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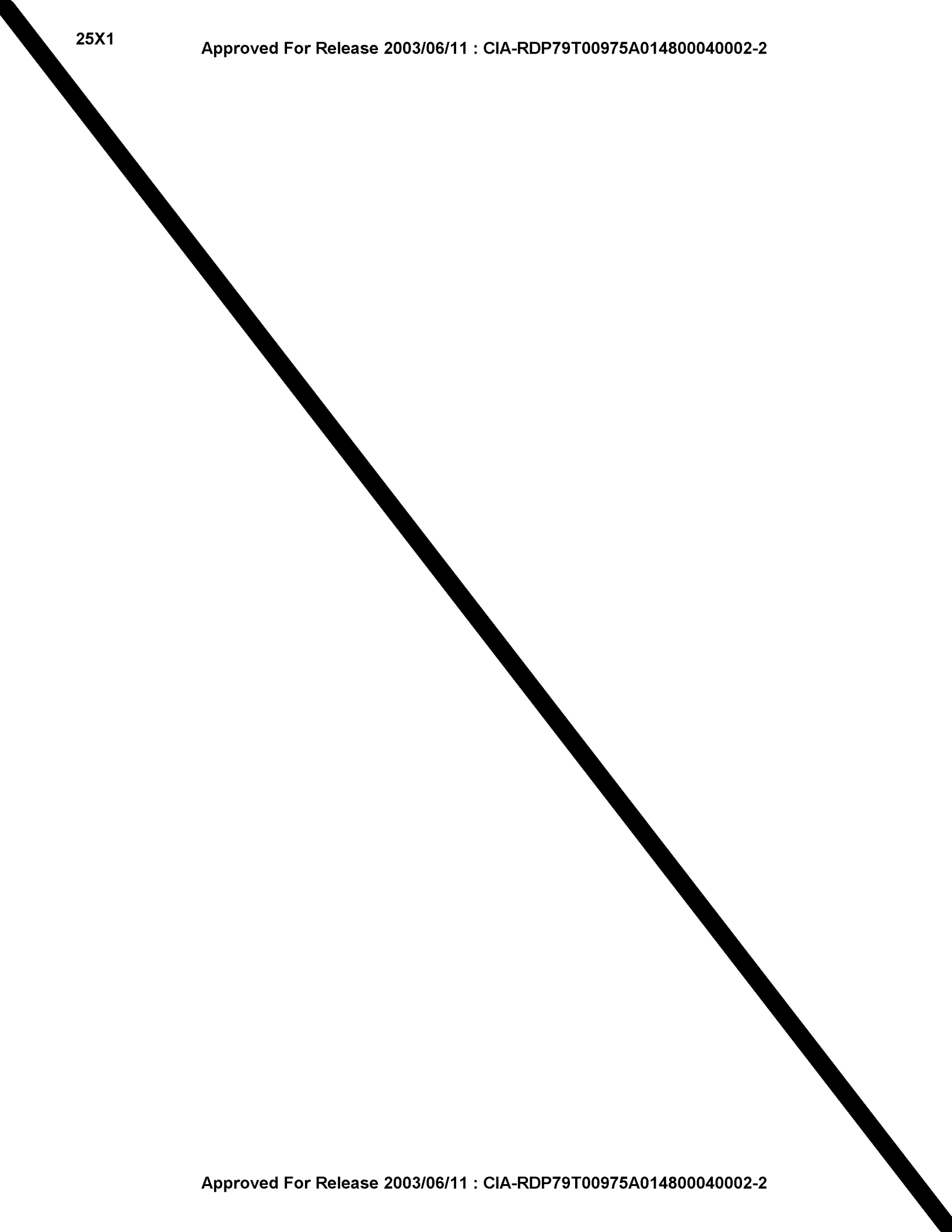

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El Salvador - Honduras: The Salvadorans are beginning to show some flexibility in their search for a formula to restore peaceful relations with Honduras.

The major stumbling block remains Honduras' refusal to open its section of the Pan American Highway until El Salvador agrees to talks on the border dispute. The Salvadoran negotiating team, which has been in Washington for the past two weeks, hopes that the impasse might be ended if President Sanchez declares unilaterally that El Salvador will adhere to the El Amatillo treaty of 1962 and that he intends to put it into effect when normal relations with Honduras are restored.

This proposal may not be acceptable to Honduras, however. The 1962 agreement merely provided for a study commission to draw up a plan for proceeding on the problem of border definition and demarcation, and did not result in clarification of the border. Therefore, the Hondurans will probably want some reasonable assurance that an agreement will actually be reached this time. Moreover, they are likely to delay reopening the highway until normal relations have been re-established and border talks are under way.

El Salvador would have trouble meeting these conditions and would be particularly unwilling to negotiate under a deadline. The Salvadoran news media's anti-Honduran propaganda campaign has kept public attention focused on the dispute, and the Salvadoran Government fears the political repercussions which might arise if it appeared to knuckle under.

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