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NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
FLEET GEORGE B. MEADE, MARYLAND

CRYPTOLOG

DECEMBER 1976



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A CRYPTOLOG INTERVIEW WITH..... 1

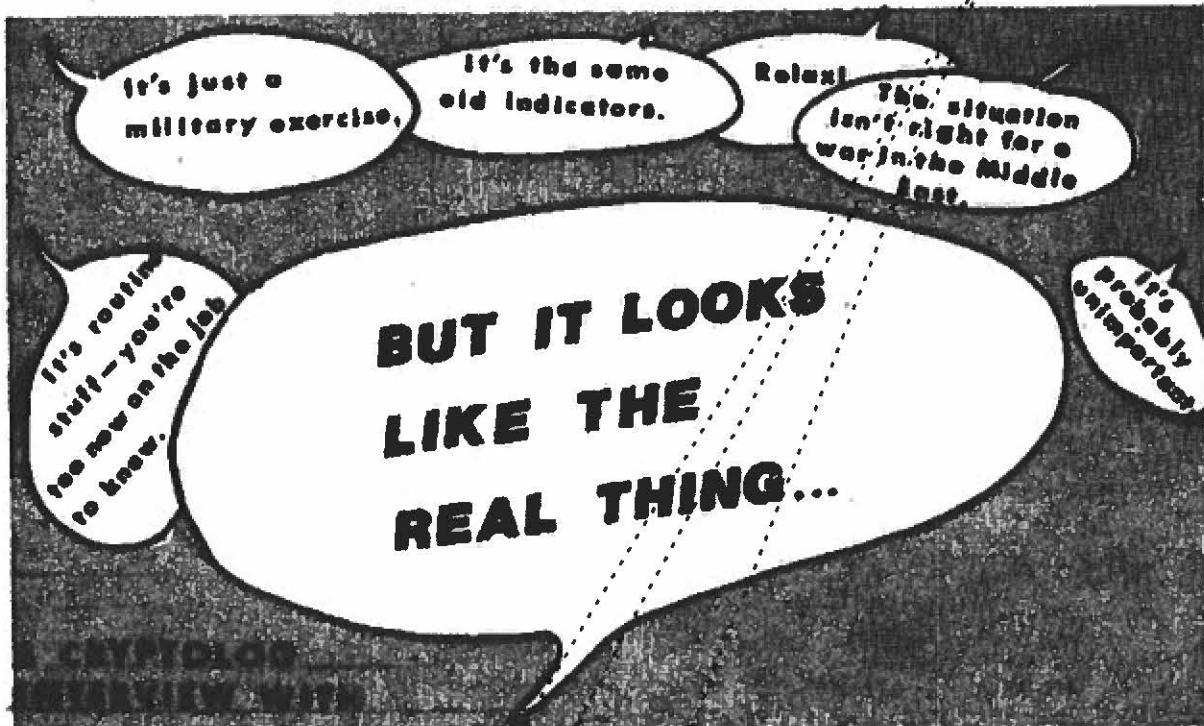
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[Redacted]

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A lot of people, in and out of NSA, call you "the one who predicted the Yom Kippur War." Could you explain how you happened to get that title?

Well, first of all, I'd like to say that that's an exaggerated statement. I didn't predict the war -- I merely wrote and presented briefings on the indicators that precoded the war. I gave these briefings to our Director, at his Daily Intelligence Brief, and to key personnel at CIA -- General Graham, who was then the Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence (O/DCI) and to Mr. Hoskinson, who was Mr. Colby's advisor on Middle East affairs.

The title gives me undue credit, because a lot of analysts and translators in G6 put in an awful lot of hours to come up with those indicators. My job merely entailed looking at all the SIGINT and collateral available and trying to make some sense out of it. Looking back, I must admit that my bosses at that time -- Mr. Raven; [Redacted] Mr. Parish; and [Redacted] -- gave me a lot of leeway in this task, and I'm really glad they did. I still recall vividly the days preceding the outbreak of the war -- getting in to work around 5 o'clock in the morning, collecting all the SIGINT reports issued during the night by our various field stations, trying to sort out the intelligence from the chaff. Mr. Raven would come up to our area around a quarter to

8 and inquire as to what I would be briefing the Director. This was very unusual, but, because of Mr. Raven's deep concern over the Middle East situation, he made this a daily practice. As this would take about 10 or 15 minutes, Mr. Geiger in V3 would invariably call, wondering where I was. Mr. Geiger was in charge of the Director's intelligence brief, and he liked to have a dry run at 0745. Naturally, I was late every day. Sometimes I didn't even finish writing the brief until 0825, 5 minutes before the actual brief began. What a nightmare! But, all things considered, the briefings went pretty smoothly. However, I used to pray that, if any questions were asked, they would be ones that I was prepared to answer. I knew that questions would be likely, because things were developing very rapidly in the Middle East. I always tried to know the facts inside and out. But still, like all briefers, I lived in fear of not being able to answer a question asked by one of our top managers at a formal briefing. Fortunately, someone was looking out for me, because the questions asked were ones that I could answer.

As for how I happened to be in a position to give these briefings, that's ironical, to say the least. In July 1973, when DDO underwent a reorganization, I was asked if I would like a job in G6 (Middle East). I had been working in GS (Latin America) for about 2 years. After thinking it over, I decided it was time for a

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change. So off I went to G6. Little did I know what was about to greet me! So it turned out that I had all of two and a half months' of experience on Middle East targets when things began to develop. Looking back again, that was an asset, believe it or not. I wasn't experienced enough to have any built-in prejudices! Often, analysts who have worked a specific target for a long period of time tend to down-grade

[Redacted]

If I'm given credit for "predicting" the war, it really means that other people had failed to

[Redacted]

When did you first get involved in these briefings?

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Was this when you went to CIA to give briefings on the Middle East situation?

Yes. Following the Director's intelligence brief on Thursday, 4 October, 74 -- which was then involved in a program that included presenting significant briefs at the DCI Staff -- asked me if I could brief that staff on the Middle East developments. With my bosses' approval, it was decided that we would do this. Since the weekly briefing was scheduled for that very day at 1400 hours, I had time to incorporate the latest developments.

What exactly did you brief to Deputy/DCI and his staff, and what was the reaction to your briefing?

Although I had had to prepare the briefing under pressure of time, I had selected and written my words very carefully. So, when I presented the briefing, I stated that

Following the briefing, I went to Mr. Hoskinson's office and repeated it for him.

He was not as concerned as General Graham had been.

I then returned to NSA and told my bosses what had happened at CIA. To be perfectly honest, I will admit that maybe I should have pushed my case harder at CIA. But I had felt a bit intimidated downtown. After all, who was I -- a briefer with about two months on the problem -- to disagree with all the experts? Not only that, but I was completely unprepared for what happened downtown. Maybe I was naive, but I had been completely unaware that there was disagreement in the intelligence community on what was happening in the Middle East. Then, suddenly, I find myself right in the middle of the disagreement with no real guidance as to how to handle the situation. Therefore, when I returned to NSA that afternoon I was a little afraid that I might have got myself in real trouble. Because if a war hadn't erupted, our credibility may have dropped considerably in the eyes of CIA.

What was Mr. Raven's reaction when you told him what had happened at CIA?

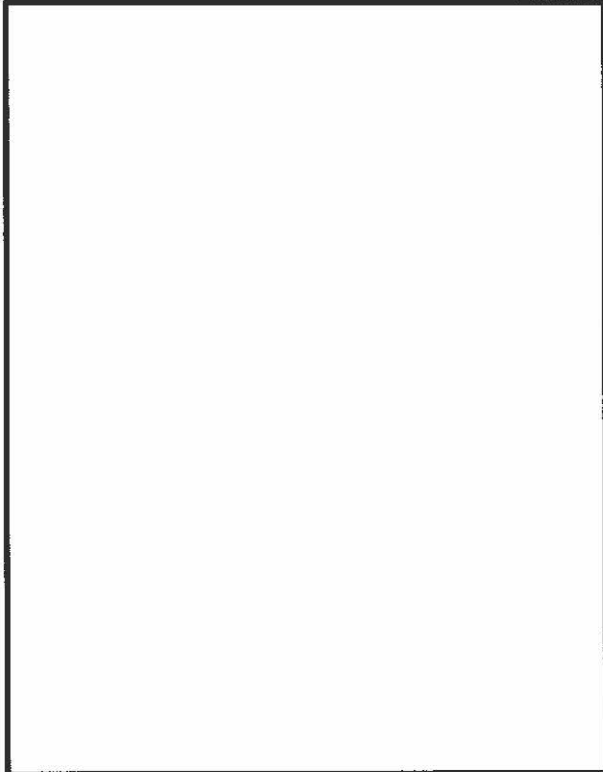
He told me not to worry personally about what I had said while at CIA, because he felt that, no matter what NSA said, the intelligence

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community would not agree that a war in the Middle East was imminent.

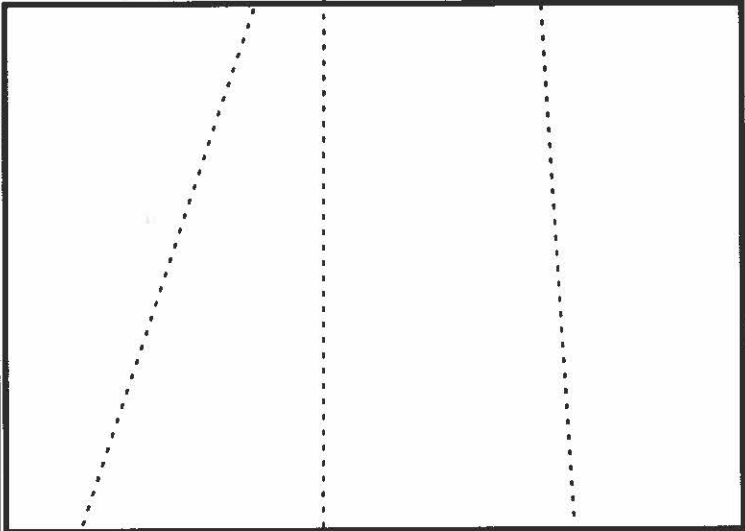
A lot of people have stated that you actually predicted the very day that the war would erupt. Is this true?

No, and I'd like to clear that point up right now. At the briefing that I gave at CIA, I did mention that 6 October was Yom Kippur -- a Jewish religious holiday -- and that, naturally, Israel would be most susceptible on that day. But that is all I said. I didn't say that war would definitely break out that day. I merely suggested that 6 October would be an advantageous day for an Arab attack. Anyone familiar with the Jewish religion knows this. Thus, it wasn't any great feat on my part to point it out.

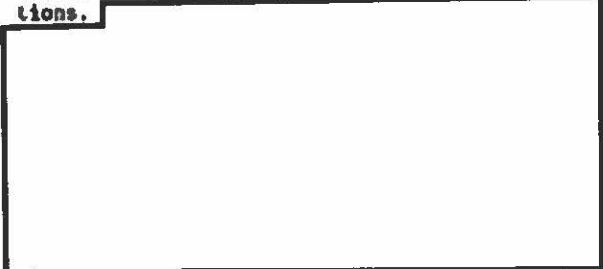


one-week SIGINT orientation course given each month at NSA. So far, 800-900 people from DIA have taken this course; and it is hoped that DIA in general has a better idea of how the SIGINT analyst makes his evaluations.

What did people at NSA learn?



Another change was the creation of the NIB¹ (National Intelligence Bulletin), which provides the executive reader with a daily summary of the intelligence facts. Prior to the creation of the NIB, the individual agencies put out their own summaries, which sometimes contained conflicting statements and interpretations.



With the creation of the NIB, we now have a publication that can collect all divergent views on a subject. In the NIB, the individual intelligence agencies can now concur or nonconcur with a given evaluation. If an agency nonconcur, there is now an opportunity for that agency to state why it does not agree with a specific evaluation, and then state its own evaluation. In this way, we now have a single vehicle available to decision-makers which contains all the possible options on a given subject.

And a third change is that DIA has been sending about 30 people at a time to attend a

¹Effective 12 May 1976, title was changed to NID (National Intelligence Daily). (Ed.)

"I just hope that we... do not repeat these mistakes in the future."

And what about you personally?

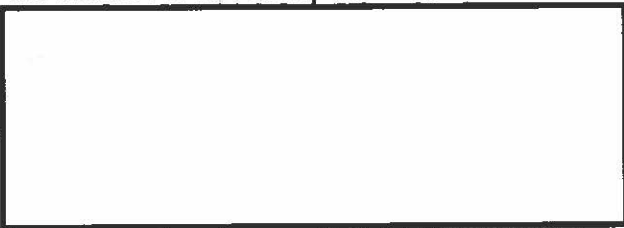
Well, personally, I felt it was a good experience but one that I hope won't have to be repeated. It was a somewhat frustrating experience, but one that taught me an awful lot about the mechanics of the intelligence community.

It was also a good lesson in indications and warning, and made me aware for the first time of the enormous

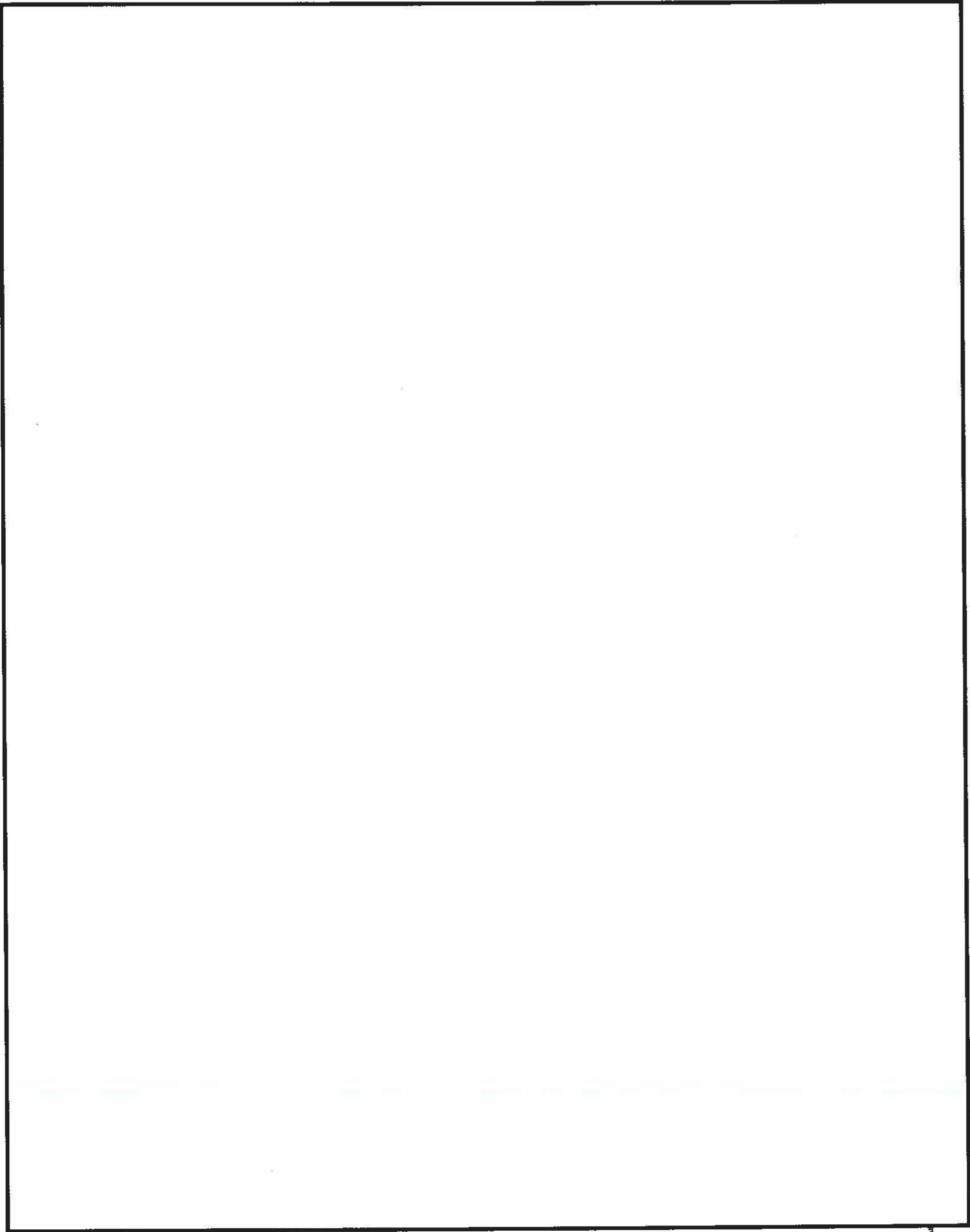


... whether it be in the Middle East, Far East, Eastern Europe, etc. I just hope that we have all benefited from the mistakes we made prior to the 1973 Middle East War and do not repeat these mistakes in the future.

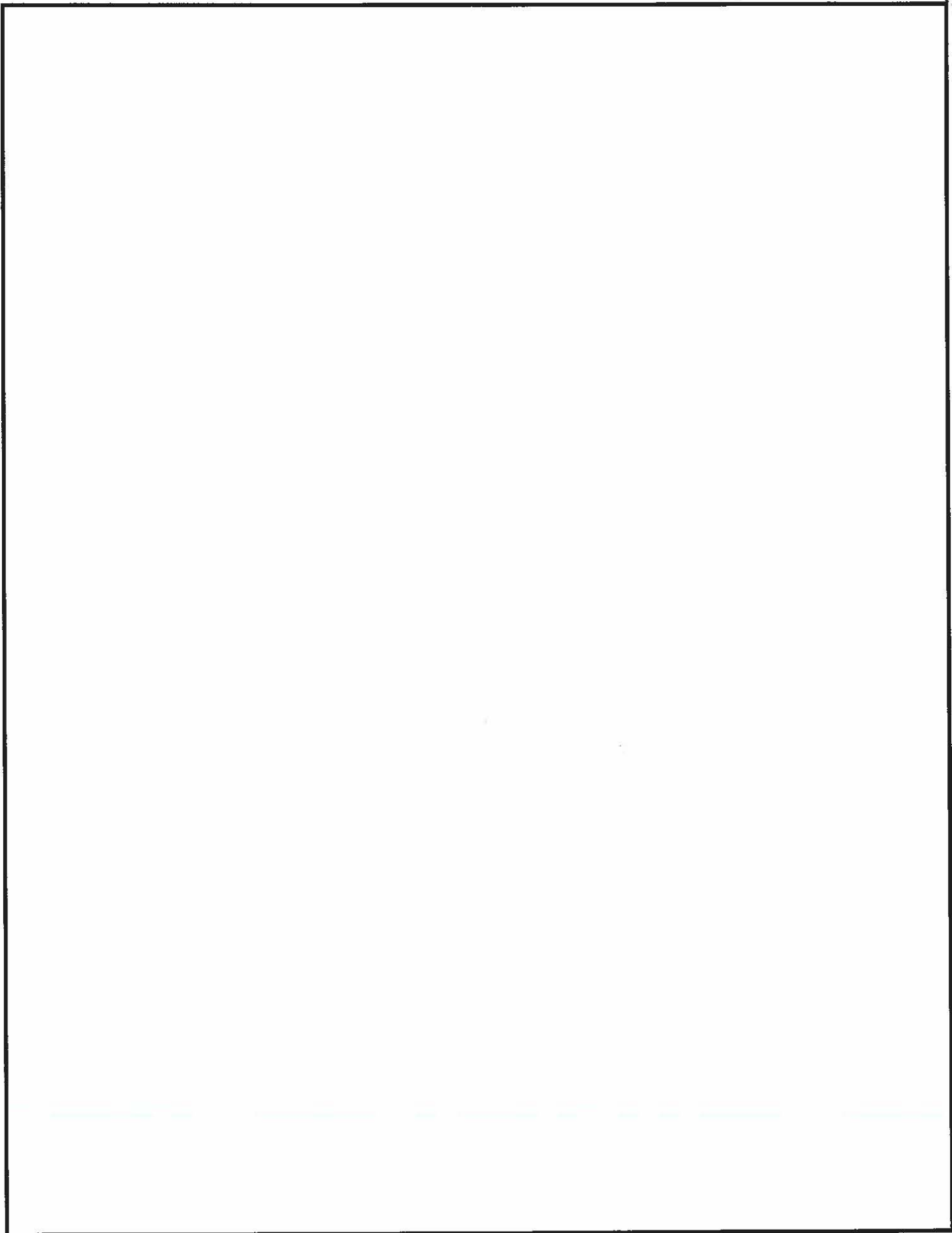
I would also like to say that, in my opinion, my role in the October crisis was a minor one which has often been blown out of proportion.

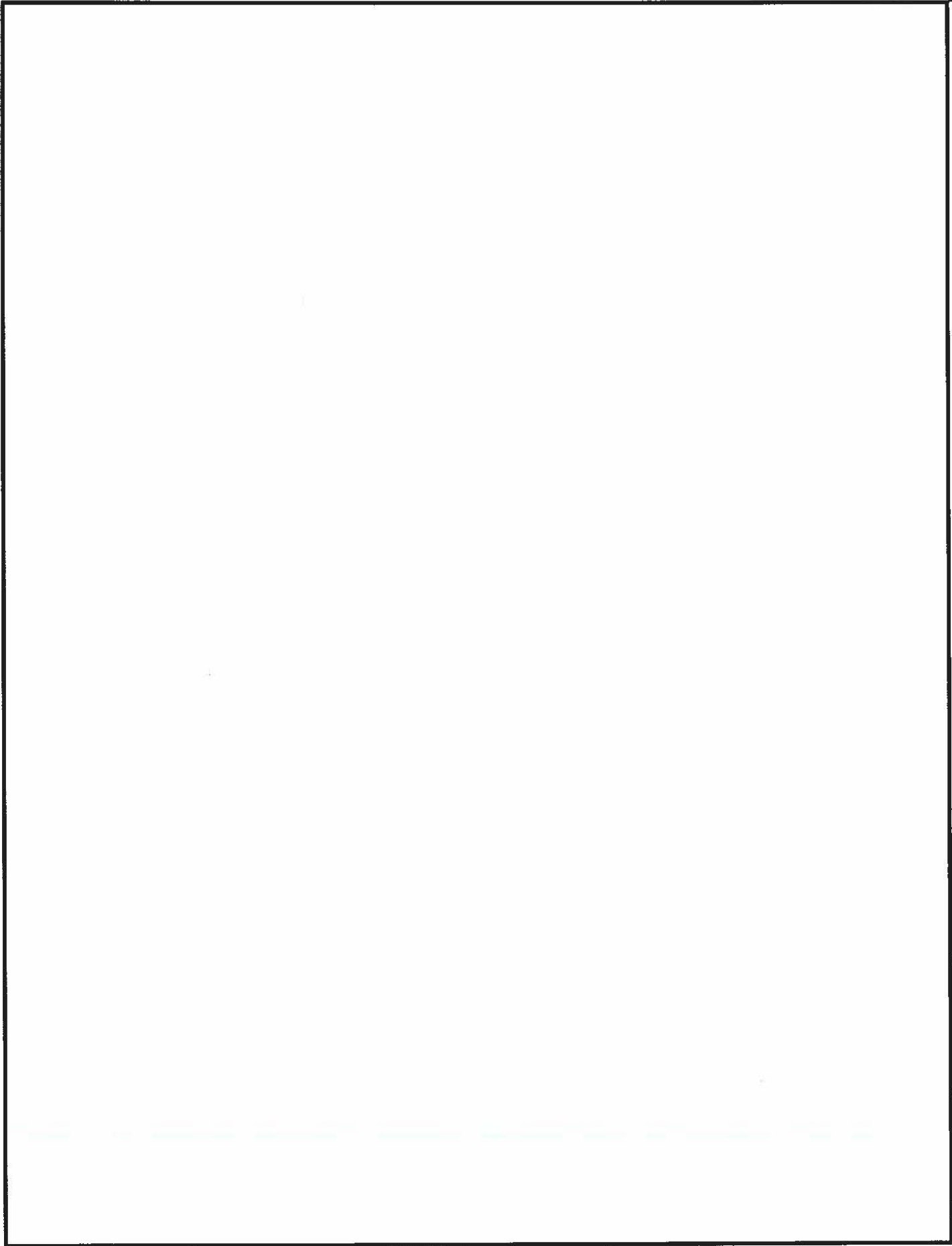


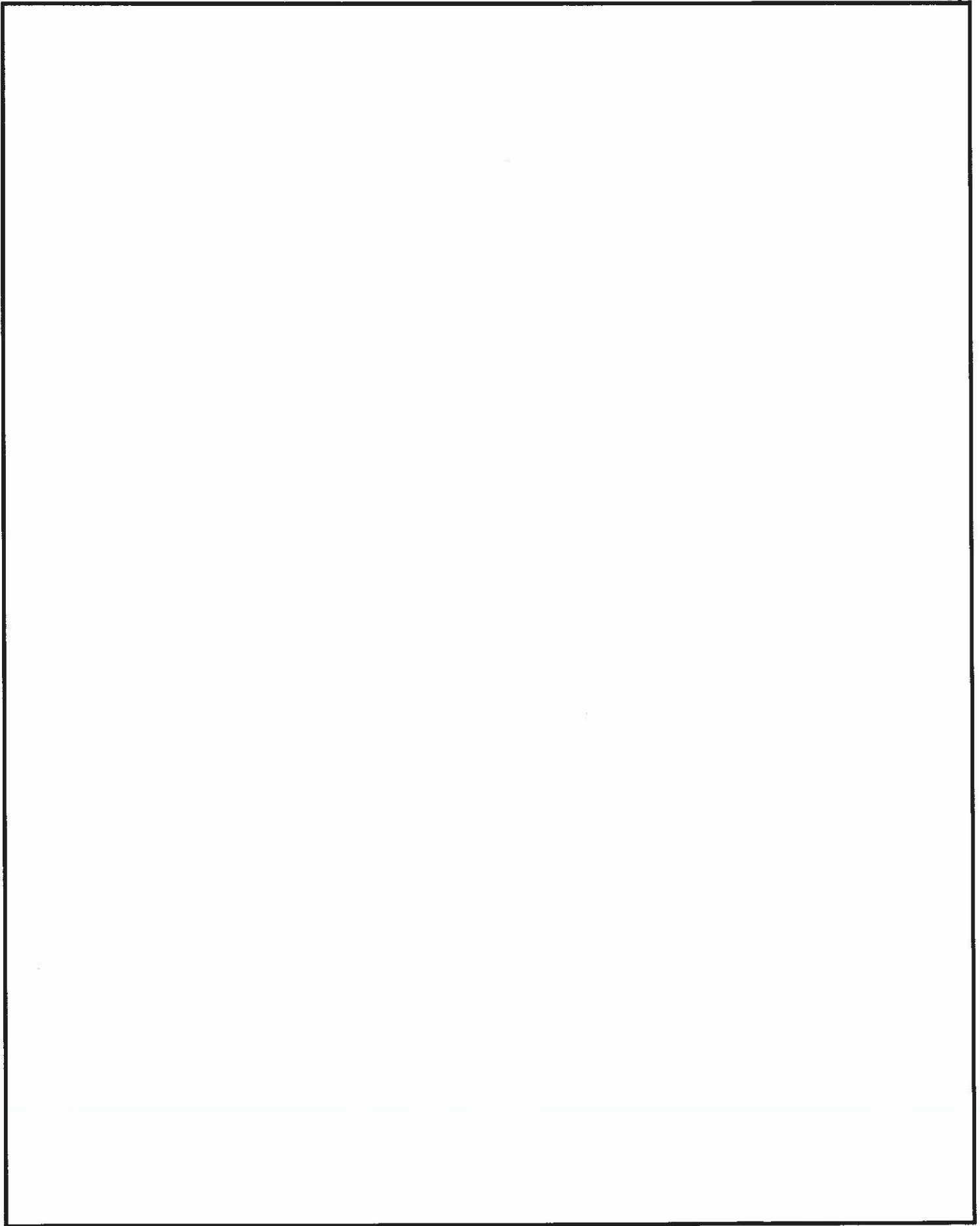
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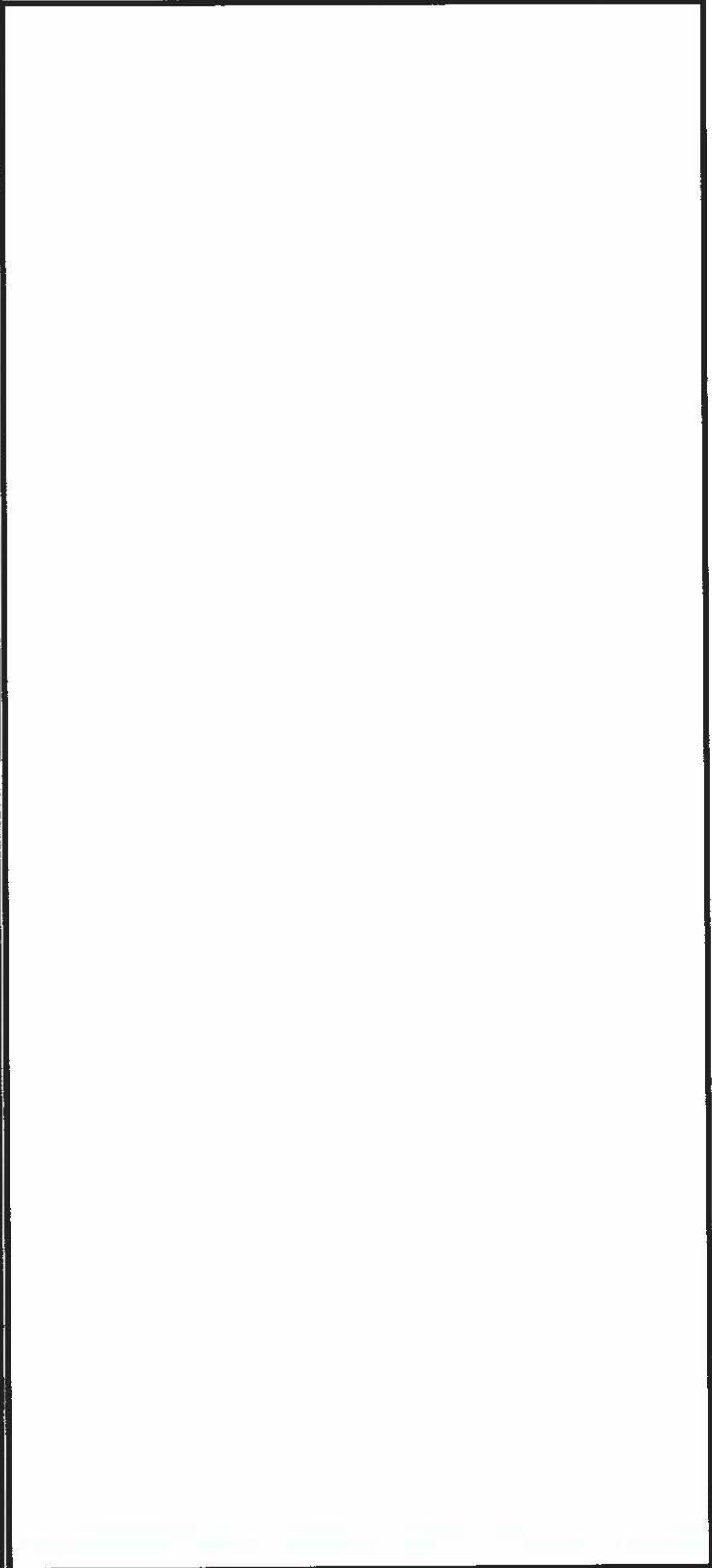
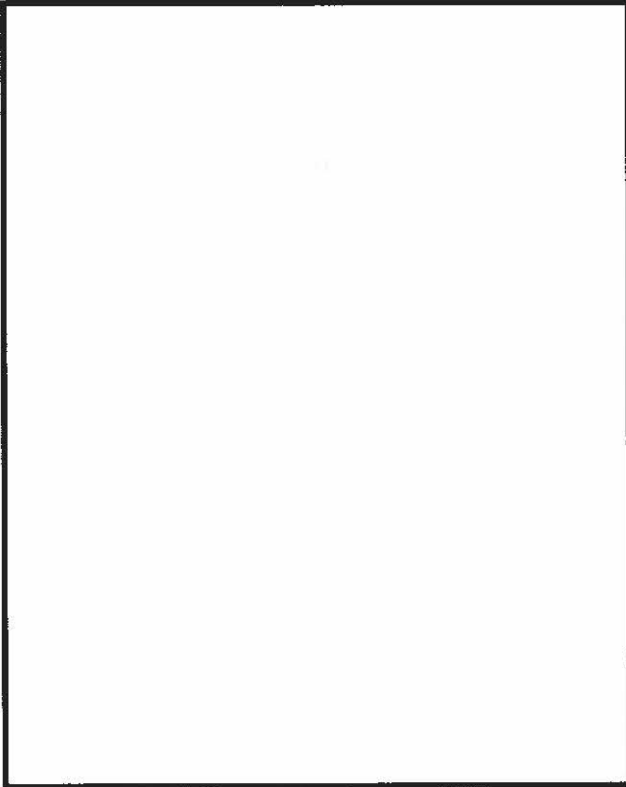




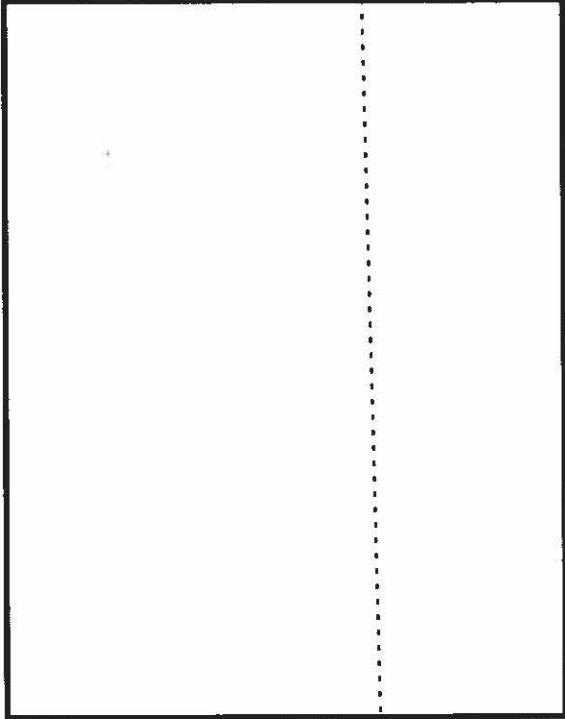


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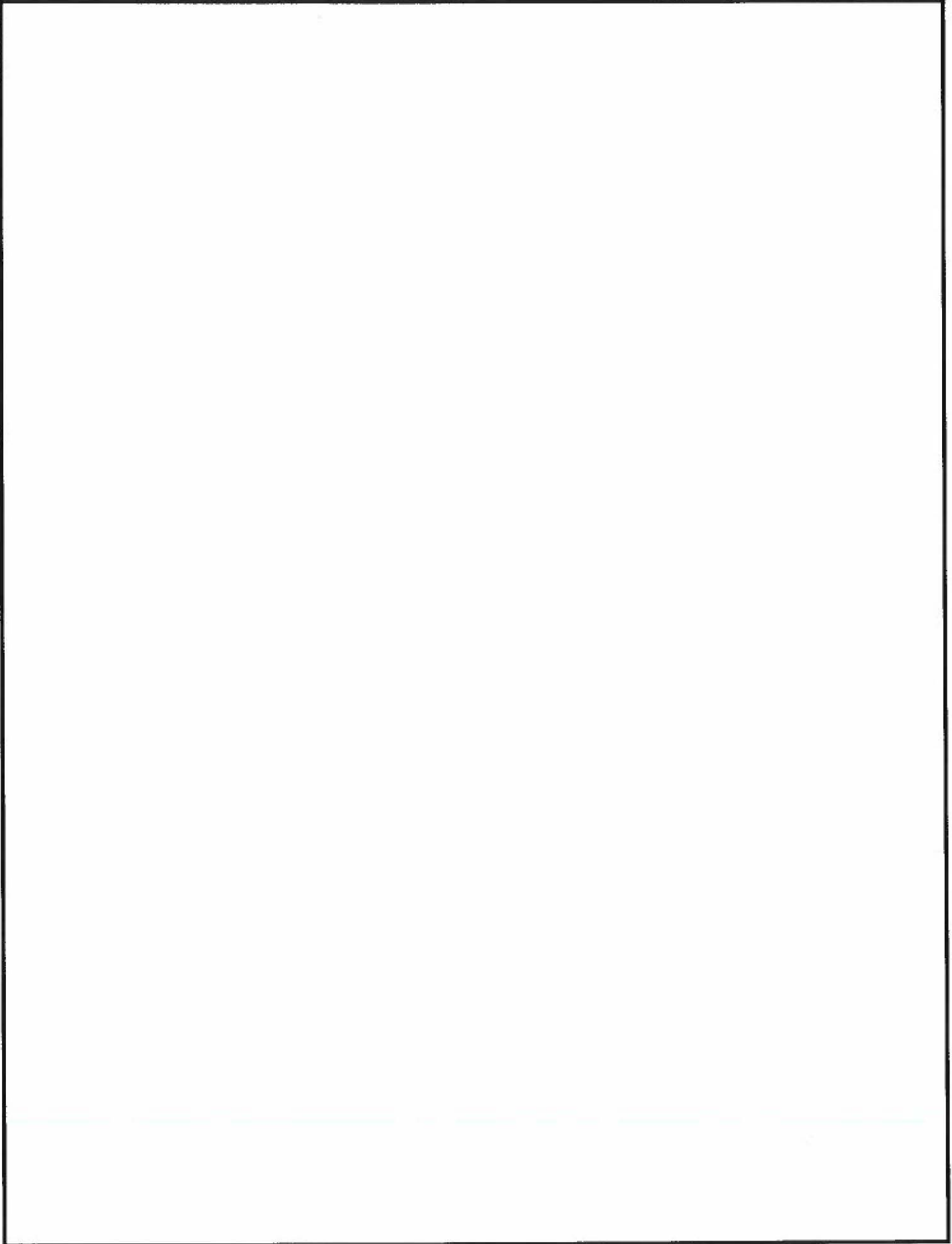
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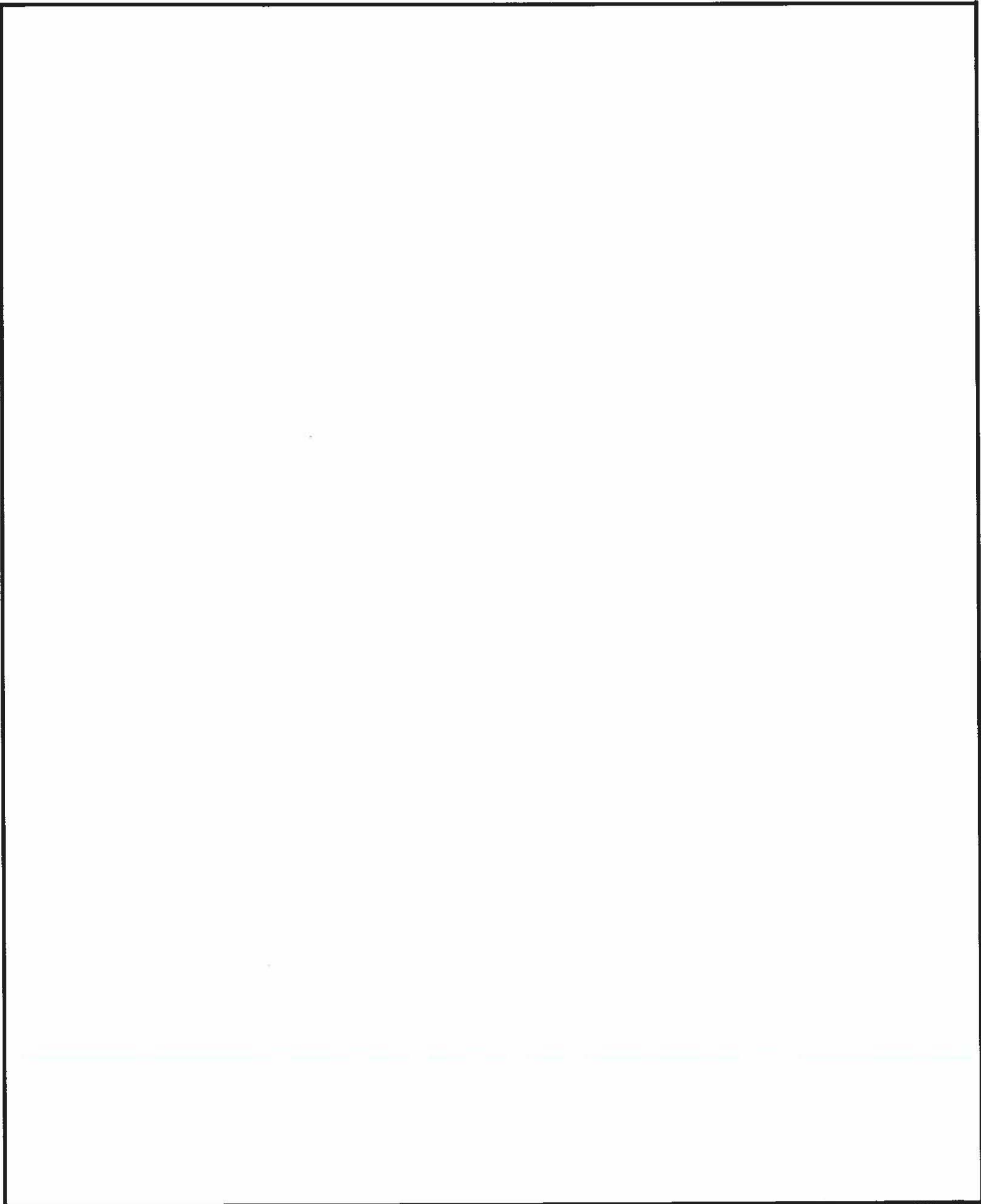
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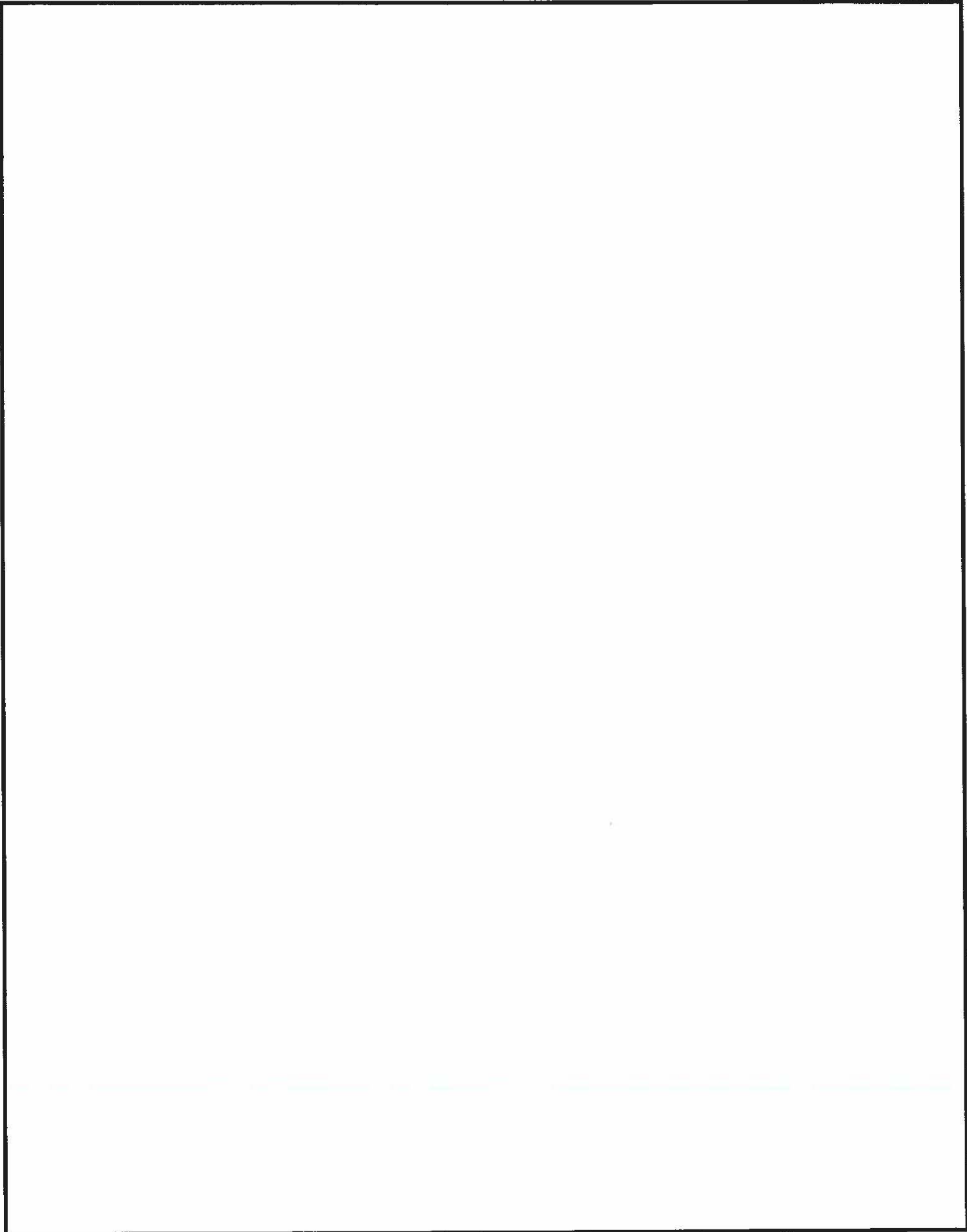
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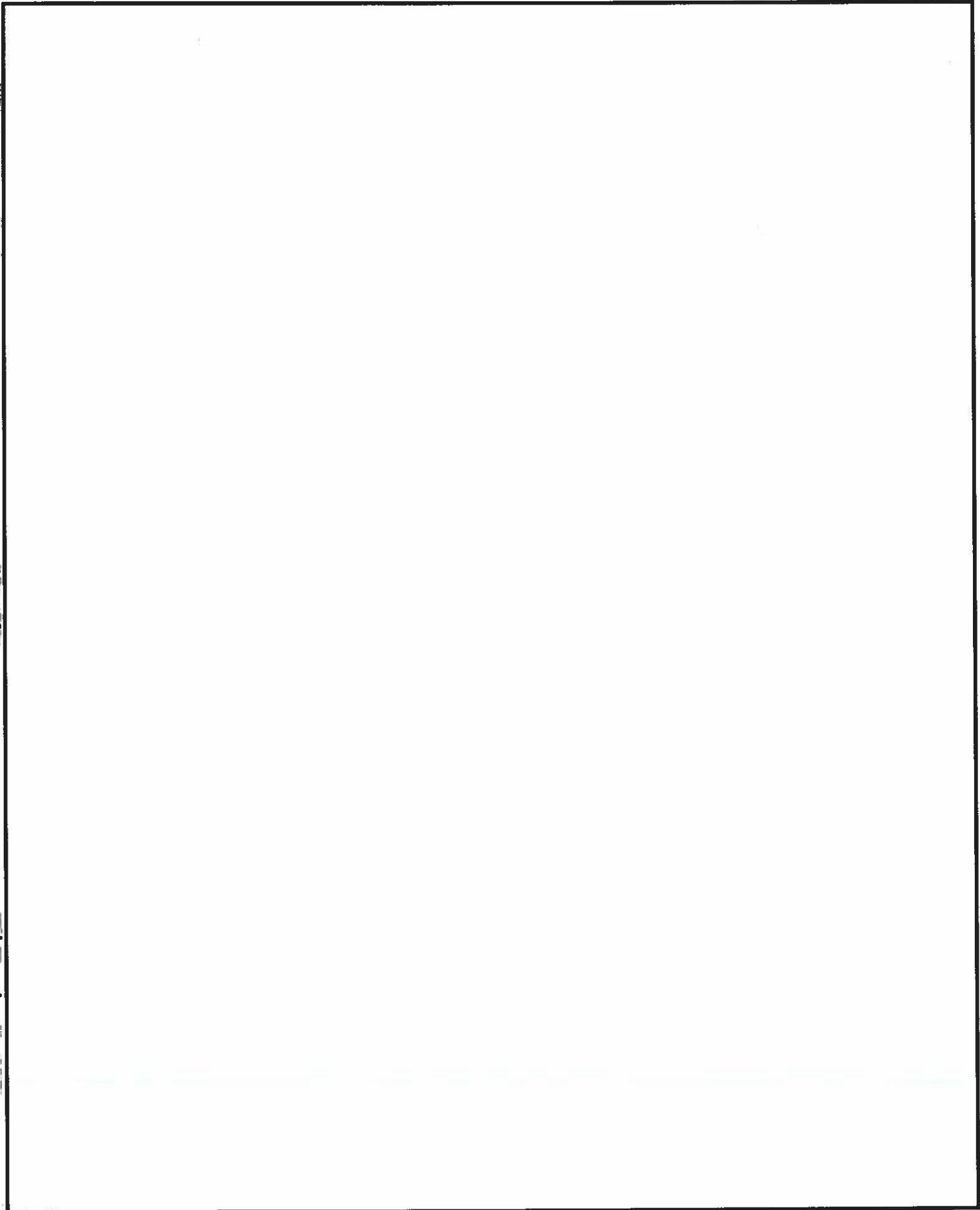
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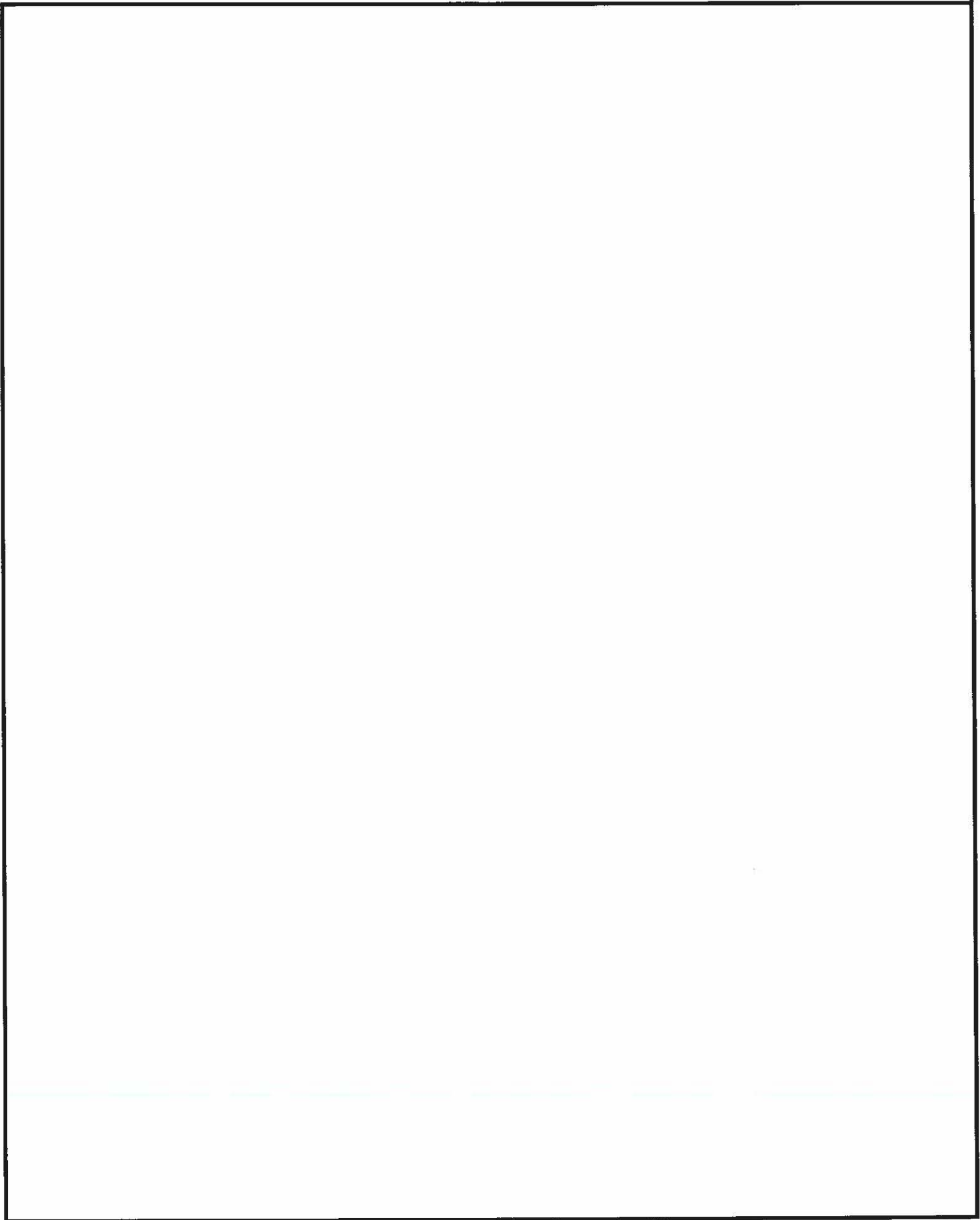
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