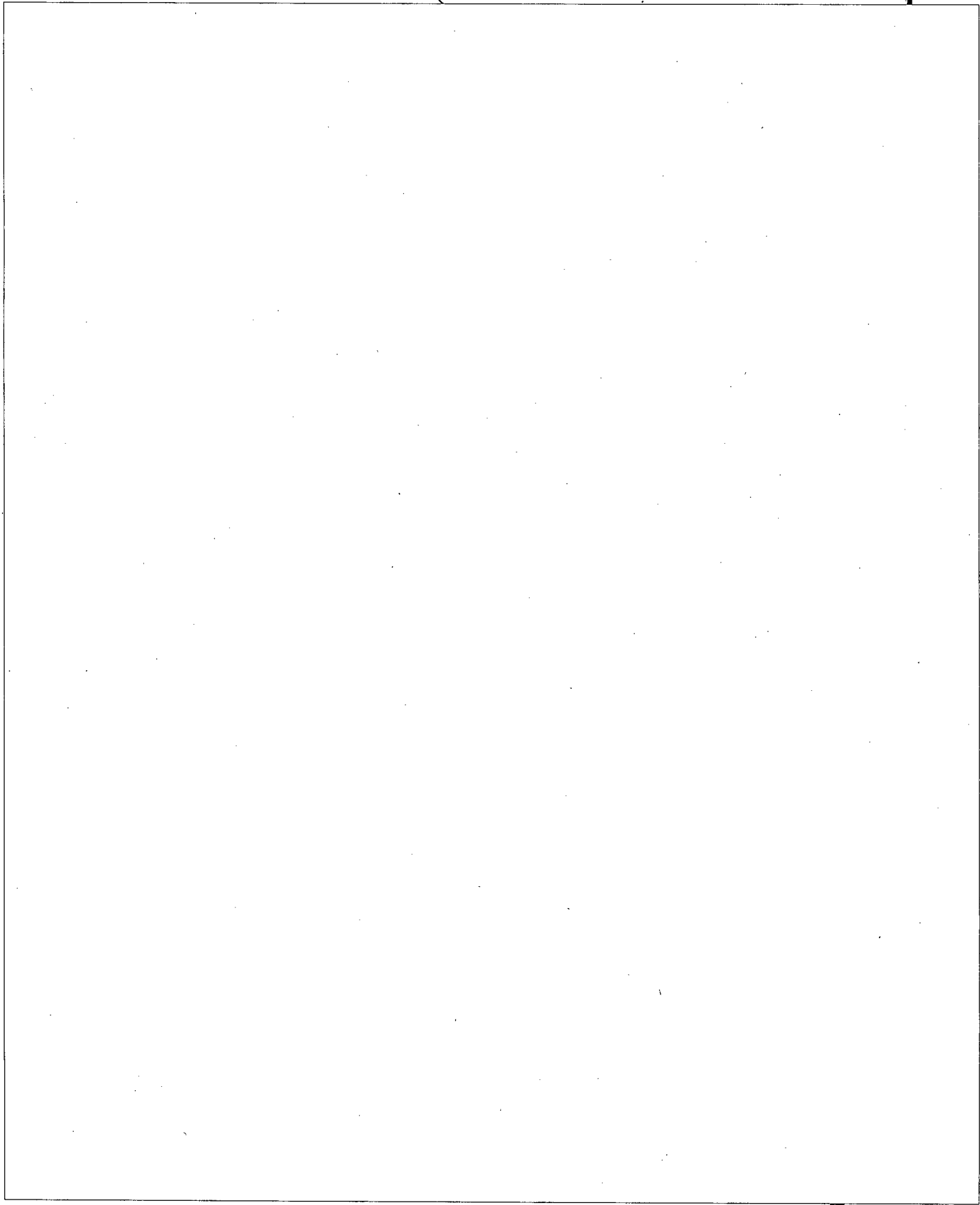


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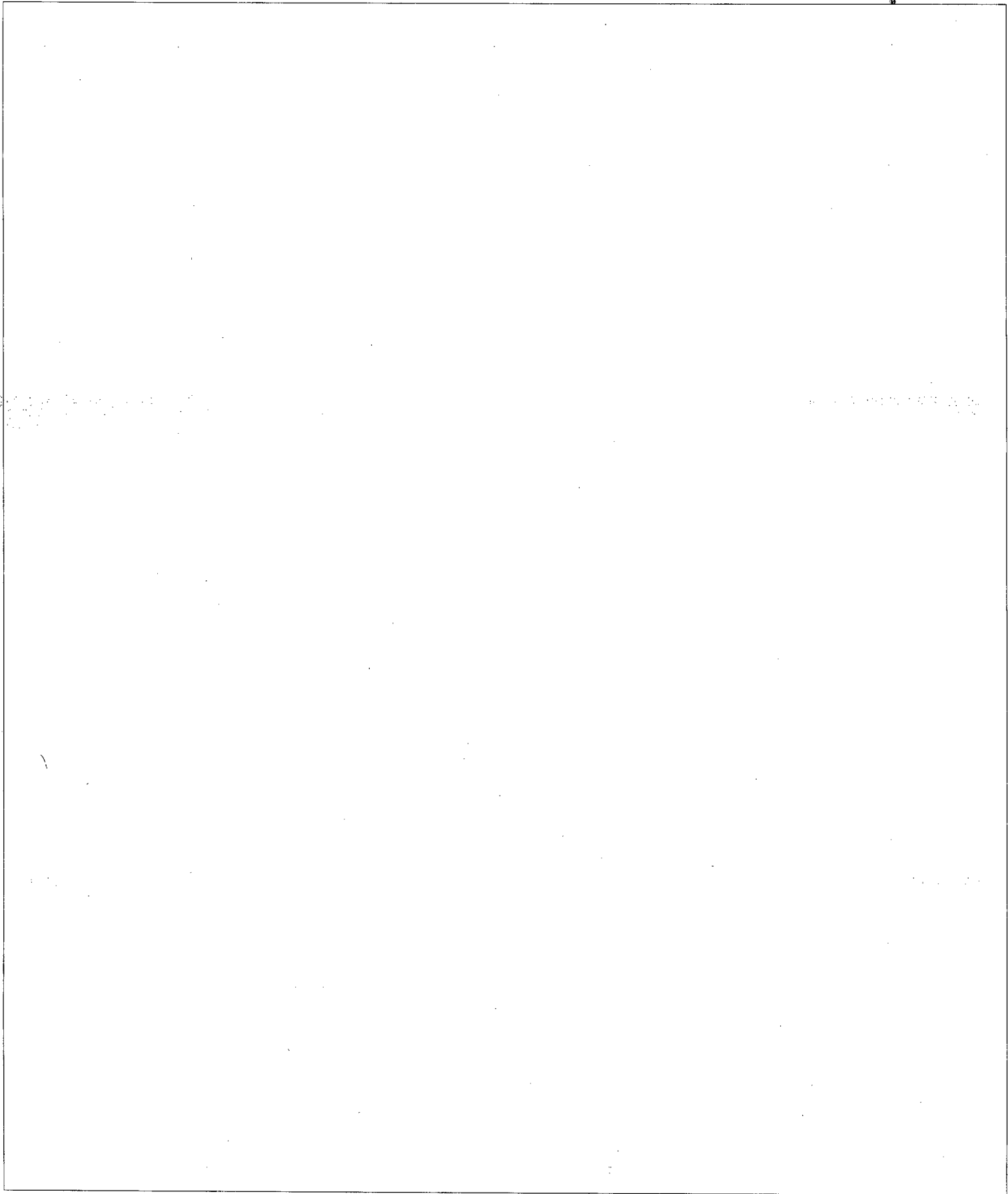
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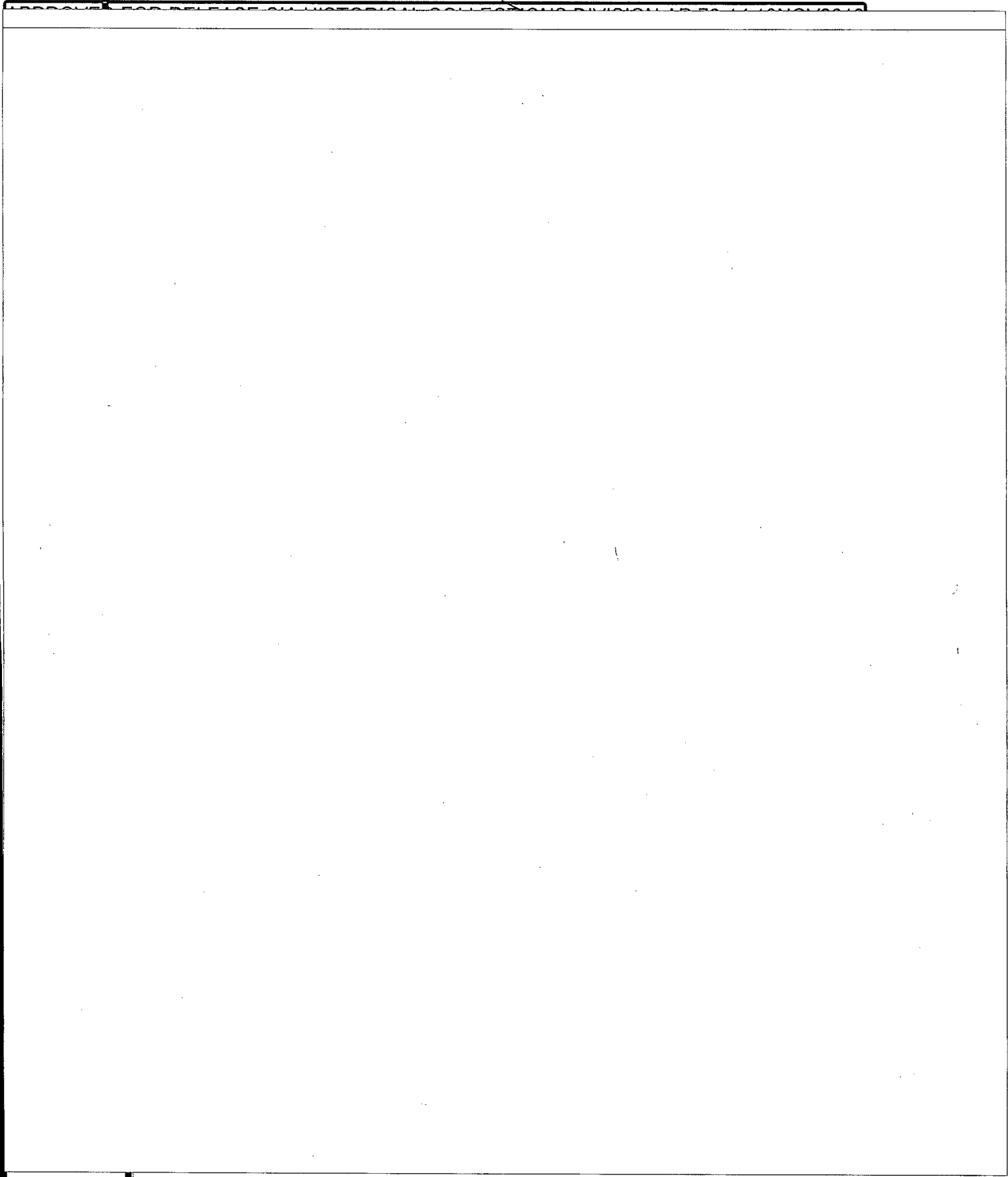
caught by surprise again. The Israelis could opt to strike preemptively to cut casualties and force the Arabs to reconcile themselves to the fact that Israel will not willingly allow itself to be victimized by Arab maneuvering.

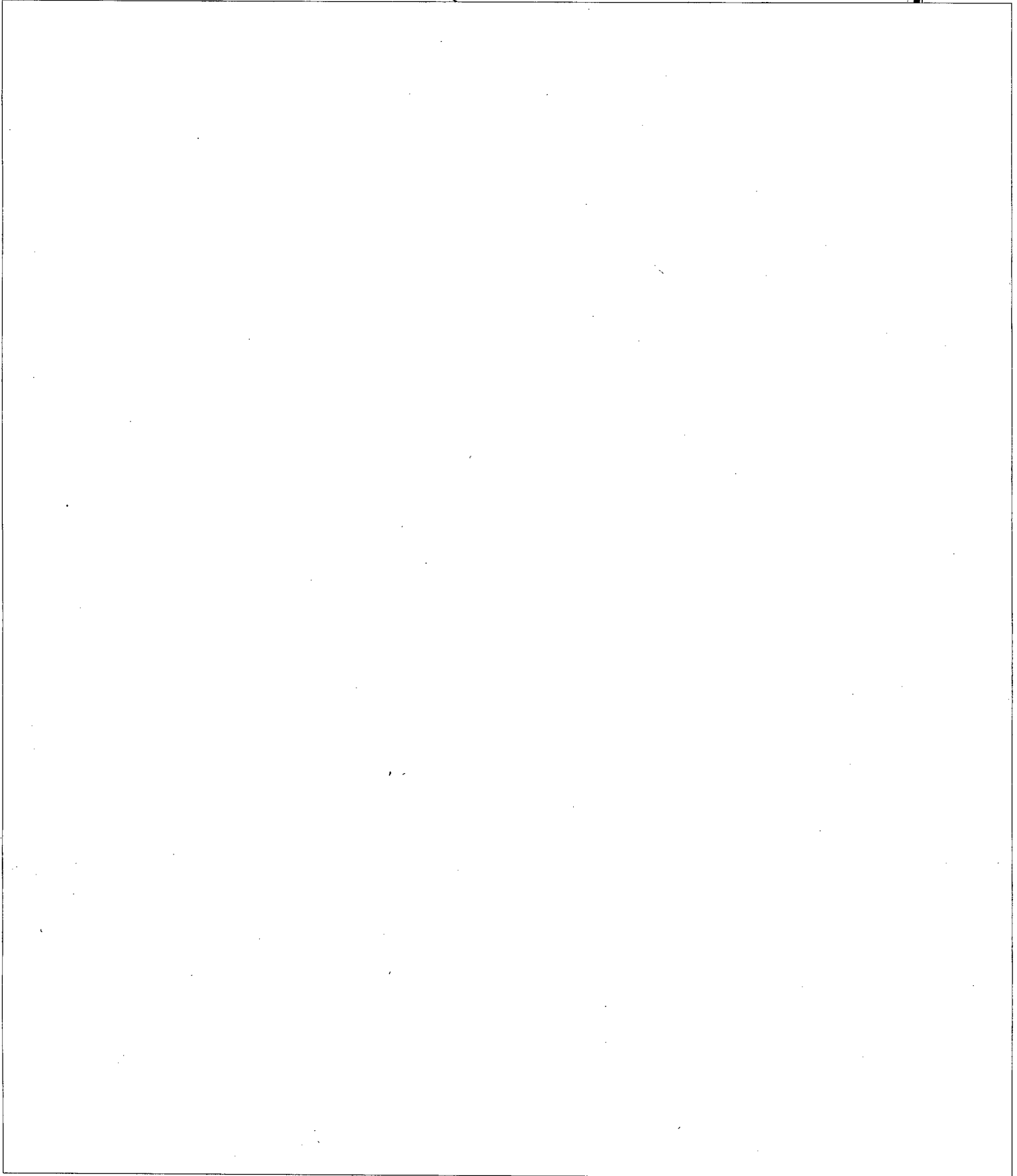
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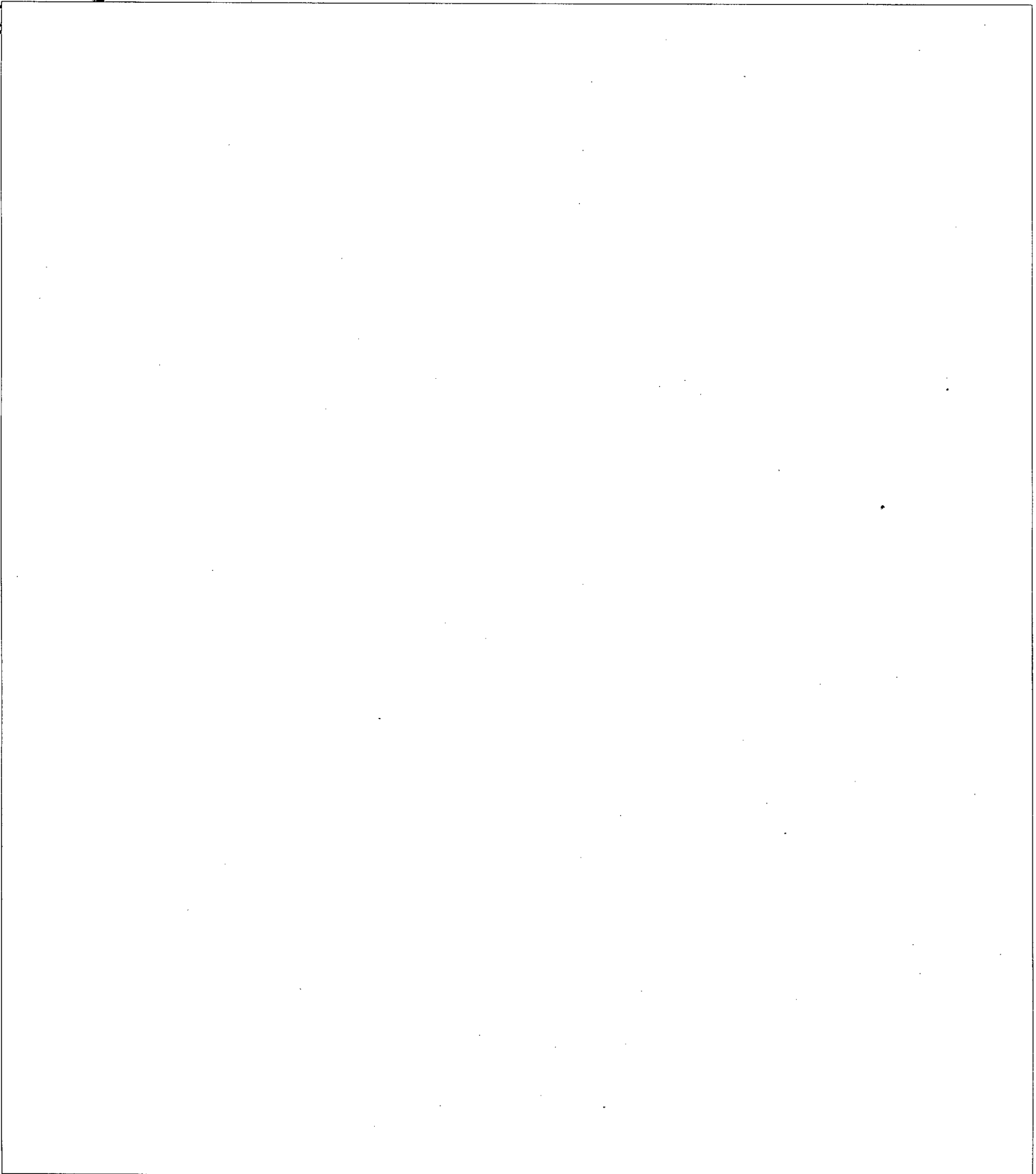


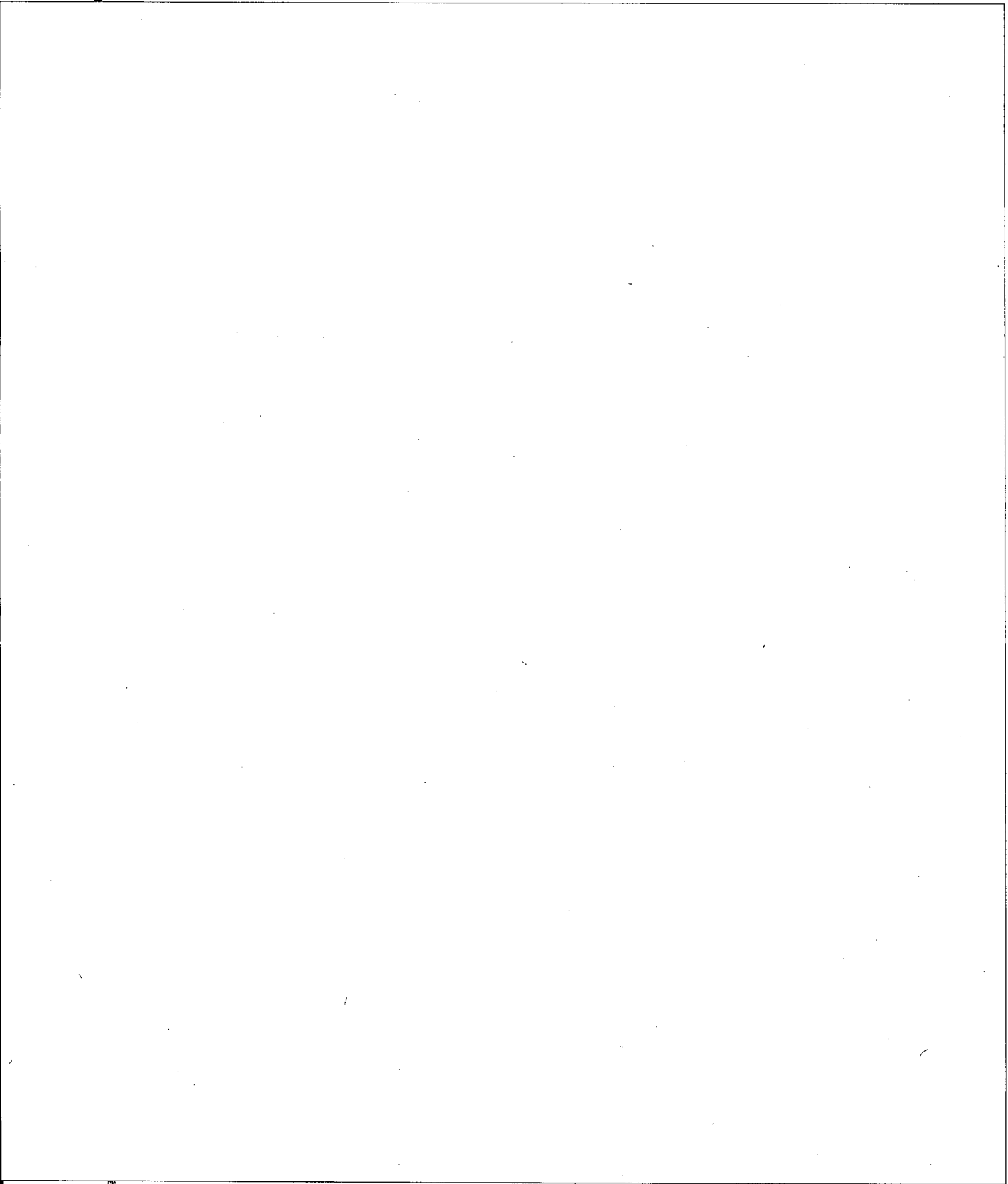






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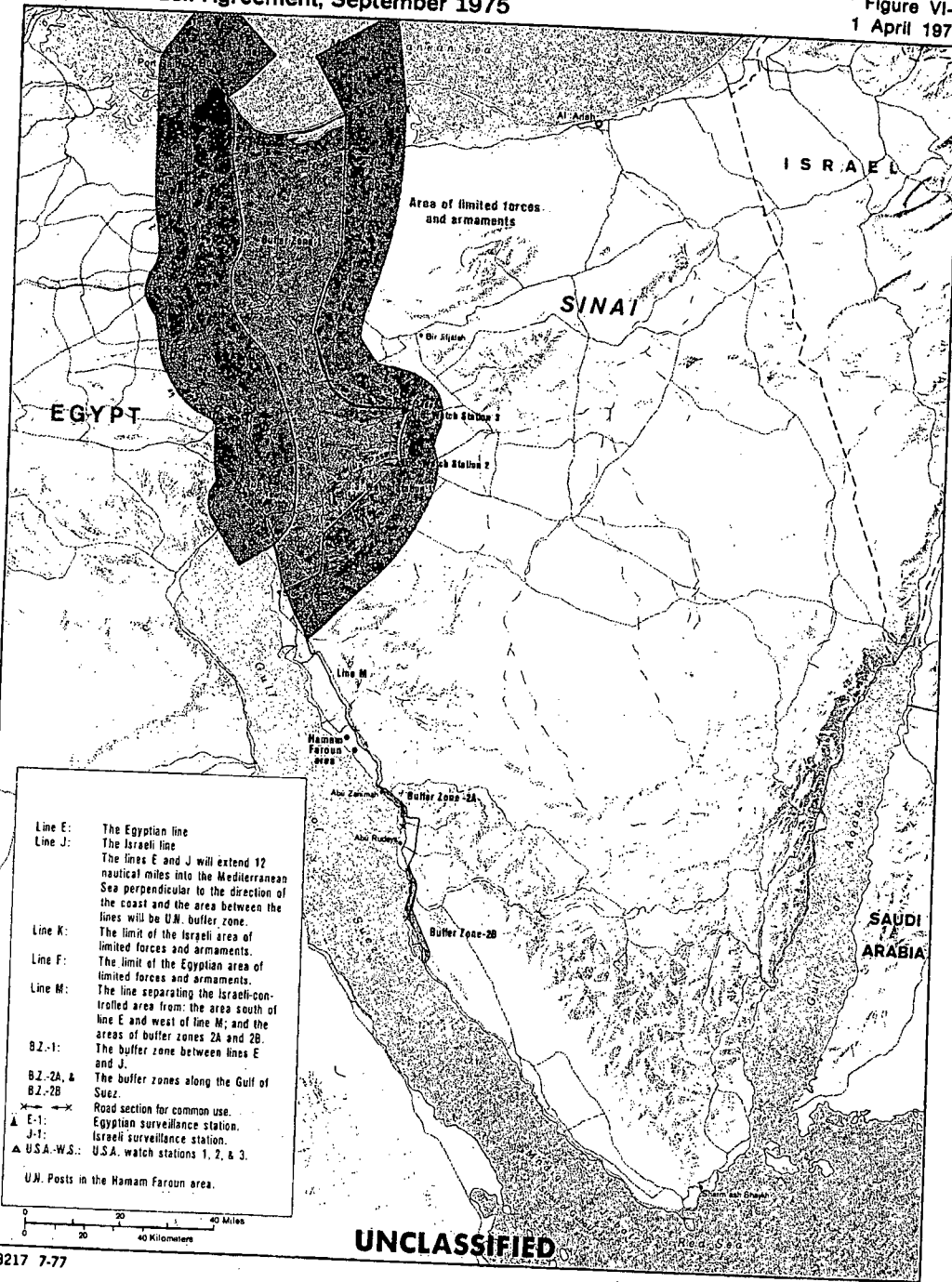




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Egyptian-Israeli Agreement, September 1975

Figure VI-1
1 April 1977



- Line E: The Egyptian line
- Line J: The Israeli line
- The lines E and J will extend 12 nautical miles into the Mediterranean Sea perpendicular to the direction of the coast and the area between the lines will be U.N. buffer zone.
- Line K: The limit of the Israeli area of limited forces and armaments.
- Line F: The limit of the Egyptian area of limited forces and armaments.
- Line M: The line separating the Israeli-controlled area from: the area south of line E and west of line M; and the areas of buffer zones 2A and 2B.
- B.Z.-1: The buffer zone between lines E and J.
- B.Z.-2A, & B.Z.-2B: The buffer zones along the Gulf of Suez.
- — — — — Road section for common use.
- ▲ E-1: Egyptian surveillance station.
- ▲ J-1: Israeli surveillance station.
- ▲ U.S.A.-W.S.: U.S.A. watch stations 1, 2, & 3.
- U.N. Posts in the Hamam Farouq area.

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SECTION VI. APPENDIX OF TABLES AND MAPS

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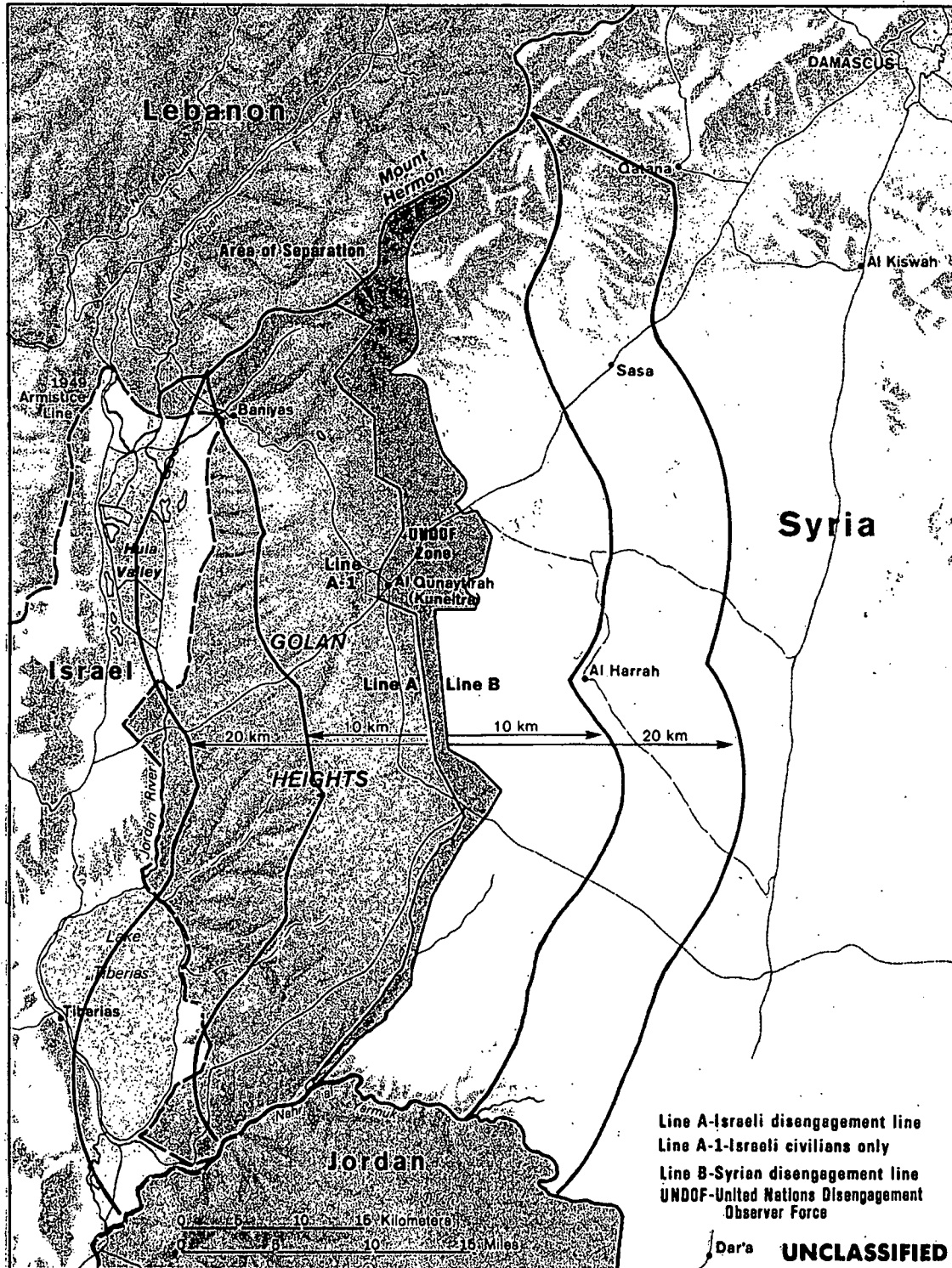
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Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Lines

Figure VI-2
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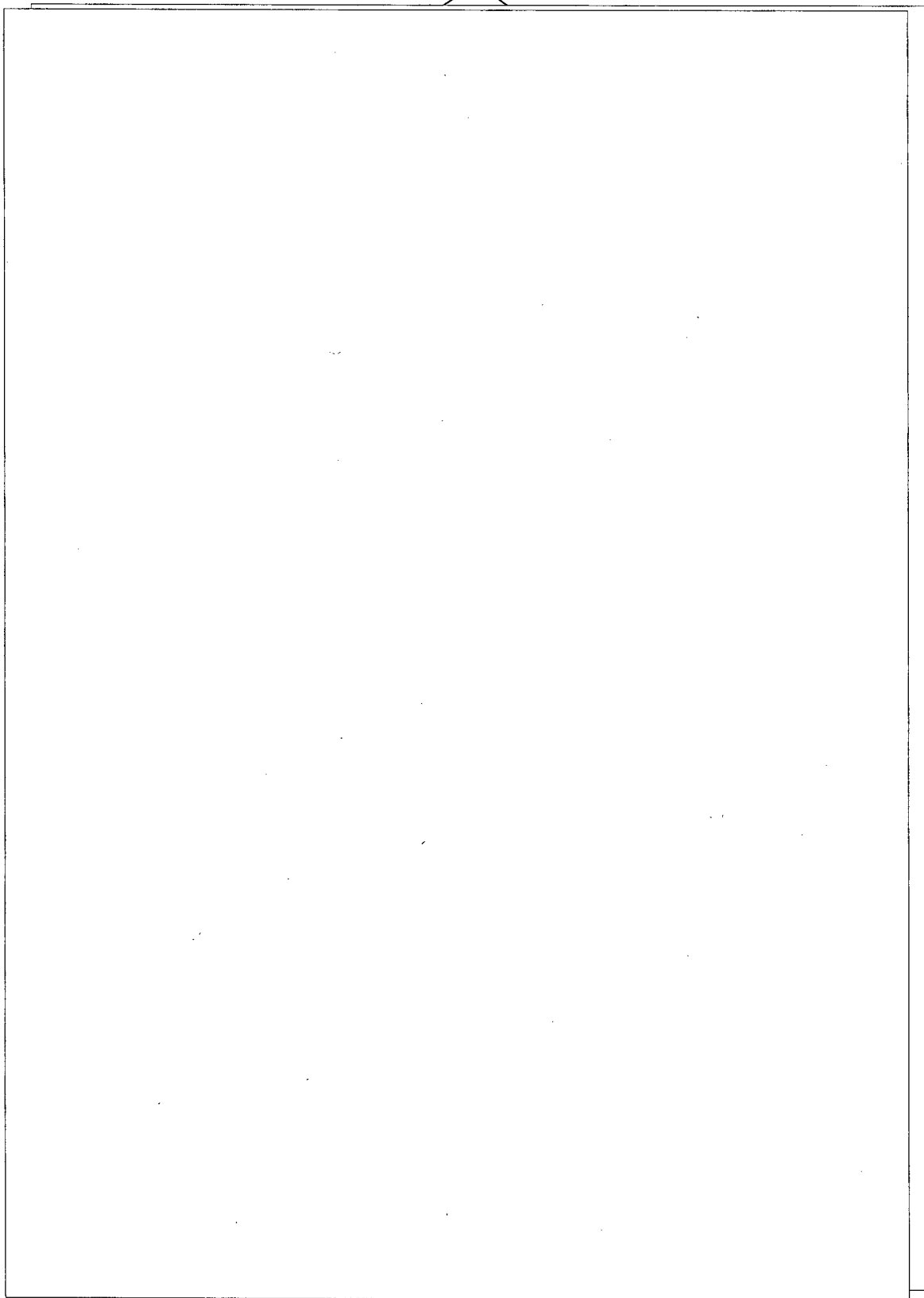


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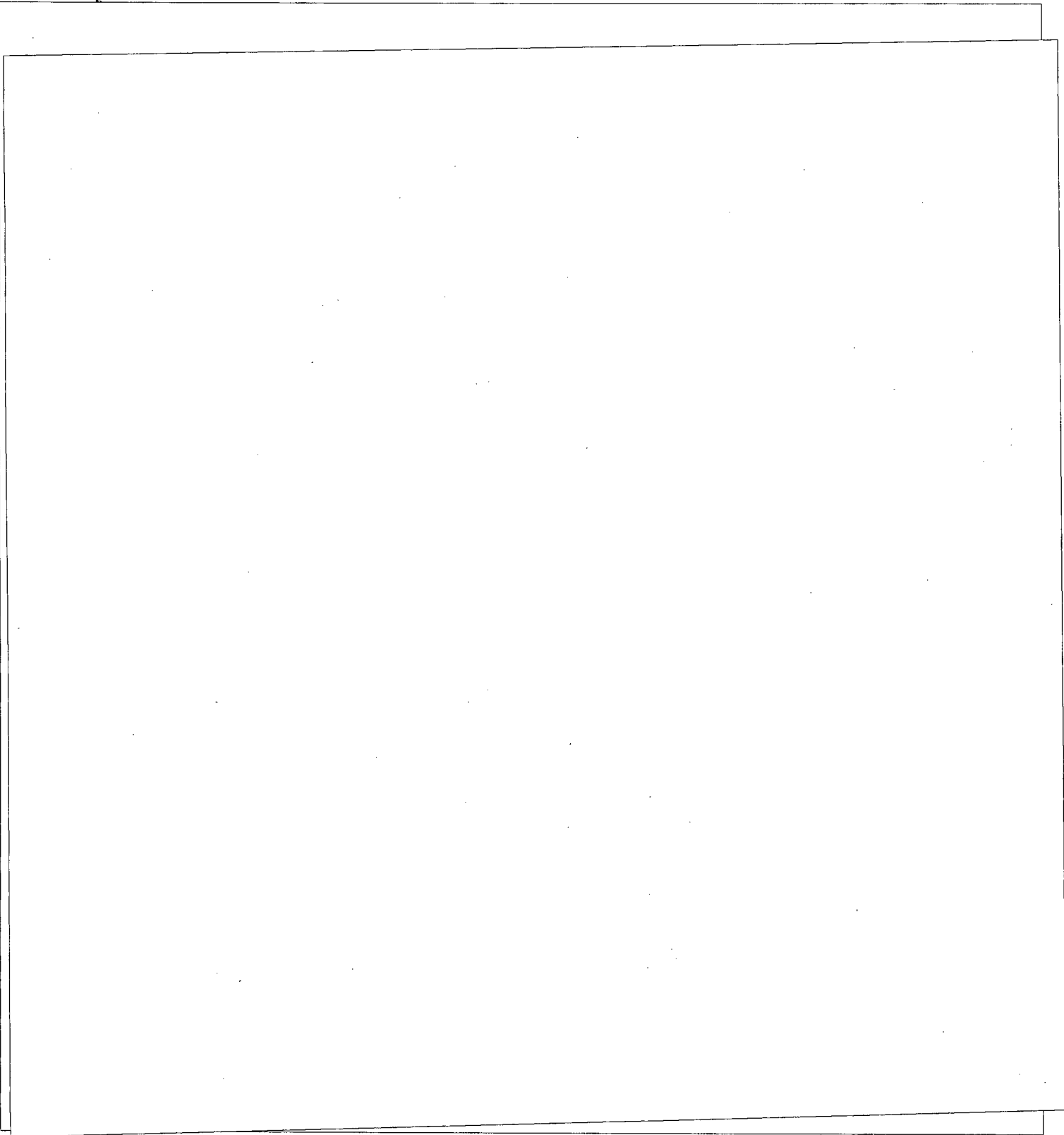
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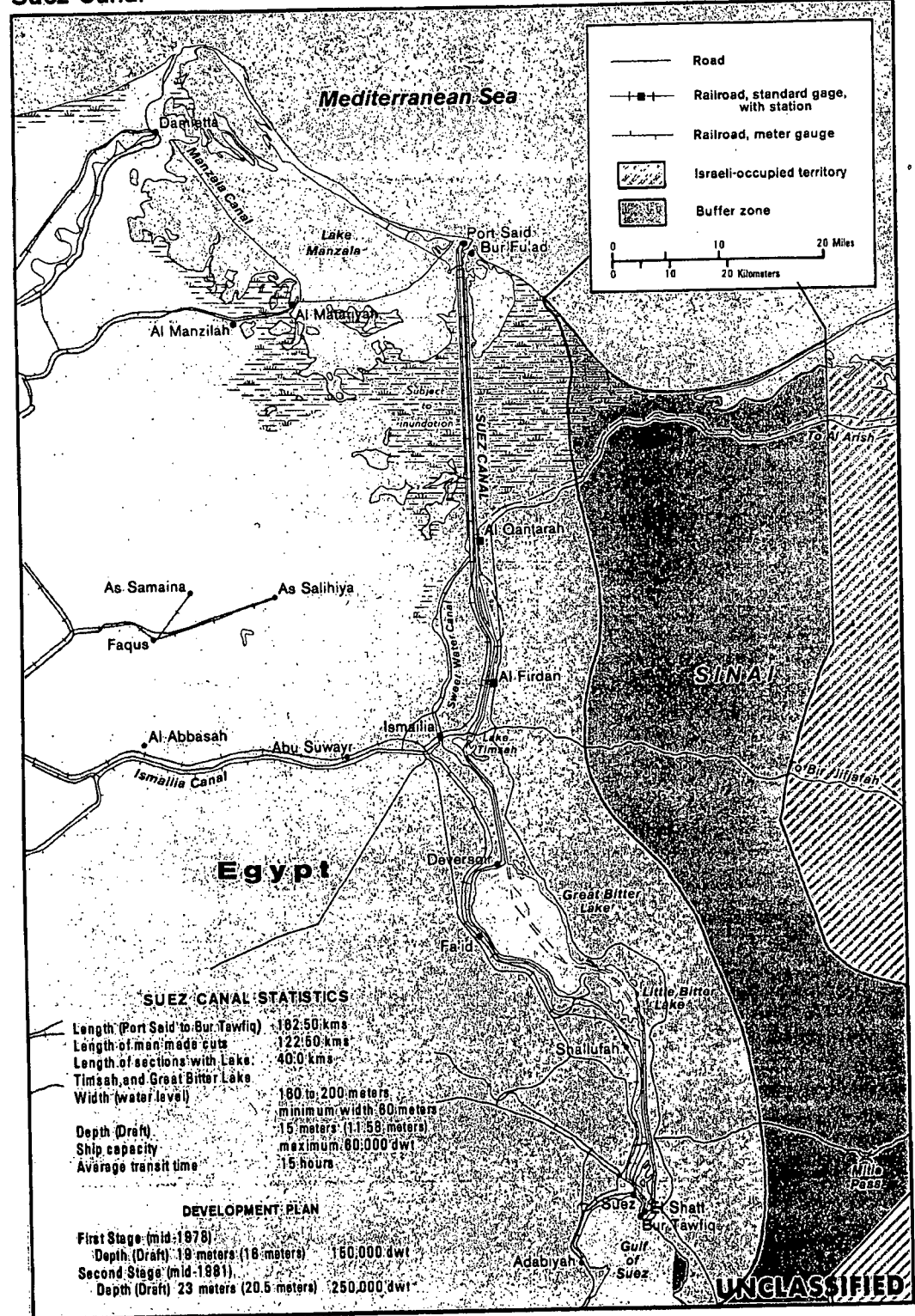
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Figure VI-4
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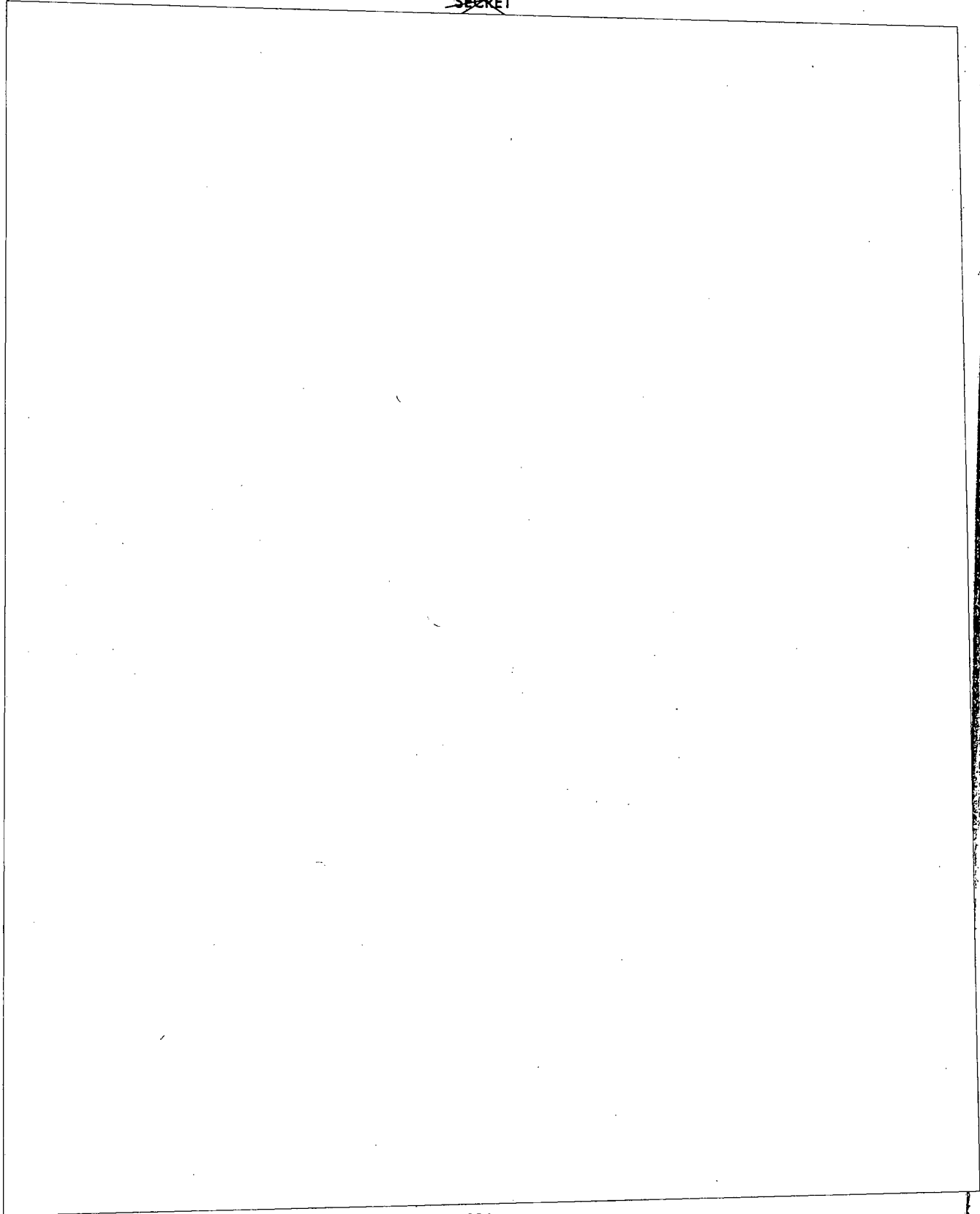
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