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African Union

Inauguration of the Headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force Against the Boko Haram Terrorist Group



Addis Ababa, 25 May 2015: The Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union (AU), Smail Chergui, the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Sanusi Imran Abdullahi, and the Chadian Minister delegate at the Presidency of the Republic in charge of National Defense and Veterans Affairs, Benaindo Tatola, today, in N'Djamena, officially inaugurated the operational Headquarters (HQ) of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) deployed by the member States of the LCBC and Benin, to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group.

The ceremony was held in the margins of the 16th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), held in Ndjamena on 25 May 2015, and in which Commissioner Chergui participated. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, also participated in the ceremony. Commissioner Chergui, Mr. Chambas and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Na-

tions Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Abdoulaye Bathily, are currently conducting a joint visit in the countries directly affected by the activities of Boko Haram, namely Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Nigeria.

The MNJTF operational HQs will have a total strength of approximately 100 military and civilian personnel provided by the LCBC Member States and Benin. It will include liaison officers deployed by the AU and bilateral and multilateral partners, and will operate under the authority of Major-General T. Y Buratai of Nigeria, Commander of the Force.

The activation of the MNJTF HQs is being done in follow-up to the communiqués adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU at its meetings held on 29 January and 3 March 2015. In these communiqués, the PSC, in support of the efforts of the LCBC Member States and Benin, authorized the deployment of the MNJTF for an initial period of twelve (12) months; endorsed the Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPS) as agreed to during the meeting of experts, held in Yaoundé, from 5 to 7 February 2015, in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the MNJTF mandate and tasks; and authorized the increase of the MNJTF strength from 7,500 to 10,000 military and other personnel.

The AU Commission reiterates its support to the LCBC Member States and Benin. In this regard, it will spare no effort to facilitate the effective implementation of the mandate of the MNJTF, notably through the mobilization, from the international community, of the required political, financial and logistical support, and the provision of the necessary expertise.

Mixte contre le groupe terroriste Boko Haram

25 May 2015



Terrorism and Transnational Organized CrimeBoko Haram

Addis Abéba, le 25 mai 2015: Le Commissaire à la Paix et à la Sécurité de l'Union africaine (UA), Smail Chergui, le Secrétaire exécutif de la Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad (CBLT), Sanusi Imram Abdullahi, et le Ministre délégué à la Présidence chargé de la Défense nationale et des Anciens Combattants de la République du Tchad, Benaindo Tatola, ont procédé, ce jour, à N'Djamena, à l'inauguration officielle du Quartier Général (QG) opérationnel de la Force multinationale mixte (FMM) déployée par les États membres de la CBLT et le Bénin, pour lutter contre le groupe terroriste Boko Haram.

La cérémonie a eu lieu en marge de la 16^{ème} session ordinaire de la Conférence des chefs d'État et de Gouvernement de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique centrale (CEEAC), tenue à Ndjamenà le 25 mai 2015 et à laquelle a pris part le Commissaire Chergui. Elle a vu la participation du Représentant spécial du Secrétaire général et chef du Bureau des Nations unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest

(UNOWA), Mohamed Ibn Chambas. Il convient de noter que le Commissaire Chergui, M. Chambas et le Représentant spécial du Secrétaire général et chef du Bureau des Nations unies pour l'Afrique centrale (UNOCA), Abdoulaye Bathily, entreprennent une visite conjointe dans les pays directement affectés par les activités de Boko Haram, à savoir le Tchad, le Niger, le Cameroun et le Nigeria.

Le QG opérationnel de la FMM aura un effectif d'environ 100 personnels militaires et civils fournis par les États membres de la CBLT et le Bénin. Il comprendra des officiers de liaison déployés par l'UA et des partenaires bilatéraux et multilatéraux, et opérera sous l'autorité du Général de Division T.Y Buratai du Nigeria, Commandant de la Force.

L'activation du QG de la FMM participe du suivi des communiqués adoptés par le Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) de l'UA, lors de ses réunions tenues le 29 janvier et le 3 mars 2015. Dans ces communiqués, le CPS, en appui aux efforts des États membres de la CBLT et du Bénin, a: décidé d'autoriser le déploiement de la FMM pour une période initiale de douze (12) mois renouvelable; approuvé le Concept d'opération (CONOPS) stratégique tel que convenu lors de la réunion d'experts, tenue à Yaoundé, du 5 au 7 février 2015, en vue de faciliter la mise en œuvre efficace du mandat et des tâches de la FMM; et autorisé une augmentation de l'effectif de la FMM de 7 500 à 10 000 personnels militaires et autres.

La Commission de l'UA réitère son appui aux États membres de la CBLT et au Bénin. À cet égard, elle ne ménagera aucun effort pour faciliter la mise en œuvre efficace du mandat de la FMM, notamment à travers la mobilisation, auprès de la communauté internationale, du soutien politique, financier et logistique requis, et la mise à disposition de l'expertise nécessaire.

The African Union strongly condemns the acts of violence in Burundi

Addis Ababa, 24 May 2015: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, has learned with dismay of the assassination of Mr. Zedi Feruzi, leader of the Union for Peace and Development (UPD) Zigamibanga, and his bodyguard, in Bujumbura, on 23 May 2015. She strongly condemns this cowardly and odious act, as well as the criminal grenade attack at the Bujumbura central market on 22 May 2015 that killed two people and injured several others.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses the AU's heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, and wishes speedy recovery to the injured. She calls for an independent and credible inquiry to shed light on these criminal acts and bring the perpetrators to justice. She calls on the Burundian authorities urgently to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the leaders of political parties, as well as of those of civil society organizations and the media. She recalls the imperative to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that the acts of violence of the last few days, as well as those that have marred the demonstrations organized by the opposition and civil society, have taken place at a time of sustained efforts to overcome the serious crisis facing Burundi. She notes, in this regard, the consultative political dialogue facilitated by the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Said Djinnit, together with the representatives of the AU, the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the Burundian parties to demonstrate renewed commitment to find a political and consensual solution to the crisis facing their country, create the necessary conditions for the holding of truly free and transparent elections, and preserve the fundamental achievements made thanks to the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, of which the AU and other international actors are Guarantors. She reiterates the AU's determination, in close cooperation with the region and other international actors, to continue to do everything in its power to contribute to the speedy resolution of the current crisis. In this regard, she renews her appreciation to the AU high-level mission led by Mr. Edem Kodjo and including Professor Ibrahima Fall, for its sustained efforts and commitment.

Terrorism in Africa

New study dispels several assumptions about terrorist recruitment in the Twin Cities

05/22/15



More than 55 percent of Minnesota Somalis live in poverty, 3.5 times more than the general U.S. population.

For almost eight years, a pipeline has pulled young Muslims from their homes in the Twin Cities into unknown territories in the Middle East and Somalia to join the ranks of Al-Shabab and the Islamic State.

The disappearance of the young Somali-Americans from their families has raised many issues, of course, questions that have drawn everyone from law enforcement officers to academics into the living rooms of Somalis living in the Twin Cites.

The latest attempt to understand the issue comes via a new report by the Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE) at the University of Southern California, "[Foreign Fighters: Terrorist Recruitment and Countering Violent Extremism Programs in Minneapolis-St. Paul](#)," which not only explores the ongoing terrorist recruitment and radicalization in the community — but suggests ways to stem the intensifying flow of Muslim youngsters to international terrorist organizations.

The report, authored by [Erroll Southers](#) and [Justin Hienz](#), was released last month

but has received little media scrutiny thus far as it attempts to shed light on specific challenges the community faces here. In fact, it found that as the size of the community continues to grow in the Twin Cities, young Somali-Americans are facing challenges that leave them vulnerable to recruitment. Among other things, the report found:

Nearly 35 percent of Somali households in Minnesota are headed by single parents — and the average family size is 4.

Nearly 40 percent the state's Somalis under 25 do not have a high school diploma.

Nearly 32 percent of the state's Somali community aged 16 years and older is unemployed.

More than 55 percent of Minnesota Somalis live in poverty, 3.5 times more than the general U.S. population.

More than 20,000 Somali-Americans under 25 face significant social and economic challenges.

The struggle to address these challenges, the study states, offers terrorist recruiters an opening to prey upon the community's youngsters, luring them into terrorism networks. Since the end of 2013, at least eight Somalis have left Minnesota to join ISIS in Syria, according to Southers and Hienz. And over the past six months alone, another eight Somali-Americans were charged in Minnesota with planning to leave the country to join Islamic extremist organizations in Syria.

Ineffective community services

The report also looks at various responses to terror recruitment. In recent years, the number of Somali-American non-profit organizations and activists seeking funding to halt recruitment and radicalization has increased. Today, there are 35 non-profit organizations serving the community in Minnesota, states the report, twenty-three of which operate in the Twin Cities.

The report highlights some organizations providing effective community services in the Twin Cities, including [Average Mohamed](#), [Ka Joog](#), [Somali Citizens League](#), [The Islamic Civic Society of America](#) and the [West Bank Athletic Club](#).

Yet the report also reveals that some organizations in the Twin Cities have misused government money they received in the name of serving the youth and fighting radicalization. One Somali law enforcement officer told researchers:

There are a lot of community organizations who get money in the name of the community and never come back...So-called Somali community leaders have been receiving money from the city or the state or local but the community never benefit. They benefit only that little group. And the community is pissed off.

Another source in the report adds that some of the organization heads "are blood-

suckers. All they need is the paycheck. They don't care about the ills and the problems."

The study suggested that overall, the current range of services is insufficient to combat radicalization and recruitment — and to halt the stream of young Minnesotans who want to join ISIS.

"More needs to be done," the report states. "This does not necessarily mean increased funding, but instead, a smarter, more strategic application of funds to programs that reflect the stated needs of the community and are continually delivering evidence that funds are spent on real, immediate efforts and not used as a way to increase personal income and prestige."

Sadik Warfa, deputy director of the Minneapolis-based Global Somali Diaspora, took issue with the criticism of some community organizations in the report. "It's unfair to criticize the Somali organizations because I know many of them don't receive funding," he said. "The problem is bigger than what this report is indicating. This community needs a huge investment: employment, education, parental support, a lot of things."

He added: "As community leaders ... we're doing everything possible to make sure our kids stay positive — without receiving any funds because we see this as our own responsibility."

Other community leaders, who declined to comment on the story because they wanted more time to read the complete study, noted that the report was established to pave the way for the federal Department of Justice's [Countering Violent Extremism \(CVE\) program](#), a controversial initiative [that many members of the Somali community say will target and surveil Muslims](#).

Report dispels recruitment assumptions

In the ongoing debate on recruitment in the Twin Cities, many community leaders often cite the lack of employment and opportunities as the primary factors forcing Somali-Americans to join violent extremists.

The report, however, states that other factors may also be at issue. Namely, that one of the core factors to recruitment is the identity crisis with which some young Somali-Americans struggle:

Recruits from Minneapolis are not necessarily (or even primarily) lacking in opportunities for a successful future in the United States. Take the example of Zakaria Maruf, relayed to us by one of his childhood friends who knew him before he left for Somalia in 2008.

Maruf was socially popular, athletic and succeeding in school. He was also affiliated with the "Somali Hot Boyz." Graduating from high school, Maruf separated from the gang and became increasingly religious, eventually becoming a teacher at a

dugsi [Islamic school] in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

Maruf swapped his gang-centered social structure for one founded on an ultra-strict interpretation of Islam. Based on the findings from this study, it seems clear Maruf did not travel to Somalia because he was poverty-stricken and hopeless but because his identity, based on a narrow interpretation of Islamic beliefs and a vague sense of nationalism, required it of him.

Another assumption the report dispels: that social media is the primary method of recruitment. The main tool for recruiters in the Twin Cities, the report found, is face-to-face interaction, although Facebook and Twitter may play a role in enhancing their interactions.

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-sketchbook/2015/05/new-study-dispels-several-assumptions-about-terrorist-recruitment-twin->

Global terrorist hotspots mapped

May 30, 2015



While there has been a net decrease in levels of terrorist threat across the globe in the past year, there looks to be heightened terrorist activity, war and civil unrest in 2015.

This is according to the 2015 Terrorism & Political Violence Risk Map, published by risk management group, Aon.

The map – and its analysis – is based on empirical data from Risk Advisory Group and Aon, which looks to provide its clients with “telling insights” into their risk exposures across the world.

“Political violence risks are moving to the top of many global companies’ agendas. High profile crises spanned the spectrum of insurable political violence risks in 2014,” the group said.

“Our findings this year suggest 2015 is liable to see similar instability, with heightened terrorism, war, and civil unrest risks present in many regions, including among the developed economies.”

According to the group’s findings, 21 countries have reduced their terrorist risk status, while 13 countries have increased risk, showing a net improvement at a country level.

80% of all terrorist attacks occurred in Nigeria and Somalia

However, with an increase of terrorist activity in the west, eastern Europe, the Middle East and east Asia, more countries had 'conflict perils' added (11) than removed (5).

Notably, although Sub-Saharan Africa doesn't have the highest overall risk coverage, it is considered the highest at risk for terrorist attacks and civil unrest.

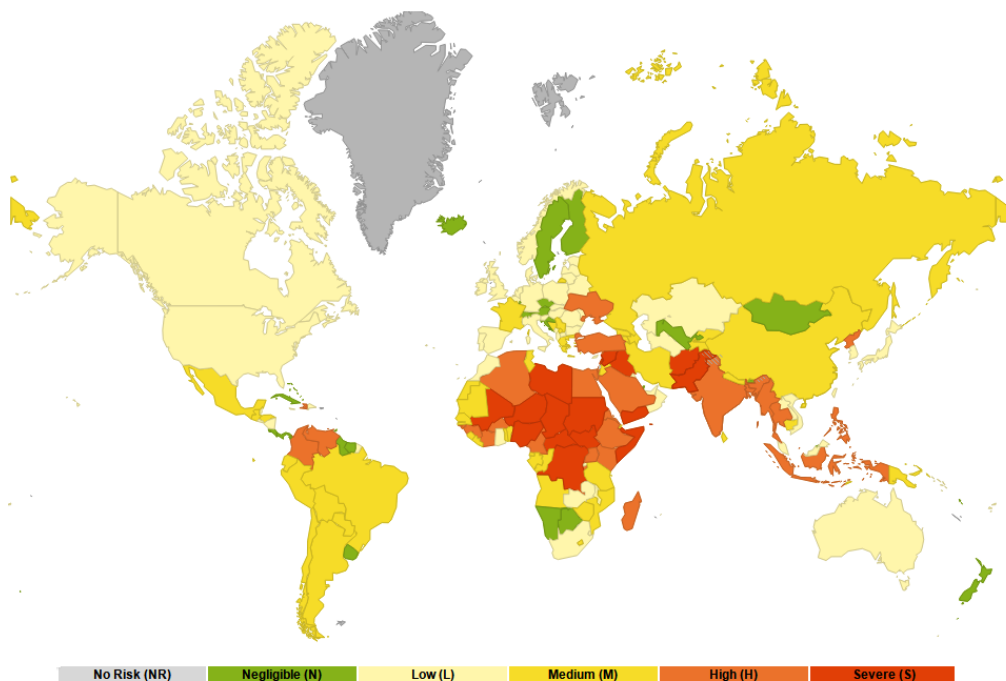
"Nearly 80% of all terrorist attacks in this period occurred in just two countries – Nigeria and Somalia," the report said, noting, however, that Southern Africa (including South Africa) remains fairly low risk.

South Africa has maintained its "low-risk" status, though remains susceptible to strikes, riots, civil commotion and malicious damage.

"The overall country risk level for South Africa remains at low. There is a low threat of terrorism and minimal risk of armed conflict or regime instability," Risk Advisory said.

"Risk Advisory has not recorded any terrorist attacks or plots in the country. However, a strikes and protest peril remains. This is due in large part to regular industrial action by trade unions in a range of sectors."

AON 2015 terrorism map



Terrorism in South Africa

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) released by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in November 2014 placed South Africa among the top 50 nations in the world for terrorist activity.

South Africa ranked 48th, tied with Malaysia, in the index, which tracks and measures incidences of terrorism over time and analyses its changing patterns in terms of geographic activity, methods of attack, organisations involved and the national economic and political context.

While south Africa has no direct terrorist threats or activity, there is a degree of terrorist association, which has lead to the country climbing the GTI from 104th position in 2010, to 48th in 2014.

It was previously reported by Sapa that South Africa has been used by global terror networks since 1990, with an Al-Qaeda presence first arriving 1997.

In February 2015, head of business crime and forensics at Werksmans, Bernard Hotz noted that south Africa was becoming an increasingly attractive destination for terrorists thanks to lawlessness and general government corruption, which opens a wide range of terrorist financing methods.

According to the GTI, the country with the most terrorist activity in the world is Iraq, which saw 6,362 people killed and 14,947 injured in 2,492 terrorist incidents in 2013, the report said.

Iraq was also the country with the biggest increase in deaths, with nearly 4,000 more fatalities from terrorism in 2013 than 2012.

<http://businesstech.co.za/news/general/88640/global-terrorist-hotspots-mapped/>

Africa has the world at its feet but its problems abound

MAY 25 2015



Climate change is only one of the challenges facing Africa as the sub-Saharan Africa region pursues growth which the International Monetary Fund expects to be 5.7% between 2014-19. File picture: REUTERS/SIEGFRIED MODOLA

THE world's eyes have turned to Africa after what many consider to be an unprecedented economic performance. Even the most cautious analysts are so sanguine about the continent's economic prospects that they are willing to bet on its rosy future.

The International Monetary Fund expects sub-Saharan Africa to grow at an average annual rate of 5.7% between 2014-19. It will make the subcontinent among the three fastest-growing regions in the world over that period.

Are these forecasts realistic? Can Africa's growth resurgence be sustained? There are several reasons we should be both optimistic and cautious about its future economic performance.

Military dictatorships, autocracies and one-party systems have overseen growth before. But these governments implemented policies such as unsustainable budget deficits, price controls, haphazard trade protection and wasteful subsidies, which were inimical to sustainable growth.

There is a lot of work still to be done, but many African countries have made substantial improvements in their policy environments. One of the reasons growth stalled in the past was that African leaders were not held to high standards of per-

formance. They are now held to higher levels of accountability.

The Arab spring has awakened African leaders to the fact that the era of impunity and insensitivity to citizens' plight is over.

Africa has witnessed the emergence of entrepreneurs willing to invest in productive sectors such as manufacturing, information technology, agro-business, aviation and services. These entrepreneurs can infuse new dynamism into African economies. This contrasts with the post-independence era's comprador bourgeoisie who depended essentially on state contracts and largesse.

Prospects for growth in Africa are likely to be enhanced by recent and future discoveries of new resources, particularly oil and gas, in the region.

During the past five years or so, significant oil and gas reserves have been found in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia. Mozambique is expected to become the third-largest producer and exporter of liquefied natural gas in Africa, after Nigeria and Algeria. Vast iron-ore reserves have also been discovered in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Future economic growth depends on whether if youth unemployment is addressed. Of Africa's 1,033-billion people, 200-million are between the ages of 15 and 24, making the continent's population the youngest in the world.

Globally, almost a third of this age group will be African by 2050. Youth unemployment will continue to threaten growth, as jobless youngsters engage in unproductive activities such as terrorism and other forms of violence.

Most economic forecasts expect growth to be anaemic in developed economies in the short to medium term, especially in the US and the eurozone. Slow economic growth in developed countries will affect African economies in various ways.

Aid-dependent countries may face declining aid flows as developed countries grapple with domestic fiscal problems. Demand for commodities and energy will also weaken, leading to declining export revenues for Africa's commodity exporters.

Because of its dependence on agriculture and natural resource extraction, Africa suffers more from the effects of climate change and environmental degradation. It also has the least capacity to deal with these challenges. Of the world's 20 countries most at-risk to climate change, 14 are in Africa.

• *Onyeiwu is professor of economics at Allegheny College. This article is based on his book, *Emerging Issues in Contemporary African Economies — Structure, Policy, and Sustainability* and first appeared at www.theconversation.com.*

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/>

Which cities are most at risk of a terror attack?

MAY 21, 2015



What is the likeliest place on earth for a terrorist attack?

Baghdad, according to a [new report that has ranked world cities according to their attack risk](#). Over the last six years, Iraq's capital suffered a stunning 380 terrorist attacks which claimed 1,141 lives, making it the deadliest city in the world, by terror attacks, according to global risk analysis firm Verisk Maplecroft.

Verisk Maplecroft analyzed 1,300 of the world's urban centers and ranked them based on the intensity and frequency of attacks in the past six years. According to its findings, 64 cities around the world are at "extreme risk" of an attack, 27 of which are in the Middle East.

One country dominated the list: Iraq. Eight of the top 20 most targeted cities were in Iraq, including Mosul (No. 2) and Ramadi (No. 3), both of which are now controlled by [Islamic State, or IS](#), known for its brutal killings and attacks. Ramadi fell to IS just last week.

Pakistan also ranked high on the list, with four of its cities in the top 20, including Peshawar (No. 7) and Quetta (No. 9). Cities in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen rounded out the top 20 list.

Where do the US, and other western countries, land on the terror list? The results may be surprising – and comforting – for western audiences accustomed

to around-the-clock coverage and warnings of terrorist attacks.

New York, the target of the 9/11 terror attacks, arguably one of the most brazen terror attacks in history, was deemed 369th most dangerous city in the world. In fact, two other, surprisingly unlikely, US cities, ranked above New York: Las Vegas, which was ranked 184 in the world, and Kansas City at 190. All three US cities were well out of the 'extreme risk' category.

That's because Verisk Maplecroft uses data from the past six years of attacks to calculate likelihood of future attacks. Despite a flurry of news articles about terror threats and regular warnings from law enforcement, the US has suffered relatively few terror attacks compared to other parts of the world.

Europe, in fact, is deadlier, according to the report. Three European cities are at extreme risk of attack, including Luhansk, Ukraine, ranked at 46; Donetsk, Ukraine, at 56; and Grozny, Russia at 54.

Paris skyrocketed up the list, thanks to the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks that left 17 dead in January. The French city soared from 201 before the attacks to 97.

Several global trends have left their mark on the terror risk list. While isolated events like the Charlie Hebdo attack affected rankings, the rise of extremist groups like IS, Boko Haram, and Al Shabab, landed a number of cities on the list. Some 14 African cities are now at increased risk of violence due to the political instability and violence wrought by the militant groups Boko Haram and Al Shabab.

While Africa saw many of its cities land on the terror risk list, South America was relatively absent. Only one city, Cali, Colombia, made the list's "extreme risk" ranking at 59.

Verisk Maplecroft says it released the list to help governments and organizations understand and protect against the risks in their countries and the countries in which they operate.

"[I]t is the risk posed by terrorism in the primary cities of strategic economies, such as Egypt, Israel, Kenya, Nigeria, and Pakistan that has the potential to threaten business and supply chain continuity," the firm said in a statement, with Principal Analyst Charlotte Ingham adding, "An estimated 80% of global GDP is generated from cities."

<http://www.csmonitor.com/>

These Are the Cities Most Likely to Be Hit by a Terrorist Attack

May 21, 2015

Twelve of the world's capital cities are considered at "extreme risk" of an attack

A report by global-risk-analysis firm [Verisk Maplecroft](#) has identified the cities most likely to be hit by a terrorist attack.

Maplecroft analyzed 1,300 of the world's important urban centers and commercial hubs and ranked them based on the intensity and frequency of attacks in the year following February 2014. The report also combined the number and severity of attacks in the previous five years.

Baghdad is considered the most at-risk city in the world, with 1,141 people dying in 380 attacks. In all, seven of the most at-risk cities are all in Iraq, including Mosul ranked at No. 2 and Ramadi at No. 3.

According to the index, 64 cities around the world are at "extreme risk" of an attack, most of these are in the Middle East (27) including cities in Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, Pakistan or Asia.

Of those 64 at extreme risk of a terrorist attack, 12 are capital cities including Egypt's Cairo, Abuja in Nigeria, Nairobi in Kenya and Pakistan's Islamabad.

There are 14 cities in Africa that have seen an increased risk of violence, which has been attributed to militant extremist groups Boko Haram and al-Shabab as well as political instability.

Three cities at extreme risk of attacks are in Europe, with Ukraine's Luhansk ranked at 46, Donetsk at 56, and Grozny in Russia at 54.

The British city most at risk of an attack is Belfast (91), compared with Manchester (398) and London, which is ranked at 400.

After the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris that left 17 people dead in January, the city was considered "high risk" and its ranking soared from 201 before the attacks to 97.

<http://time.com/3891981/terrorist-attack-cities-greatest-risk/>

Burundi

Crise au Burundi: hypothèque sur les élections, l'Afrique de l'Est en sommet

30 Mai 2015



Des manifestants burundais anti-3e mandat du président Nkurunziza pendant un rassemblement à Musaga, un quartier de Bujumbura, le 29 mai 2015 (AFP/LANDRY NSHIMIYE)

En pleine contestation contre le [président](#) burundais Pierre Nkurunziza, la vice-présidente de la Commission électorale a fui à l'étranger, hypothéquant encore un peu plus les prochaines [élections](#) à la veille d'un sommet régional crucial sur la [crise](#) au Burundi.

La vice-présidente de la Commission électorale nationale indépendante (Céni), Spes Caritas Ndironkeye, a fui le Burundi en avion vendredi en début de soirée pour rejoindre Kigali au Rwanda, selon des proches. Elle a laissé une lettre de démission qui doit être remise à la Céni ce samedi.

Une autre commissaire de la Céni, Illuminata Ndabahagamyé, serait également en fuite, mais l'information n'a pas été confirmée. La Céni compte cinq commissaires au total, désignés par le président et approuvés par l'Assemblée nationale. "Ce qui se passe est une catastrophe", a commenté un membre de la Commission sous couvert d'anonymat. "Techniquement, la Céni peut continuer de travailler avec quatre commissaires sur cinq, on peut tenir le coup. Mais si c'est deux

(commissaires qui sont parties), aucune décision ne pourra être prise, et il sera impossible de les remplacer d'ici" à vendredi.

Des élections législatives et communales, déjà repoussées de 10 jours sous la pression de la communauté internationale, sont prévues vendredi, suivies du scrutin présidentiel le 26 juin, puis des sénatoriales le 17 juillet.

Cette défection est un nouveau revers pour le camp présidentiel, à moins d'une semaine du début théorique des scrutins et alors que le Burundi est plongé depuis un mois dans une grave crise politique, avec des manifestations quotidiennes pour contester la candidature de M. Nkurunziza, au pouvoir depuis 2005, à un troisième mandat.

Jeudi, l'influente Église catholique et l'Union européenne avaient annoncé à quelques heures d'intervalles leur retrait des élections, l'UE jugeant notamment que les conditions actuelles et "l'atmosphère de peur et d'intimidation généralisée" ne permettaient pas la tenue de scrutins "crédibles".

La veille, l'opposition avait jugé "impossible" la tenue des élections en raison du "désordre" et de l'insécurité, appelant la communauté internationale à ne pas "cautionner" un "hold-up électoral" au risque d'"une prévisible guerre civile".

- 'Radicalisation' du pouvoir -

Samedi, l'opposant Agathon Rwasa a de nouveau demandé un report des scrutins du 5 juin, qui, si ils se tenaient à cette date, seraient selon lui une "mascarade". Dans un nouveau rapport, International Crisis Group (ICG) a également réclamé un report "immédiat des élections", s'inquiétant de la "spirale de la violence" en cours et de la "radicalisation" du camp présidentiel. Human Rights Watch (HRW) a pour sa part dénoncé la "riposte meurtrière" et la "répression" policière lors des manifestations.

Dans ce contexte, il semble impossible que ces élections puissent se dérouler dans de "très bonnes conditions", comme l'affirmait vendredi le ministre de l'Intérieur, Edouard Nduwimana: les manifestations anti-Nkurunziza ne faiblissent pas, avec leur lot d'affrontements et de tirs de sommation des policiers, et les incidents de sécurité se multiplient.

Vendredi, un manifestant a de nouveau été tué en province, et deux grenades ont explosé en plein Bujumbura sans faire de victimes.

Samedi matin, un impressionnant dispositif policier était de nouveau déployé dans tous les quartiers contestataires de la capitale. Des petits groupes de manifestants ont néanmoins tenté de se rassembler, notamment à Cibitoke et Kanyosha. Le parti présidentiel CNDD-FDD a pu organiser sans incident un meeting dans le quartier de Kanyosha.

Les leaders du mouvement anti-troisième mandat ont appelé à une mobilisation maximale pour "dire clairement à Nkurunziza que le match est fini", en un "moment décisif" à moins de 24 heures du sommet de Dar-Es-Salaam, en Tanzanie, où les chefs d'État d'Afrique de l'Est se réunissent une nouvelle fois sur la crise. Tous les yeux seront tournés vers ces présidents, qui devraient demander un report des élections à défaut de prendre clairement position sur le nœud du problème: le troisième mandat.

L'ONU a dit vendredi espérer que le sommet donnerait un "nouveau souffle" au difficile "dialogue politique" interburundais en cours depuis deux semaines. On ignorait samedi si le président Nkurunziza ira en personne en Tanzanie. Le premier sommet, le 13 mai, avait été bouleversé par une tentative de coup d'Etat militaire. Le retour de M. Nkurunziza dans son pays avait précipité l'échec du putsch, sans étouffer la fronde dans les rues.

Le sommet s'est ouvert dans l'après-midi, au niveau des ministres des Affaires étrangères, selon un correspondant de l'AFP. Les chefs d'Etats se réuniront dimanche.

<http://www.leparisien.fr/>

Kenya

Kenya: attaque meurtrière des shebab contre des policiers

26/05/2015



Photo fournie par les services de l'Union africaine et des Nations unies le 1er octobre 2012 montrant le contingent kenyan de la force de l'Union africaine en Somalie (AU-UN/AFP/Archives / Stuart Price)

Des policiers kényans ont été victimes d'une nouvelle attaque meurtrière des islamistes shebab près de Garissa, dans l'est du Kenya, où les insurgés somaliens avaient massacré près de 150 personnes début avril.

Revendiquant l'attaque menée "avec succès contre les troupes chrétiennes du Kenya", les shebab ont affirmé avoir fait plus de 20 morts.

Les autorités kényanes ont de leur côté fait état d'un mort et de quatre blessés et le ministre de l'Intérieur, Joseph Nkaissery, a qualifié de pure "propagande" le bilan avancé par les islamistes.

"L'armée et la police contrôlent totalement la situation et une opération majeure est en cours", a assuré le chef de la police, Joseph Kipchirchir Boinnet, dans un communiqué publié dans la soirée. "Tous les policiers manquants ont été retrouvés (...)", a-t-il affirmé.

Selon des sources policière et sécuritaire, les policiers ont été victimes d'une embuscade alors qu'ils étaient en patrouille. L'attaque est survenue en deux temps dans la nuit de lundi à mardi près de la frontière somalienne dans les environs du village de Yumbis, à quelque 70 km au nord-est de Garissa.

Selon ces mêmes sources, un engin piégé a d'abord explosé au passage d'une patrouille de police, suivi de brefs échanges de tirs. Un convoi de quatre véhicules de police a été envoyé en renfort et est tombé dans une embuscade. Les quatre véhicules ont été détruits par des tirs de lance-roquette RPG des assaillants.

Une source policière s'exprimant sous couvert d'anonymat a expliqué que l'incident avait eu lieu "dans la zone la plus isolée de Garissa, pas très loin de la frontière avec la Somalie", justifiant les "difficultés à avoir des informations précises".

- Raids shebab -

L'attaque attribuée aux shebab est intervenue quelques jours seulement après un nouveau déploiement de forces de sécurité kényanes dans la région, visée par plusieurs raids des islamistes liés à Al-Qaïda ces dernières semaines.

<http://www.boursorama.com/>

Kenya



Kenya (AFP / INFOGRAPHIE)

La semaine dernière, le village de Yumbis lui-même avait déjà été le théâtre d'une incursion shebab: selon la presse kényane, les insurgés, lourdement armés, avaient donné une leçon d'islamisme aux habitants et hissé leur drapeau sur un poste de police laissé à l'abandon. Un incident similaire avait eu lieu dans une mosquée de la zone quelques jours plus tôt.

La région de Garissa, comme les autres zones kényanes frontalières de la Somalie - Mandera, Wajir et jusqu'à Lamu et Mombasa sur la côte -, sont le théâtre d'attaques récurrentes, d'ampleur variable, des shebab.

Les islamistes, qui avaient aussi revendiqué l'attaque sanglante du centre commercial Westgate de Nairobi (67 morts en septembre 2013), ont promis une guerre impitoyable au Kenya tant qu'il ne retirerait pas ses troupes lancées dans le sud somalien à leur poursuite fin 2011.

Voisines d'une Somalie livrée au chaos depuis plus de deux décennies, dont elles sont séparées par 700 km de frontière poreuse, ces régions de l'Est kényan, pauvres, longtemps négligées, peuplées majoritairement de somali et de swahili musulmans stigmatisés, sont devenues une cible privilégiée des islamistes: ils y trouvent relais, terreau propice à la radicalisation et pour toute opposition un appareil sécuritaire souvent faible et corrompu.

Depuis l'attaque contre l'université de Garissa le 2 avril, dans laquelle 142 étudiants ont trouvé la mort, la zone est restée particulièrement instable.

Pour tenter d'endiguer les attaques islamistes - en 2014, des raids sanglants menés à Mandera et Lamu avaient déjà fait plus de 160 morts -, les autorités ont promis de renforcer la sécurité, et même de construire un mur ou des pans de mur le long de la frontière pour empêcher les incursions shebab.

Ces annonces laissent sceptiques les analystes, convaincus que des cellules shebab sont déjà implantées au Kenya, où elles recrutent et opèrent sans avoir besoin de passer la frontière. Les observateurs dénoncent même, en général, une politique kényane contre-productive en matière de contre-terrorisme, et notamment une stigmatisation des populations somali et musulmanes qui ne fait qu'exacerber les tensions.

Libya

Isis: Mokhtar Belmokhtar defection shows the deadly threat of Libya

May 21, 2015



Mokhtar Belmokhtar (Reuters)

The notorious Mokhtar Belmokhtar (aka Mr. Marlboro) hit the headlines yet again this week, after his group the **Mourabitounes** released an audio message pledging allegiance to the Islamic State (Isis).

Belmokhtar immediately released his own media statement, claiming that this was in fact not true. But a day later, on 19 May, the group's co-leader Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui released yet another audio message proclaiming that they now held a European hostage, a Romanian, and ended with a repeated pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State.

Clearly the Mourabitounes are falling along the same Islamic State fault lines that many other traditionally Al-Qaeda-aligned groups are experiencing - whether to abandon AQC's weakened leadership or to team up with the more successful Islamic State.

Libya is the Perfect Stronghold

Belmokhtar was the mastermind of the brazen 2013 attack on the British Petroleum (BP) gas refinery in the southeastern Algerian site of In Amenas, famous for taking at least 570 people hostage, both Algerians and foreigners, in a four-day stand-off.

Mr. Marlboro, already a hero to the North African jihadist community, solidified his hero status after the success of the In Amenas attack, winning the hearts of ji-

hadists no matter whether they were aligned with Al-Qaeda or Isis.

It is commonly known that Mr. Marlboro has been residing in Libya for well over a year; what is less commonly known is that he is there under the protection of Ansar al Sharia in Libya. The combination of a multitude of militant groups, well established and organised criminal networks, and the general lawlessness of the area, places Libya in an ideal position both logistically and ideologically for the global jihadi cause.



Image: Sirte, Libya celebrates after IS announcement of the fall of Ramadi circulating 19 May 2015. TRAC

The two-fold consequence

Libya's significance to groups like the IS is not founded in how much territory any specific group controls or how many fighters are present in those groups, but rather in the absence of any form of governance. This vacuum enables IS to coerce support, establish safe havens, create supply networks, and engage in organised criminal activities, such as human smuggling, at will.

The rate of refugees coming from Libya to the European Union is alarming, and presents Libya as a very unique two-fold threat, both regionally (further destabilising North Africa) and transnationally (on the shores of the EU).

The growing threat to Europe through the illegal migration from North Africa (most notably Libya) to the shores of Europe (most notably Italy), combined with IS inroads into Libya, makes the fragile nation a complex double threat. The confusion over the true allegiance of the Mourabitunes belies the larger problem that Libya poses in general. The Romanian hostage situation demonstrates the willing-

ness and ability of the group to target Europeans. It is not beyond the imagination of IS to send full boats carrying its operatives disguised as refugees.

Unchecked refugees sailing off Libyan shores can no longer be ignored as a security concern. Until the authorities are sure that those who disembarked on European soil are genuine refugees seeking a better life and not to implement terrorist schemes, the refugees will be a worry.

IS has vocally threatened Europe many times, but specifically highlights Libya's convenient proximity to Europe in the recent Coptic Christian execution video entitled: *A Message Signed with Blood To the Nation of the Cross*. The executioner warns "*And today we are on the South of Rome on the land of Islam, Libya, sending another message*" minutes before orchestrating the mass simultaneous beheadings.

Veryan Khan and Jasmine Opperman are senior directors for the Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC), one of the world's largest electronic compendiums for data and analysis of terrorist groups, activities, trends and up to date developments. By subscription, TRAC serves corporations, governments and military, universities, the media, and professionals. For complete information see www.trackingterrorism.org or follow the group on Twitter @TRACterrorism.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/>

Nigeria

Obasanjo: Why It's Taking Too Long to Crush Boko Haram

28 May 2015



Former President Olusegun Obasanjo

AfDB: African economies to bounce back in 2015

By Kunle Aderinokun in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has said it is taking a long time to crush Boko Haram members because the military, which he alleged had high ranking officers who are corrupt, was also not equipped to deal with terrorists.

Obasanjo spoke on Tuesday night in a panel discussion on 'Development and Security: Dealing with New Threats' at the ongoing 2015 Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

He, however, expressed confidence that the incoming administration of Muhammadu Buhari will deal with the Boko Haram insurgency decisively.

Obasanjo was quick to add that Boko Haram will not be dealt with using the military alone but the government also has to resolve the issues of underdevelopment and poverty ravaging most part of the Northern region.

According to him, "The military was not adequately equipped to deal with terrorism and there was corruption in the high ranks of the military. I believe Boko Haram will be dealt but it will not be dealt with only by military force because we have to deal with the big problems of underdevelopment and poverty. But if you don't

do that and you keep on hanging those problems, they will be suppressed for a while and it will be a matter of years, then you will begin to have Boko Haram in one form or the other rearing its ugly head again.”

Also speaking, Chairperson, African Union, Mrs. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, stated that there was an urgent need to address the issues of underdevelopment, unemployment and poverty across Africa.

She pointed out that with the level of unemployment in the continent, it is fast becoming explosive.

According to her, “Africa is full of young people. If we don’t invest in them, we’re sitting on a time-bomb.”

Pointing out that, as it currently stands, countries and regions are tackling the issue of terrorism individually, Dlamini-Zuma called on governments to come together as one and solve the issue in a more holistic manner.

Earlier, at the opening ceremony, the outgoing AfDB President, Donald Kaberuka, stated that over the last 10 years, the bank had committed \$28 billion to infrastructure, of which \$11 billion was dedicated to energy, \$11 billion for transport, \$4 billion for water and \$2 billion for information and communications technology.

While saying those were significant amounts that almost double what the bank had done in the previous 40 years, in terms of Africa’s needs, he however lamented that the gap remained large.

Given this scenario, Kaberuka noted that “going forward, two things would be pivotal: Innovation: getting project ready and de-risking them to attract additional private capital, and further deregulation in the energy sector; including reform of energy subsidies, strengthening the balance sheets of the national off-takers and truly independent regulators.”

He expressed confidence that the bank would take the lead in infrastructure, to show that Africa is ready for business.

The outgoing president paid glowing tributes to the founding fathers and staff of the organisation in its 50 years.

He said he had been able to learn a lot in the 10 years that he served as President of the Bank, noting that the bank’s return to Côte d’Ivoire from Tunisia in September 2014 should not be seen as a celebration, but a solemn event, and a time to scan the future.

Citing Nelson Mandela, he said: “After climbing a hill, one finds that there are many more higher hills to climb.”

Meanwhile, the 2015 Africa economic outlook has predicted that the continent’s

economies would record robust growth in 2015 expanding by 4.5 per cent in 2015, and may reach 5 per cent in 2016, compared to 3.9 per cent registered in 2014 and 3.3 per cent globally.

This, the outlook noted, signaled robust growth despite ongoing global and regional headwinds, including depressed commodity prices and the lagged impact of the Ebola epidemic.

Falling global oil prices are also expected to support growth among net oil importers by boosting consumer demand and competitiveness and mitigating inflationary pressures.

Moreover, the report themed: 'Regional Development and Spatial Inclusion' showed that most African economies now boasts of much greater economic diversification – with a shift in the African economy, with agriculture, construction and services playing a bigger role than before.

This overall positive outlook is, however, overshadowed by the spillover effects of the deadly Ebola disease outbreak in West Africa, which have dampened the region's prospects in the tourism, service and aviation sectors due to the perceived risk to exposure.

This is in addition to depressed commodity prices and uncertain global conditions, the consequences of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa as well as domestic political uncertainties that could delay an expected return to pre-2008 levels of growth.

"African countries have shown considerable resilience in the face of global economic diversity. For future growth to be sustainable and transformative will require that its benefits are shared more equitably among the population and that governments continue to pursue policies that promote economic stability."

Acting Chief Economist and Vice-President of AfDB, Steve Kayizzi Mugerwa, said.

The report is a joint publication by African Development Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

According to the report, total foreign investment in the continent is expected to reach \$73.5 billion in 2015, targeting consumer markets in large urban centres.

Remittances from Africa's diaspora have increased six-fold since 2000 and will reach \$64.6 billion by the end of 2015. African sovereign borrowing, on the other hand, is rising rapidly, indicating increasing investor confidence, the report shows.

However, it cautioned that this new source of financing must be accompanied by macroeconomic prudence to ensure that sustainable debt levels are maintained.

Human development in Africa is improving, although indicators show that poverty

remains widespread in both low- and middle-income countries.

“Inclusive and sustainable growth is a fundamental aspect of Africa’s post-2015 development agenda for economic and social transformation,” said Chief Economist and Head of the Strategy and Analysis Team at the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, Ayodele Odusola.

He added: “We need to invest in building economic opportunities, including at the local level. And especially those of young women and men who are the architects of tomorrow’s Africa.”

The report showed that economic gains had been uneven across regions and within countries and, despite high growth rates, are vulnerable to setbacks from health, environmental and social risks.

Specifically, the report showed that the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease had a severe impact on the populations and economies of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and their neighbours in West Africa, with the fight of these countries exacerbated by the uneven international response.

It underscored that the Ebola epidemic highlighted the inadequacy of social service delivery in many African countries, especially health services, and the fragility of institutional structures.

“An important lesson is that the enhancement of equity, social protection and timely responses to domestic disasters cannot be accomplished without strong and accountable domestic institutions,” the report also stated.

Although the level of social tensions and violence receded in 2014 in many parts of Africa, the consequences of war are still evident, with lingering conflicts in the Central African Republic, Libya, Nigeria and South Sudan. The impact on populations and livelihoods has been severe.

“There is an obvious and urgent need to foster more inclusive growth and broader political participation to reduce the deprivation that tends to stoke rebellions and conflicts,” the report said.

<http://www.thisdaylive.com/>

Boko Haram Video Indicates Foreign Fighters Within Top Ranks Of Nigerian Militant Group: Report

May 27 2015



Nigerian soldiers held up a Boko Haram flag that they had seized in the recently retaken town of Damasak, Nigeria, March 18, 2015. [Reuters/Emmanuel Braun](#)

The Nigerian army has analyzed video footage found in captured Boko Haram camps that indicates foreign fighters hold positions of power within the Nigerian militant group. The gruesome footage, reported Wednesday by [Reuters](#), also showed amputations, stoning and lashing in the most convincing evidence yet to support the claim that Boko Haram has foreign influence within its ranks.

“The [foreigners] carry arms and fight alongside the other terrorists,” a senior military source, who declined to be identified, told Reuters in Abuja. “They are also experts and trainers.”

The half-hour video showed Boko Haram leaders in front of a large crowd ordering judgments based on the Islamist extremist group’s strict interpretation of Shariah law. A man whose face was covered by a white turban stood in the middle of the crowd and spoke in Sudanese Arabic. Another man wearing a black turban stood close by, speaking in Arabic and nodding in agreement, while another waved a Boko Haram flag behind them. Turbans in this style are not typical in northeast Ni-

geria, Reuters reported.

“God ordered all believers to enforce his punishments,” the man said to the camera while standing near a preacher who shouted into a loudspeaker in Nigeria’s northern Hausa language. “God ordered us to cut off the hand of the thief and flog the adulterer and adulteress.”

The crowd cheered as men and women were lashed, while others had their hands amputated. One man was stoned to death after being buried up to his head in a pit. There is no time stamp or date on the video, but the Nigerian military reportedly believed the gathering took place in southeastern Borno state in or near the town of Gwoza, Boko Haram’s former headquarters.

“It helps document their atrocities as evidence in the event of any trial,” a senior military source told Reuters. “To understand their pattern or mode of operation ... and equipment in their possession with other information, is vital for intelligence.”

Nigerian troops found [thousands of euros](#) on the dead body of a Boko Haram commander in Borno state near the border with Cameroon this week. Nigeria Defense spokesman Maj. Gen. Chris Olukolade said the terrorist kingpin is believed to be of foreign descent and was among several Boko Haram fighters killed over the weekend during a foiled attack on Nigerian Special Forces in Mafa district, according to [local media reports](#).

Boko Haram, which loosely translates in Hausa as “Western education is sinful,” pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, also known as ISIS or ISIL. ISIS [accepted](#) the Nigerian militant group’s pledge in March. Boko Haram launched an insurgency in northeast Nigeria in 2009 to establish a state under strict Shariah law. Since then, more than 15,000 people have died in Nigeria, and nearly 1.5 million have been displaced, according to the [United Nations refugee agency](#)

<http://www.ibtimes.com/>

Somalia

Somalis aware, not alarmed of terror recruiting risks

May 30, 2015

Social media, Twin Cities ties put local Somali youth within reach of ISIS recruiters, but FBI and community leaders see no evidence of targeting here.



(Photo: Elisha Page / Argus Leader)

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Said Yusuf stands near the front counter of his grocery store on West Sixth Street and nods his head.

Yes, yes, he's heard about the steady exodus of young Somali Muslim men and women out of the Twin Cities to join Islamic terrorist groups overseas.

Yes, he knows that federal officials suspect Minneapolis and St. Paul are fast becoming the primary hub for the Islamic State, also known as ISIL or ISIS, and its growing jihadist recruitment efforts here in the United States.

But what of Sioux Falls, the native Somalian is asked? What of the hundreds of Somali refugees who have been relocated here by Lutheran Social Services — only 250 miles from the Twin Cities — and fears that their children might be targeted by

ISIL recruiters?

This time, Yusuf does not nod.

"I know the people here," he says, and terrorist recruitment is not a fear they live with, at least not compared to their fellow countrymen in the Twin Cities.

[Sioux Falls has about 1,600 to 1,800 Somalis](#), though "it's difficult to tell as (they) have a tendency to migrate to Minnesota on a frequent basis," said Tim Jurgens, director of Lutheran Social Services' Center for New Americans.

Yet while they might not be overly concerned about the threat, they aren't ignoring the conversation, either, say those who interact with them on a daily basis.

"I do think there is some concern, not just with the Somalis but the Sudanese and other groups locally as well," said Christy Nicolaisen, director of the Multi-Cultural Center. "I think they worry about how some are influenced by what is going on over there. Maybe not worry, but I do think there is discussion."

At the African Community Center on East 10th Street, agency president Hirsi Mohamed said the FBI has stopped by his office twice to talk. He's told them that his organization neither sees nor hears of problems in Sioux Falls, "but that we have to keep our eyes on those kinds of things."

The use of Twitter in terrorism recruitment

Three weeks ago, FBI director James Comey described how ISIL recruiters operating from safe havens in Syria were using Twitter and other social media platforms to direct messages to the smartphones of "disturbed people" who could be pushed to launch assaults on U.S. targets.

"It's like the devil sitting on their shoulders, saying 'kill, kill, kill,' " Comey said in a meeting with reporters.

The increasingly sophisticated use of social media by ISIL means Sioux Falls could just as easily be a target for recruitment as Minneapolis, said Kyle Loven, media coordinator for the FBI in the Twin Cities.

"I don't think geography is a protection nor a barrier any longer with respect to terrorism recruitment," Loven said.

Yet while acknowledging that the FBI has counterterrorism work going on in South Dakota and North Dakota, he said he knew of no specific concerns in the Sioux Falls areas.

In the Twin Cities, a steady stream of young people started returning to Somalia in 2006 to join a militant group there called al-Shabaab.

From 2006 to 2011, at least 27 Somali-Americans disappeared from Minneapolis and went off to fight in their homeland. Justin Hienz, who co-authored a report re-

leased in April through the University of Southern California that explored the ongoing terrorist recruitment and radicalization in the Twin Cities Somali community, said many of those young people were drawn back to their homeland by talk of rebuilding it.

"They were Muslim. They were interested in pushing back against Kenya and Ethiopia's influence in their country. So there was this nationalistic pull," said Hienz, who is based out of Washington, D.C.

Originally, al-Shabaab was perceived as a political movement and not a terrorist one, he said. But by the end of 2013, the flow out of the Twin Cities no longer was to Somalia but to Syria — the result of a relationship that had developed between al-Shabaab and ISIL.

In the past 17 months, at least 11 men and one woman have left Minnesota for Syria, law enforcement officials report. Another dozen or so either attempted to travel there before being intercepted or are believed to be preparing to go.

"Once they stopped going to Somalia, parents and friends (in the Twin Cities) couldn't understand the draw," Hienz said. "Why go to Syria, where they have no ethnic or cultural ties? Why was there this shift in destination?"

Assimilation

and self-identity

The answers, he said, probably go to issues of assimilation and self-identity — and help to explain why the Twin Cities are struggling so much with terrorist recruitment when smaller communities such as Sioux Falls aren't.

Minneapolis is unique, Hienz said, in that it has the largest Somali census in the country, one that is constantly replenished with first- and second-generation Somalis just leaving foreign refugee camps.

It is a population that never fully assimilates, in part because the Somalis tend to congregate in closed communities, Hienz said.

Two Somali malls in Minneapolis look like they're right out of Mogadishu with their narrow walkways and stalls, he said. There are charter schools filled with nothing but Somali students.

In such an environment, home and cultural life tend to remain largely tied to the old world. Especially for those between 16 years old and the mid-20s who are not well assimilated and living on the margins of society, it can be difficult to know what your identity is in the world, Hienz said.

"On the one hand, you're American, and on other hand, Somali. Accepted by both. Rejected by both," he said. "Say someone is confused about who they are, and a skilled recruiter comes along and says: 'You're like me. You're not American. Look

at how they insult your family.' That lack of assimilation is when you have the opportunity to shape an identity toward being a freedom fighter."

It's probably less likely in Sioux Falls, Hienz said, because there are no charter schools here, no isolated Somali neighborhoods and no replica malls, though Somalis like Said Yusuf do operate their own stores.

"We're a small community. Everyone knows each other. That is the difference here," Yusuf's wife, Sofia Mohamed, said.

Demographic differences

Besides, Somali children are much younger in Sioux Falls, which is something else that separates this community from the Twin Cities, Yusuf said.

For at least one segment of the Somali population in the city — the Bantu — ISIL poses few concerns. The Bantu were not originally native to Somalia. They are descendants of people from various Bantu ethnic groups who were captured in southeastern Africa and sold into slavery in Somalia and other areas during the 19th century Arab slave trade.

A minority that was marginalized in the East Africa nation, "we would never be recruited by ISIS," said Suleiman Khamis, who is among 24 Somali Bantu families now living in Sioux Falls. "So I am sure the Bantu are not involved. ... in what is happening in Minneapolis right now."

'There is not any way we can deal with it'

Khamis does worry, however, about how white Sioux Falls perceives his people as concerns about Islamic State recruitment continue to play out across the country.

"Every time we see the news, what is happening, because we came from Somalia, that is something that always worries us," Khamis said. "Right now, there is not any way we can deal with it. We don't have the experience to know how to deal with it."

The hope is they don't have to. But this is not a city that is sitting back and waiting to see what happens. Hirsi Mohamed at the African Community Center said his organization is talking to the school district about helping with tutoring programs for African refugee students, especially at the high school level.

He also is interested in the possibility of workshops in the future that bring educators, parents and students together to focus on citizenship, leadership and greater integration into the community. For the reality is, the better African students can do in school, the more they are assimilated into Sioux Falls, the less likely ISIL will ever find a recruiting ground in this city.

"We're trying to make sure this community will be safe," Mohamed said.

So far, at least according to the FBI and others who are paying attention, there's no reason to believe it isn't.

<http://www.argusleader.com/>

South Africa

L'Afrique du Sud, refuge de jihadistes ?

29 MAI 2015



La Britannique Samantha Lewthwaite, la «Veuve blanche», soupçonnée d'avoir pris part à l'attentat contre un centre commercial au Kenya, et titulaire d'un passeport sud-africain. (Photo Interpol.)

RÉCIT

Le pays, réputé tolérant, pourrait servir de base arrière pour les terroristes, notamment les shebab somaliens. D'autant que la lutte antiterroriste n'est pas la priorité de Pretoria.

L'Afrique du Sud serait-elle une plaque tournante du jihadisme ? C'est une question qui revient ponctuellement dans la presse locale. «*La présence de cellules islamistes en Afrique du Sud n'est pas neuve, dit le professeur Hussein Solomon, chercheur à l'Université de l'Etat-libre. Dans les années 90, le Hezbollah avait des camps d'entraînement dans le pays. Et il y a des preuves de l'implantation d'Al-Qaeda en Afrique du Sud dès 1997.*» Récemment, la Britannique Samantha Lewthwaite, alias la «Veuve blanche», qui est soupçonnée d'avoir pris part à l'attaque sanglante du centre commercial Westgate à Nairobi en septembre 2013, a utilisé un passeport sud-africain. «*Elle a passé deux ans en Afrique du Sud et faisait transiter de l'argent du Royaume-Uni vers des Somaliens installés dans le pays, membres des shebab [rébellion islamiste somalienne, ndlr], dit Hussein Solomon. Mais aujourd'hui, personne ne semble se soucier de ce qu'il est advenu de son réseau.*»

«Émotionnel». En Afrique du Sud, les musulmans en général sont intégrés dans la société, qui prône la tolérance religieuse, ainsi que dans la vie politique et culturelle. Ils représentent 2,3% de la population sud-africaine (pour environ 8% en France), et leur présence dans le pays remonte à plus de trois cents ans. *«Nous devons nous assurer que les problèmes de l'Europe ne deviennent pas les nôtres... Notre culture et nos valeurs publiques sont très différentes de celle de la France»*, écrivait l'éditorialiste sud-africain Max du Preez, après l'attaque de *Charlie Hebdo*.

Alors que des nations s'unissent contre le terrorisme islamiste, la politique de l'Afrique du Sud sur la question est moins virulente. Officiellement, le pays n'est pas impliqué dans des conflits armés avec des jihadistes et n'est donc, en théorie, pas une cible privilégiée pour des représailles. Bien sûr, le gouvernement condamne les attentats, mais cela n'a pas entraîné de réponse politique tangible. Et le Congrès national africain (ANC), le parti au pouvoir, longtemps qualifié d'organisation terroriste sous l'apartheid, reste attaché à l'idée que le terroriste de l'un est souvent le héros de l'autre.

«Le débat est émotionnel. Et il y a une perception qu'il existe une intention cachée occidentale derrière la lutte contre le jihadisme, pense Anneli Botha, chercheuse sur le terrorisme à l'Institut des études de sécurité de Pretoria. Surtout, tant qu'il n'y a pas d'attaque directe sur le territoire sud-africain, le gouvernement ne considère pas cela comme une priorité.»

Les Etats-Unis, la Russie et le Royaume-Uni auraient pourtant, à plusieurs reprises, prévenu l'Afrique du Sud d'une menace terroriste. Le mois dernier, des fuites de documents confidentiels relevant de la sécurité de l'Etat ont été rendues publiques par la chaîne de télévision Al-Jezira. Selon ces sources, les services de renseignements sud-africains, en collaboration avec d'autres pays, auraient déjoué au moins deux attentats-suicides d'Al-Qaeda ou des shebab en Afrique du Sud entre 2007 et 2010. Un centre communautaire juif du Cap était notamment ciblé. Le projet d'attentat a apparemment été déjoué après des écoutes téléphoniques entre un membre des shebab en Somalie et des ressortissants somaliens en Afrique du Sud.

«Rumeurs». Par ailleurs, toujours selon ces documents, «Jihadi John» (Mohammed Emwazi, de son vrai nom), le combattant britannique et bourreau de l'Etat islamique, identifié en février sur plusieurs vidéos comme étant l'auteur de plusieurs décapitations d'otages, aurait tenté de se réfugier en Afrique du Sud en 2009. Mais il aurait été stoppé à Dar es-Salaam, en Tanzanie, alors qu'il essayait de prendre un avion pour Johannesburg, sans passeport.

La chercheuse Anneli Botha a interviewé un membre des shebab, qui a participé au double attentat de Kampala, la capitale ougandaise, en juillet 2010. *«Il avait vécu deux ans au Cap, y avait reçu une instruction religieuse et était en possession d'un passeport sud-africain»*, explique Botha. Pour elle, la corruption de l'administration fait de l'Afrique du Sud une place de choix pour se procurer illégalement des pa-

piers d'identité. Elle doute cependant de la présence de camps d'entraînement, comme suggéré par des médias nationaux. *«Cela fait vingt ans que ce genre de rumeurs circulent. Je pense que la menace se situe surtout dans l'utilisation du territoire sud-africain comme un refuge, un lieu où se procurer des documents de voyage, ou prêcher des discours radicaux dans les mosquées. Et en l'absence de réaction, plus la perception sera grande qu'il est facile d'opérer*

<http://www.liberation.fr/>

International Organizations

UN

Foreign Terrorist Fighters Come from more than 100 UN Member States



May 26, 2015 – More than half of the UN's 193 member states are generating fighters for Al Qaeda and the Islamic State with some 25,000 recruits joining the terrorist groups from countries as diverse as Trinidad and Tajikistan, according to a new report from a United Nations expert group.

The report, from the Security Council team monitoring sanctions on individuals associated with Al Qaeda, says that six UN member states have generated more than 1,000 foreign fighters each while another 42 have generated more than 100 such fighters each.

"Open-source analysis by the team indicates an increase of 71 per cent in reported foreign terrorist fighters worldwide between the middle of 2014 and March 2015, in part owing to more comprehensive internal reporting by Member States and greater open-source data," the authors state. "There has also been a sharp increase (from 70 to 733 per cent) in fighters from a number of European and Asian Member States."

The destination countries for the majority of foreign fighters are Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, with smaller numbers present in Yemen, Libya, Pakistan, the Sahel countries, Somalia and the Philippines, according to the report while origin countries for

large number of foreign fighters include Russia, Tunisia, Morocco and France. Smaller numbers are coming from countries that have no previous association with terrorism including Finland, the Maldives and Trinidad.

There is no standard profile for those that leave their home country to join terrorists groups, according to the report, other than they tend to be males between the ages of 15 and 35, though some are older veterans who fought in Chechnya and Afghanistan and returned home.

For some countries such as France, those joining terrorist groups often have a record of petty crime while in Britain, there are clusters of recruitment associated with certain towns and schools. In other cases, criminal networks, such as ethnic Chechens in Austria, are associated with recruitment.

Libya has become a major training ground for foreign fighters, the report says.

The Security Council is set to discuss the findings on Friday.

<http://untribune.com/foreign-terrorist-fighters-come-from-more-than-100-un-member-states/>

Interpol: Islamic State group gains support in Africa, Asia

May 29, 2015

UNITED NATIONS — A growing number of extremist groups from Africa to south-east Asia are shifting their allegiance to the Islamic State group, leading to greater risks for "cross-pollination" among conflicts beyond Syria and Iraq, the head of Interpol said Friday.

Juergen Stock cited this shift as an emerging trend at a U.N. Security Council meeting along with changing travel methods being used by foreign fighters seeking to join groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaida.

Stock was a keynote speaker at a meeting attended by half a dozen ministers including U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson to assess progress in implementing a U.S.-sponsored resolution adopted last September requiring all countries to prevent the recruitment and transport of would-be foreign fighters preparing to join extremist groups.

On Friday, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement calling for a significant increase in border controls, improved cooperation at all levels "including preventing terrorists from exploiting technology, communications and resources."

Johnson said the United States will be developing a new passenger data-screening and analysis system within the next 12 months which will be made available to the international community at no cost for both commercial and government organizations to use.

In a report obtained by The Associated Press on April 1, the panel of experts monitoring U.N. sanctions against al-Qaida said the number of fighters leaving home to join al-Qaida and the Islamic State group in Iraq, Syria and other countries has spiked to more than 25,000 from over 100 nations. The panel said its analysis indicated the number of "foreign terrorist fighters" worldwide increased by 71 percent between mid-2014 and March 2015.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said most are young men motivated by extremist ideologies but he called for an examination of the reasons why more women and girls are joining the groups as well. He said he plans to present a plan of action to prevent violent extremism to the General Assembly later this year.

"No country can tackle this challenge alone," Ban said.

The Security Council Counterterrorism Committee said in a report Friday that it identified an initial 67 countries most affected by "foreign terrorist fighters," examined what 21 countries have done to address the threat and found that only five required advanced information on airplane passengers. It said most engage in international cooperation and nearly all have taken steps to prohibit incitement to

terrorism under their criminal laws but only 13 countries had criminalized the financing of terrorism.

Interpol's Stock urged the 193 U.N. member states to share more information, "and share it even better," stressing that the international police organization database includes information from fewer than 100 countries and just over 4,000 names.

"Intelligence is crossing borders, but at a much slower pace than foreign terrorist fighters are," he said.

Read more at <http://www.wral.com/>

Terrorism in the World

Canada

Western countries facing increased terrorism threat: Aon

2015-05-27

Canada is among nine developed economies tagged as being at increased terror threat, largely as a result of the risk presented by Islamic extremists, notes a new map released Tuesday by [Aon Risk Solutions](#).

Aon's [Terrorism and Political Violence Map 2015](#) – produced in partnership with [The Risk Advisory Group](#) – highlights global terror threats and is intended to help businesses understand and calibrate the current risk landscape.



The top risks for business include “a progressively uncertain and dangerous geopolitical environment, where the risk of armed conflict is growing amid changing and unstable regional balances of power,” notes a statement from Aon Risk Solutions, the global risk management business of Aon plc.

The developed nations rated at increased risk in the 2015 map are Canada, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland and Norway. “Many of these rises are largely due to increased terrorism threats, most of which stem from the rising influence of Islamic State (ISIS), as well as the ongoing threat from Al-

Qaeda affiliates and supporters,” the statement adds.

Although the map shows a net reduction on country risk ratings worldwide – the risk rating was reduced in 21 countries and increased in 13 – Aon reports that political violence and terrorism risks is concentrating and intensifying around a smaller number of countries.

the 13 countries at increased risk from terrorism and political violence are Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Lesotho, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania and Ukraine (Russia’s military manoeuvres and increase in military spending mean the potential for further armed conflict in the area – Ukraine and Estonia – is no longer unthinkable, yet the overall outlook in the rest of the region is moderately positive); and

the 21 countries at reduced risk are Albania, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Brazil, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Panama, Tunisia and Uzbekistan (South America sees the most positive results, with the risk level falling in seven countries across the region, while no countries in Latin America are rated at increased risk in 2015, highlighting the potential for business investment across the continent).

“It is interesting that Europe is at significantly greater risk from the rise of the Islamic State,” Scott Bolton, director of business development and network relations for Aon Risk Solutions, says in the statement.

“Businesses need to understand how they can mitigate against this risk in affected countries, as well as build terrorism insurance programs that align more closely with their exposure,” Bolton continues.

“This data highlights that terrorism and geopolitical uncertainty are risks that businesses cannot ignore – and they are as relevant to developed economies as to emerging markets,” adds Henry Wilkinson, The Risk Advisory Group’s head of intelligence and analysis.

Still, Wilkinson points out, “a high level of risk doesn’t automatically mean that these areas are closed for business. Companies can exploit the opportunities in any market with high quality intelligence and analysis, and a strategy to navigate and manage the risks.”

Risk ratings are based on TerrorismTracker data from the previous 12 months, The Risk Advisory Group’s data and intelligence and consultations between experts from The Risk Advisory Group and Aon, notes the statement. Each country is assigned a score – negligible, low, medium, high or severe – in line with its risk of terrorism, civil unrest and conflict, with the total score being an aggregate of these variables.

Verisk Maplecroft recently reported that 12 capital cities are facing “extreme” terrorism risks that had the potential to threaten business and supply chain continui-

ty. The finding was based on an assessment of 1,300 of the world's most important commercial hubs and urban centres.

The countries in question include the strategic markets of Egypt, Israel, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan, Verisk Maplecroft reported at the time.

In Europe, Paris (97 on the list) "has experienced one of the steepest rises in the ranking, reflecting the severity of the terrorist attack in January 2015. "The risk level in Paris is representative of a wider trend for Western countries, including Belgium, Canada and Australia, where the level of risk in key urban centres is substantially higher than elsewhere in the country, in part due to the significant PR value attached to such high-profile targets by militant Islamist groups."

<http://www.canadianunderwriter.ca/news/western-countries-facing-increased-terrorism-threat-aon/1003644231/?&er=NA>

Blood Year: Terror and the Islamic State

31 May 2015

In fighting terrorism, warns David Kilcullen, we should be careful what we wish for. We set out to eliminate al-Qaeda and instead, after a full decade of fighting, we got the Islamic State. Kilcullen, a strategist in global anti-terrorism strategies and adviser to, among others, the United States, offers part history, part enlightened analysis, part commentary, part provocation and part mea culpa in tracking the dramatic and disturbing rise of IS.

In 2004, Kilcullen – an Australian Army lieutenant-colonel with a PhD in Islamic extremism – was tasked to help shape Australia’s counterterrorism efforts with regional partners and allies when 9/11 and other attacks, including the Bali bombings that left 88 Australians dead, saw Western governments focused on one movement and one man: al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden.

The counter-strategy, Kilcullen asserted at the time, should be to fight al-Qaeda’s clout by “disaggregating” the organisation, “to dismantle, or break up, the links that allow the jihad to function as a global entity”.

Washington’s policy in Iraq contradicted that to the hilt: conflate all enemies of the West into one basket called “terrorism” and pound them to smithereens. The “mindless obstinacy” of then-US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, resulted in what Kilcullen labels “the greatest strategic screw-up since Hitler’s invasion of Russia”. The sad legacy: an ugly war that continues, a tidal breakdown in law and order, spreading insurgency across the region, the near-destruction of Syria, the suffering and alienation of millions, and a flood of international recruits into IS.

Kilcullen says the West now faces “a larger, more unified, capable, experienced and savage enemy, in a less stable, more fragmented region”. His answer, for now: a heavier air campaign against IS, and giving Western forces the authority to fight IS offensively, not only in training roles. “Hawkish”, he admits, but why so tough? Because if the West doesn’t go full bore against IS, Iran surely will, giving Tehran reign over huge tracts of the Middle East. “We have to go hard now,” Kilcullen warns ominously, “or we’ll end up having to go in much harder, and potentially on a much larger scale, later – or accept defeat.”

He acknowledges people in the West are tired of fighting extremist terror, and admits so himself, but reminds us, too, of Trotsky’s taut observation: “You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you.”

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/>

ISIS making alarming inroads in South-east Asia

31 MAY 2015



A resident painting over an ISIS flag in Solo, Central Java. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has ramped up its activities in South-east Asia so effectively that there is now an entire military unit of terrorists recruited from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, according to Singapore's Prime Minister. -- PHOTO: TEMPO

THE Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has ramped up its activities in South-east Asia so effectively that there is now an entire military unit of terrorists recruited from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, according to Singapore's Prime Minister.

"South-east Asia is a key recruitment centre for ISIS," Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on Friday. He noted that this included more than 500 Indonesians and dozens of Malaysians. "ISIS has so many Indonesian and Malaysia fighters that they form a unit by themselves - the Katibah Nusantara (Malay Archipelago Combat Unit)," he added.

Even in Singapore, "a few" young men have gone to Syria to join the ISIS ranks, and even more were intercepted trying to leave, PM Lee disclosed. The Singapore authorities had recently arrested two students, one 17 and one 19, the latter of whom had planned to assassinate Singaporean leaders if he was unable to reach the Middle East.

"This is why Singapore takes terrorism, and in particular ISIS, very seriously," Mr Lee said. "The threat is no longer over there, it is over here."

Mr Lee revealed that ISIS has posted a propaganda and recruitment video showing Malay-speaking children training with weapons inside territory controlled by the terror group, and that two Malaysians were identified in a separate video carrying

out the beheading of a Syrian man.

Mr Lee also said that the Malaysian police have arrested several people who were planning to go to Syria to join the terrorist group, including some members of the Malaysian armed forces. Some were planning attacks inside Malaysia.

Meanwhile, several extremist groups in South-east Asia have pledged allegiance to ISIS, including Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiah, whose leader, Abu Bakar Bashir, announced his allegiance from his prison cell last year.

ISIS has said that it intends to establish a province of its "caliphate" in South-east Asia. Mr Lee said the idea was a "grandiose, pie-in-the-sky dream".

But he warned that it is entirely feasible that the group could take advantage of some ungoverned spaces to establish a foothold from which to expand recruiting and plan attacks in the new host countries.

"That would pose a serious threat to the whole of South-east Asia," Mr Lee said.

Starting from Friday, Singapore has contributed a KC-135 tanker plane to the international coalition fighting against ISIS forces in the Middle East.

The deployment is symbolic, but Mr Lee emphasised that the fight against Islamic extremism was just beginning and, like the Cold War, would surely take decades to win.

"Fifty years from now, I doubt the scourge of extremist terrorism will have entirely disappeared," he told the forum. "Remember that Soviet communism, another historical dead end, took 70 years to collapse, and that was a non-religious ideology."

Terrorism in South-east Asia is not new. More than 200 people died in the Bali bombings in 2002. Jemaah Islamiah almost succeeded in a plot to bomb diplomatic offices in Singapore just after Sept 11, 2001.

But the development that South-east Asian terror groups are now flying the black ISIS flag - and young men from the region are saluting it - is a huge problem.

The current US-led fight against ISIS is largely limited to the Middle East. But the extremists' approach to fighting the West has no geographic boundaries. Unless the anti- ISIS coalition does more to cooperate with countries in South- east Asia and elsewhere, the terror group will just expand its recruiting and attacks across the globe.

- See more at: <http://www.straitstimes.com/>

'Money, guns, girls': How ISIS recruiters win in the West

May 20, 2015



- Young people are binary, believing in good and evil, authority and rebellion, says Chloe Combi
- Some join ISIS because they believe it is the right thing to do and it's daring, Combi says
- She says disenfranchisement, rebellion and peer pressure are some of the factors involved

Chloe Combi is a former teacher who is now a columnist and consultant on youth issues for the Mayor of London. For her book ["Generation Z: Their voices, Their Lives"](#) she interviewed hundreds of teenagers and children born between 1994 and 2005. The names of those quoted in this article have been changed. The views expressed in this commentary are entirely those of the author.

(CNN) "Harry Potter" is one of the most popular book series of the last decade. At its heart lies a duel between good and evil. A duel between light and dark ... young and old ... reason and madness ... authority and rebellion.

Young people are binary creatures -- things are always this or that, and never in the middle -- which is one reason they all relate to the bespectacled apprentice wizard.

Similarly the young are passionate creatures, believing in things with ardor and conviction -- which is why in literature they are sent at personal risk to fight Voldemort. And why in real life they are sent to fight, say, communism.

Central also to "Harry Potter" -- and strangely war too -- is friendship. Both are

about going off with your buddies and peers and hopefully all making it back together.



UK police launch campaign to fight ISIS recruitment 02:16

So it surprises me the amount of head scratching that goes on when the media/politicians/people in general discuss the issue of young Muslims flying off to be more ardent Muslims.

"It's the West!" they cry -- the bad West is smothering this fragile religion -- which behaves anything like a butterfly likely to be broken on a wheel of McDonald's, porn and Apple.

"It's social media!" they cry. Adults seem to think kids berate Zayn Malik on Twitter for leaving One Direction one day, and the next, they are at Heathrow, bound for Syria.

"It's Islam!" they cry, discounting the million or so young Muslims who stay firmly put in the UK.

'Young people problem'

I'm not saying these things don't figure at all in young people's minds, but if we want to understand this problem, we should treat it less as a "young Muslim" problem and more as a "young people" problem.

Young Muslims are going to far away countries in the name of their faith for the same reasons Harry goes to fight Voldemort or the 18-year-old American went to Vietnam -- despite the possibility of dying for this "honor."

Because they believe it's the right thing to do.

Because it's daring.

Because it's what all their pals are doing.

Because it's romantic and will make them sexier to the opposite sex.

Because it sounds like a laugh -- hey man, you get a great big gun in the desert -- just like "Call of Duty!"

Because it's their duty.

Because it's an honor -- and they believe they can return to a changed world, that they helped to change -- heroes.

Brainwashed and crazy?

I know this to be true because I have spent the last two years interviewing teenagers about their lives, beliefs and ambitions.

Aarif, 16, who is studying for his GCSE exams this summer told me: "There is a lot of quite serious chat about ISIS and going to do your part in the war for your brothers and Allah and all that. I'm not gonna lie. You can't ignore it or say you're not interested, because you get enough s***. It's like a way to prove not just that you're a proper Muslim, but a proper man."

His friend Kasim, 16, concurs: "I respect all my brothers going out to fight. And my sisters. They are playing their part too. It is something you talk about. The media makes them out to be like, these crazy people brainwashed by crazy people, but that's not how we (his own group of peers) think about it all. We have so much love and respect for them."

'X' needs you!

Ideology aside, there are similarities between psychological tactics used on these boys than there have been in any recruitment campaign in any conflict: be a real man with all the other real men. X needs you!

It's curious that the West is so surprised at the efficacy of these tactics. Because ideological consideration aside, recruiters have been using the same methods for over 100 years.

Both Aarif and Kasim's points also highlight something that has been woefully lacking in explaining the appeal of ISIS to the Western-born Muslim teenager: which is old-fashioned peer pressure.



Expert: Promise of apocalypse key to allure of ISIS

As anyone who has worked/lived with/raised teenagers will attest, the lure of "all my mates are doing it" argument is powerful. There was a recent media storm over the grainy spectacle of [Amira Abase, Kadiza Sultana and Shamina Begum](#) all wearing Western clothes and on their way to Syria from Gatwick Airport.

I would bet my mortgage that during the lead-up to their final departure, there were 1,000 conversations that took place in the bedrooms of their suburban houses or on Snapchat where they goaded each other on.

One 17-year-old, Farzana, told me: "I had a massive row with two of my best friends who were talking about going over to Iraq to fight. They talked about it like it was going to be a fun holiday. They said I was a bad Muslim and friend. We don't speak now."

Her point offers insight into the romantic view many young Muslims have about joining extremist groups.

Mohammed, 16, is considering going to Iraq to join ISIS. He states his dedication to his faith and the "will of Allah" as the primary reasons for this decision. However, the people he is talking to about this decision (he refuses to tell me whom) also promise "loads of money, guns and good girls." When I press him further about potential dangers, he shrugs and says "if I don't like it, I'll just come home."

This is a sentiment I hear often. This suggests that for at least some, the decision is based more on rebellion, glory and adventure than ideology.

Teenage rebellion

In Western thought, dying for an ideology is virtually obsolete now. But teenage rebellion against the "man"/parents/school/country/the norm is common. But while many of us cringe at those years, the likelihood of it resulting in anything terrible was slim.

Not so for the young Muslims who see a trip out to Syria in the name of religion as their own equivalent of "On the Road."

Some girls I know, like, discuss how fit 'Jihadi John' is or talk about how life might be better out there. When you're not torn between two worlds and don't fit in either.

Souad, 17

Farood, 17 who describes himself as "devout but modern and completely uninterested in groups like ISIS" concurs with the role of teenage rebellion in the radicalization of young Muslims.

"I definitely think that's true. Like the press says s*** about you, or your parents p*** you off, and you don't have any money, and you don't learn s*** at school and you know there aren't any jobs, and you feel like no one else gets you. I think that's a big part of the problem. It's being offered to a lot of people I know as a better and alternative way of life with your own kind -- your brothers and sisters."

Farood's girlfriend, Souad, 17 has an interesting female perspective.

"Being a Muslim girl is hard here because you live in a country that is all Western and still have to dress and act traditionally. Some girls I know, like, discuss how fit 'Jihadi John' is or talk about how life might be better out there. When you're not torn between two worlds and don't fit in either."

Souad is aware that life under such regimes would be anything but freer or fun, particularly for women and girls. But this is not an opinion held by many of her female peers.

Farood's indifference to the lure of extremism becomes more interesting and revealing when he revealed he has "a very nice life, at a good school, with a white-British Christian mother and an African father who is a Muslim."

Crucially, Farood is happy and has a sense of a dual identity as both a British citizen and a Muslim (he was allowed to choose his faith.)

Muslim and British?

Again and again, where I saw young Muslims seriously considering volunteering for extremist groups abroad, there were two constants: they weren't satisfied with their lives here and they had all been convinced of this binary way of thinking. That you couldn't be a Muslim and be British.



What makes ISIS so attractive to some youth?

There is no doubt that Islam is a deep, complex faith that holds influence over kids that want to go and fight in its name. But many other factors are pushing young Muslims into such drastic action.

Disenfranchisement, loneliness, alienation, rebellion, peer pressure and identity crisis -- these are things all young people feel, and lie at the heart of many of their choices irrespective of faith.

To return to "Harry Potter" -- I have never met a young (or old) person who believed Harry shouldn't have gone to Hogwarts, despite the danger. That he should have eschewed his glorious (but perilous) destiny for a drab world he felt alienated from.

If we understand this so readily in the children of literature, why is it so hard to understand in our actual children?

Most young people, except the fortunate few, don't see this as a land of opportunity or hope anymore -- and it is obvious why. If you offer a young person the promise of fortune and glory, it is easy to see why they might seriously.

<http://edition.cnn.com/>

United Kingdom

Is a British Widow Really a Key Player in the African Militant Islamic Group al Shabaab?

May 21, 2015



Samantha "the White Widow" Lewthwaite. Photo via Interpol/[Wikimedia Commons](#)

On Monday, reports emerged suggesting that al Qaeda affiliate **al Shabaab**, which controls large swaths of Somalia from strongholds in the south of the country, is now at least partially led by Samantha "the White Widow" Lewthwaite, a British woman. Drawing on anonymous comments from members of the Somali security officials, one report published in the UK *Mirror* suggest that the since marrying an al Shabaab commander named Hassan Maalim Ibrahim (a.k.a. Sheikh Hassan) last May, Lewthwaite climbed the ranks, replacing leaders killed in US drone strikes to become the right hand of group leader **Ahmad Umar** (a.k.a. Abu Ubaidah).

A separate report in the *Daily Mail* Wednesday alleged that Lewthwaite personally commands a unit of nearly 200 "jihadi widow spies" who pose as street merchants and receptionists at businesses like hotels.

These stories further suggest that the 32-year-old mother of four is responsible for the deaths of more than 400 people by masterminding a series of raids and suicide attacks over the past few years, including the April 2 attack on Garissa, Kenya, that

killed 148. It's also claimed that the White Widow surrounds herself with British commanders (as her Somali language skills are poor), including a dedicated suicide squad of 15 people, and has led the recruitment of teenage and female suicide bombers using cash and heroin as incentives and means of control.

But despite the apparently juicy idea that a traditionally male-dominated Islamist group features a woman in a senior role, security analysts believe these claims are silly and that most evidence suggests the White Widow is a low-level player at best.

<http://www.vice.com/>

Beating the Terrorist Brand -- The Need for a Political Offensive

05/19/2015



By now Secretary Kerry should have presented Congress with the State Department's latest official [annual review of the state of global terrorism](#). It will make hard reading and itemize a litany of shortcomings in the seemingly neverending war on terror.

Undoubtedly, this year's report will say the global situation is worsening, as it has concluded for a couple of years now. In the last 12 months an Islamic State has been established, exacerbating the Middle East sectarian divide; localized conflicts in North, East and West Africa have spread; Yemen is in turmoil; and Afghanistan/Pakistan stability shows no sign of improving.

Despite President Obama's switch to a [strategy of funding a proxy fight against terrorists](#) -- a policy [I have questioned](#) -- there seems to be little good news in the global war against terrorism.

How we talk about terrorism matters, as fame and influence is what the terrorists seek. Those fighting terrorists struggle to reduce their influence -- often talking and acting in ways which all too often inadvertently reinforces the terror message. Today, many governments who are fighting terrorists with U.S. funding are trailing behind them -- both in terms of neutralizing the [propaganda of their deeds](#) and communicating a better, more influential offering.

[Joseph Nye said](#) that, alongside a strategy of hard, military containment, it was soft power that brought down the Soviet Union. And it seems it was a smart blend of hard military and soft political power that converted Irish republican terrorism into today's mostly peaceful Northern Irish politics. However, we do not seem to be deploying a similarly strong dose of blended soft and hard power to defeat the terrorists today.

Developing Joseph Nye's concept of smart power and applying my experience of working for governments and militaries struggling with terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, Somalia and Libya, Kenya, Washington D.C. and London, I will start by identifying how we are going wrong, then use the next post to suggest improvements to positively influence populations and help beat the terrorists.

Do not...

1. ... be blind to other people's reality and deaf to their politics.

Violent extremism, as a method of rebellion, is growing in many developing countries in the world. In my experience, too often we fail to appreciate events from the point of view of the other, and really listen to why there is the clamor of conflict, before launching our response. After U.S. troops were withdrawn from Iraq and the conflict faded from our consciousness, Iraqi civilians continued to suffer a [recorded doubling of casualties year-on-year](#). We may have "got over" what happened at Abu Ghraib, but such events continue to symbolize all that is offensive and wrong about Western-funded interventions in the Muslim world -- and still provide a [powerful lever for recruiters to pull](#).

In Afghanistan, many are living an [entirely different daily experience](#) from the "good versus evil" context that we talk of. After taking off the blinkers, and seeing the realities experienced by people and politics in many corners of the globe, we need to better reflect on and respond to other people's experience of reality.

2. ... confuse foreign public diplomacy with Western domestic politics.

For years, the U.S. and other governments spent more effort in proving the necessity and righteousness of the war in Afghanistan, than it did in demonstrating effective, good intention locally. Meanwhile, the insurgents outmaneuvered us by anchoring their communications in local realities.

When President Obama announced his new \$5 billion Global Counterterrorism Partnership Fund [last year](#), he used the word "partner" 17 times to describe the creation of a set of unequal relationships to address "specific challenges" to U.S. "interest." By fighting terrorism in this way, the U.S. presses the proxy governments to serve the U.S.' agenda over and above addressing issues around their domestic legitimacy.

These so-called partners who can access significant military funding have an interest in building perceptions of a global specter of terrorism - and being an important part of a global war.

3. ... embolden the terrorists.

When I was in Libya last year what I did not see was the "Islamist" versus "secular" narrative that is [still perpetuated](#). Instead, there was and still is a complex melée of militias fighting over assets and seeking dominance, within a local political and cultural context.

Even Generals among U.S. allies have reinforced misleading rhetoric coupling localized conflicts across sub-Saharan Africa as the [next "front" in the war against terrorism](#), giving the terrorists' the very brand position they desire. There are no battle lines with armies facing each other and no single war that crosses continents -- until we build that perception.

The groups are more rag-tag than corporate but we allow them to be perceived as having a strength that just does not exist. Everything we do should be about dividing and conquering them, rather than strengthening their terror messages and reputation.

In that sense, this particular "war" is certainly too important to be left to the Generals, yet in countries all over the world the dominant response is the hard power of uniforms and guns -- further violence and conflict. We give the very response the terrorists want. Strong security is about good politics, not about the military -- and must be a process visibly led by politicians, not Generals.

4. ... focus on the evil.

Fact: Terrorists terrorize. Their power is in the emotional influence generated by their evil actions. We need to respond by offering a better story.

Too often we get caught up in dancing to their tactical tune; perpetuating the horror of an event, reducing it to a battle of good v. evil, and helping to amplify their terrorizing message. Leaders need to change the political conversation and build an alternative vision, a subject I talk about in my second blog.

If, as the conservative magazine, The Economist, says, Boko Haram is ["first and foremost, a product of Nigeria's broken and kleptocratic politics"](#), then we need to address the local political grievances at the heart of a conflict that we erroneously brand as international terrorism. And we must also consider where else this analysis fits.

Radicalization, terrorism and instability are worst in the least-developed parts of the developing world. In East Africa's slums, Afghanistan/Pakistan's border areas, Nigeria and Mali's north, Somalia's broken state and -- yes -- alienated communities in the west. This cannot be a coincidence.

This is not so about the absence of institutions and "ungoverned areas;" sometimes there is too much government, of the uniformed variety. Rather, this is about forgotten people - and their needs - and our communications must more actively involve them.

5. ... simplify.

We still do not really know who, or what, we are fighting. The ongoing misuse of the term, "Islamic extremist" -- even alongside statements describing terrorism as unIslamic -- obscures and distracts from a genuine understanding. It endows the extremists with the legitimacy they seek rather than undermining their cause.

Recently, President Obama has wisely and conspicuously [avoided this polarizing tagline](#) -- using the far more descriptive and less emotive, "violent extremism." However, most of his allies are not following suit. Why don't governments lead more discussion in using the term "unIslamic extremists?"

Tag lines aside, the way the U.S. government categorizes terrorism enables many governments to avoid debate and solutions to long-standing political grievances. Governments the world over need to engage everyone in complexity about the causes of terrorism, and expose the real fault lines which cause social fragmentation and prompt people to turn on each other.

A much more thorough popular discussion of the terms, "Islamic" and "Islamism", would be useful in the West, especially given the other Islamic State that we have been fighting for and funding for more than 10 years; the [Islamic State of the Republic of Afghanistan](#).

If we want to undermine the terrorists we need to enable extensive discussion of what the enemy stands for and expose the [viability of different political, social and cultural agendas](#). When we [curtail or distort public debate](#) we cede the heart of the battle to the terrorists. And when we talk about such issues simply in terms of militarized security, we play to the terrorists' main message of fear.

6. ... alienate our friends.

Critically, communications of U.S. foreign policy served to bolster the [flimsy partnership](#) between al Qaeda and the Taliban, thereby strengthening their influence, even when [intelligence assessments](#) told the United States they were separate and divided. The vast majority of the Taliban was never the real threat and, brought into the political process early on, could have stabilized the country against [far worse threats](#).

Time and time again when governments talk about terrorism they draw a line in the hot sand of domestic conflicts, be it in Afghanistan or Iraq, Mali or Libya, Nigeria or Somalia -- who is ok and who is beyond the pail -- and they get it wrong.

Governments need to listen properly to what minority communities have to say and build genuine relationships on joint terms. In southern and eastern Afghanistan, for many years we failed to take seriously the [local concern](#) we heard about night raids and a range of issues, which alienated a whole population of initially undecided Pashtuns and bolstered the Taliban.

At the same time, our talk of freedom and democracy in Afghanistan failed to resonate because it was inconsistent with our military and political actions locally, as the propaganda of our deeds undermined our political offering.

7. ... globalize the struggle.

Many of the terrorist groups we find ourselves fighting are themselves riven with disunity, at both the global and local level, ripe for political leverage that turns a fissure into a chasm.

Although [President Obama himself identified](#) the local source of many terrorist problems, too often we herd the groups into a global network of "[franchises](#)" and "affiliates," elevating their influence to that of a global super league. This bolsters their perceived strength, assisting them in their morale, recruitment and funding operations.

The U.S. government's own [authoritative research](#) shows the process of radicalization to be personal and localized. Why don't we distinguish Somalia's al-Shabaab from al Qaeda and talk down the influence of the Islamic State, rather than simply repeating their messages which unifies, strengthens and builds their terror brands - and aids recruitment?

And at the same time, I have seen governments prefer to amplify the role of covert foreign agency in terrorist attacks, distracting attention from local grievances and avoiding questions of local legitimacy.

The propaganda of our deeds

I have seen how heavy-handed, oppressive and divisive government reaction turns fringe terrorist organizations into chronic problems. Too often a thin democratic legitimacy is used to aggressively promote statehood and bolster a predatory or semi-legitimate government at the cost of stable intra-community politics, and human lives.

Whichever [list](#) of brand attributes you look at, it is clear that today's persistent terrorist organizations are manipulating marketing ideas like consistency, uniqueness

and credibility far more effectively than we are undermining them. Often, we inadvertently help them, without realizing how they are succeeding.

Brand strength is not just important to modern day terrorists and rebels; it is entirely pivotal to their current success, but it can also be used to bring about their downfall. To be more effective, we need to have a coherent approach to destroy their brand and influence, and generate our own new, better political vision -- a subject I will talk about in the second blog.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matt-freear/beating-the-terrorist-bra b 7307452.html>

A Gap in Surveillance, but Ways Around It

MAY 31, 2015

WASHINGTON — For the first time since the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Americans [are again free](#) to place phone calls — to friends, lovers, business associates, political groups, doctors and pizza restaurants — without having logs of those contacts vacuumed up in bulk by the [National Security Agency](#).

And for the first time in nearly 14 years, if government agents identify new phone numbers that they suspect are linked to terrorism, they will have to subpoena phone companies for associated calling records and wait for the response to see if anyone in the United States has been in contact with that number. The N.S.A. can no longer simply query its database for the information.

This unusual situation may last only a few days, until Congress can reach an accommodation over three counterterrorism laws that expired at 12:01 a.m. Monday.

Nonetheless, the fact that Congress allowed the laws to lapse — the most important of them is the purported legal basis for the bulk records collection program — is an extraordinary moment in the story of the tensions between post-9/11 policies and privacy rights. It has led to heated warnings in the political realm about exposing the country to heightened risk of attack.

A few hours before the Senate convened on Sunday, John O. Brennan, the C.I.A. director, warned on the CBS program “Face the Nation” that if lawmakers let those laws lapse, the F.B.I. would “not have the ability then to track these various elements that we are looking at who are trying to carry out attacks here in the homeland.”

But interviews with law enforcement and intelligence officials about what they will do in the interim suggest there are multiple workarounds to the gap.

One of the expired laws permitted wiretap orders of “lone wolf” terrorism suspects who are not part of a foreign group, a provision that has apparently never been used. A second permitted “roving” wiretap orders that follow suspects who change phones, a provision that apparently has been used only rarely.

The third permitted court orders requiring businesses to turn over records that are relevant to a national security investigation, the provision known as Section 215 of the [Patriot Act](#). In addition to the bulk phone records program, the F.B.I. used Section 215 about 160 times last year to obtain particular business records, like suspects’ Internet activity logs.

All three of the expired laws contained a so-called [grandfather clause](#) that permits their authority to continue indefinitely for any investigation that had begun before June 1.

Law enforcement officials have made it clear that the F.B.I. has long-running, open-ended “enterprise” investigations into groups that pose a threat to public safety, like Al Qaeda. A senior intelligence official recently [told The New York Times](#) that the administration was open to invoking the grandfather clause to get the records if a need arose during any lapse.

In addition, several officials said, in most terrorism-related cases the F.B.I. could instead use a grand jury subpoena to get the records it wanted by invoking rules for investigations into standard crimes.

Still, legal specialists said, there is one hypothetical gap: a counterintelligence investigation scrutinizing a newly arrived foreign diplomat for whom there is no evidence of any criminal wrongdoing. Neither invoking the grandfather clause nor using a grand jury subpoena would be likely to work in that case. But the debate has focused on terrorist attacks, not espionage.

In theory, the Obama administration could also invoke the grandfather clause to ask the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to reauthorize the bulk phone records program as well. However, the administration has vowed not to do that.

A federal appeals court recently [rejected](#) the theory that Section 215 could be used to authorize the bulk calling logs program, a theory the surveillance court had embraced. Seeking to avoid a confrontation, the government is trying to avoid asking the surveillance court to say anything more about the program until Congress enacts new legislation.

But the apparent loss of the program for now does not mean the government has no way to analyze calling records linked to a new suspect. The F.B.I. can still issue subpoenas called national-security letters to phone companies to obtain the records.

There would be investigative drawbacks. It would probably take longer than querying the N.S.A. bulk calling logs database. And some phone companies do not keep their customers’ calling records more than 18 months, while the security agency keeps them for five years.

Any need for such workarounds may be brief. Last month, the House passed the USA Freedom Act. It would extend the three expired laws. After six months, the bill would ban the bulk collection of phone records, and create a new system in which the government could still systematically gain access to such logs to hunt for links to terrorists. But the bulk records would stay in the hands of phone companies.

The legislative impasse grew out of efforts by supporters of keeping the existing program without changes, including Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican majority leader.

Proponents of the existing program have argued that ending it [would lead to terrorist attacks](#). Still, the program cannot claim to have thwarted an attack in nearly 14 years of existence.

The Bush administration started the program in October 2001, and persuaded the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to start blessing it as legal under Section 215 in 2006. Since it [came to light in 2013](#), via leaks by the former intelligence contractor Edward J. Snowden, two independent panels studied classified files and concluded that [it had not been abused, but also that it had provided scant concrete benefits](#).

The program's greatest achievement was leading the F.B.I. to scrutinize a man in San Diego who turned out to have donated several thousand dollars to the Shabab, the Islamist group in Somalia. The man was not accused of plotting any attack.

Still, privacy groups say that even if there is no evidence that analysts abused the program, merely to have the government collect the records damages Americans' privacy. And officials say that even if the program has never thwarted an attack, it has helped flesh out investigations and it might yet prove critical.

Those sentiments converged into the changes that would be made by the USA Freedom Act. But for the next few days, at least, things will be a little bit different in post-9/11 America.

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

Islamic extremists pose higher risk to several Western economies, but not in US, analysis says

May 31, 2015 |

The risk to nine Western nations' economies is rising mainly due to terrorism threats from Islamic extremists, but so far, the risk remains low in the United States, according to recent analysis published by a London-based risk management firm.

Aon Risk Solutions, which is part of the insurance multinational company Aon plc, identified the developed nations as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland and Norway, which face increased terrorist threats from the Islamic State as well as from al-Qaeda and its supporters, according to a May 26 [press release](#) from the company.

It also identified Lesotho, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania and Ukraine as four other nations facing increased risk from terrorism and political violence. For Estonia and Ukraine, their risk levels rose due to Russian military maneuvers and higher military spending, although the overall picture for the rest of the region is "moderately positive."

The company presented the analysis through its interactive "[Terrorism and Political Violence Map](#)" and corresponding report ([pdf](#)) that is designed to help Aon's clients understand the terrorism risk exposure. It showed "a progressively uncertain and dangerous geopolitical environment, where the risk of armed conflict is growing amid changing and unstable regional balances of power," the release said.

"It is interesting that Europe is at significantly greater risk from the rise of the Islamic State," said Scott Bolton, an Aon Risk Solutions director, in the release. "Businesses need to understand how they can mitigate against this risk in affected countries as well as build terrorism insurance programmes that align more closely with their exposure."

However, the risk level to the United States remains low, according to the interactive map.

Yet, an analysis about the U.S. presented in the map noted: "However, a terrorism peril remains as result of several disrupted plots by individual jihadists and small cells and threats issued by internationally active terrorist groups such as [al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] and [Islamic State], particularly against aviation, banking and other business sectors in their English-language publications."

Additionally, the press release said that 21 countries are at a reduced risk of terrorism and political violence. In fact, in South America and nearby regions, there is a drop in the risk to seven countries, including Cuba and Honduras.

"This reflects counter-terrorism progress and moves to end long running conflicts in Colombia and Peru," the release said. "No countries in Latin America are rated at

increased risk in 2015, highlighting the potential for business investment across the continent."

Sub-Saharan Africa has 16 countries at high risk – the most of any region – which the report said is driven by unhappiness with their governments and socio-economic problems. Alternatively, Southern Africa is relatively stable.

<http://www.fiercehomelandsecurity.com/story/i>

Are We Our Own Worst Enemy? The Problems In Countering Jihadi Narratives And How To Fix Them – Analysis



Screenshot from Islamic State promotional video and media package

May 30, 2015

Two weeks back, the [Washington Post published the most insightful article](#) to date on the challenges the U.S. government has encountered battling al Qaeda, the Islamic State and jihadis writ large in social media. The U.S. State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) has been charged with a mission impossible: countering jihadi sympathies online while also pleasing all critics inside the U.S. government and in the mainstream media.

Ten years ago, countering al Qaeda's narrative largely rested in the hands of the Department of Defense (DoD). Gobs of money were thrown at efforts to discredit Bin Laden and crew. Having supported a few of these programs, I can attest firsthand that they were largely a giant waste of time; their focus was more about pleasing military commanders than actually undermining al Qaeda's message. The CSCC on the other hand, in concept, remains the correct approach. What more could the U.S. ask for than culturally-informed counterterrorism experts armed with social media, building from lessons learned gained in more than a decade of observing jihadi propaganda? Apparently the system must have zero defects as well.

The [Washington Post article illustrates](#) the strange position the CSCC remains in. The article discusses how one of the CSCC's videos gathered more than 800,000 views. This should have been seen as a major success, simply gaining an audience in jihadi online circles is a major first step, but instead those inside government prone to fearful bureaucratic survival immediately started undermining the effort.

The CSCC played by the enemy's rules and lost, not to the enemy, but to their own team.

As we approach the fourteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. should ask itself whether it seriously has the stomach to counter jihadis on the Internet. For the CSCC or any government effort to be successful in the online space, they must have initiative, flexibility, capacity, autonomy and space for experimentation. Bureaucrats, media critics, and counterterrorism pundits are unlikely to provide these things to an operation like the CSCC.

Two months ago, I questioned the renewed White House calls for countering violent extremism (CVE) against jihadis. The U.S. government sends out these calls every few years when jihadis do bad things and little really happens afterwards beyond some conferences with nice photo ops. My [three essential questions two months back for conducting CVE were:](#)

Where do you want to counter violent extremism? There are [three fronts](#) in countering jihadis flowing into ISIS: 1) The Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) 2) Europe 3) North America. These three fronts, in order, provide different percentages of fighters into ISIS ranks and depending on where they are located, are brought into ISIS through differing combinations of on-the-ground and online recruitment efforts.

Who do we want to counter? Which extremists do you want to counter? Extremists supporting ISIS come in many different shapes and sizes. [Will McCants provides the best spectrum](#) for identifying where to focus CVE efforts. I would recommend focusing on those already “radicalizing” to join ISIS.

How do you want to counter extremists? As I argued at length in past *Geopoliticus* posts, the U.S. has largely used the wrong messages, messengers, medium, and method to counter the bulk of those radicalizing to join ISIS (i.e., moderate voices and community engagement). Instead, I proposed using a different message more effective for the radicalizing target audience and in particular a more effective messenger: defectors from ISIS ranks.

Having read about the struggles of the CSCC, I would like to take these questions a step further today and describe how I would recommend doing a more effective counternarrative program. As I discussed previously, CVE efforts should start online rather than on-the-ground. Online efforts cut across all three theaters of foreign fighters being recruited to ISIS (MENASA, Europe & North America) and when done properly will illuminate the hotspots where on-the-ground CVE efforts such as community engagement and promoting moderate voices can be applied more effectively.

Engaging videos, mirroring the production format and quality of ISIS and describing the horrors experienced by ISIS defectors provide the ideal vector for engaging

those in the ‘Radicalizing’ stage of ISIS recruitment. [I’d call the program “Make Villains, Not Martyrs”](#) with the goal of exposing ISIS members for the power hungry, political criminals they are rather than the devout martyrs they claim to be. The effort would move through four phases:

Pinpoint Vulnerable Audiences: Identify those radicalizing online communities of ISIS enthusiasts most attracted to ISIS content. Folks like J.M. Berger have already done the lion share of this work ([just watch his Twitter feed](#) and [read his book](#)). Social media companies who’ve finally conducted waves of shut-downs on ISIS accounts should be able to provide even greater fidelity on where those ISIS digital enclaves reside and further describe the proclivity that these accounts have for ISIS material. This refined data would further enable the crafting of a precise counter narrative.

Develop engaging “telenovela” style defector video content: Defector accounts, I believe, remain the most effective counter narrative, but simply filming a defector interview and then broadcasting it won’t work. Instead, the ISIS defector content must be able to engage the radicalizing individual and sustain their attention. I would alternatively propose the development of three dramatic retellings of actual defectors and foreign fighters lost amongst different jihadi conflicts, illuminating ISIS and al Qaeda’s betrayal of their own principles and troops. I would script out three, “telenovela” style videos that would initially stand-alone but would later be networked together. It’s important to note, these videos would not be fiction, but instead dramatic retellings of actual debacles involving foreign fighters. I’d recommend the three movies, as seen in Figure 1, describe the treachery of three fratricidal jihadi campaigns:

Tentative Title: “Fitna” – Jabhat al Nusra & ISIS foreign fighters killing each other in Syria

Tentative Title: “Bandit” – AQIM’s fracturing, infighting and criminality as they are overrun by French forces in Mali.

Tentative Title: “Ansaris & Muhajirs” – al Shabaab’s killing off of their own foreign fighters and clan based infighting inside the group.

Each of these movies would be provided in different languages to more directly appeal to specific radicalizing audiences and they would illuminate several themes of folly and despair encountered by actual foreign fighters embroiled in these jihads.

Three Videos For ISIS Counternarrative Engagement

#1: Tentative Title - "Fitna" (Syria/Iraq)

Synopsis: Exploit ISIL's violent infighting with al Qaeda's Jabhat al Nusra in Syria to showcase internal jihadi politics and subsequent violence.

Key Themes & Supporting Evidence:

- Greed
- Ego
- Fratricide
- Criminality
- Elitism
- Splits
- Folly

Languages: Filmed in Arabic, Subtitled in English

#2: Tentative Title - "Bandit" (Sahel)

Synopsis: Detail the rapid fracturing of AQJM in the Sahel, French invasion leading competing factions.

Key Themes & Supporting Evidence:

- Greed
- Fratricide
- Race
- Folly
- Criminality

Languages: Filmed in Arabic, Subtitled in French & English

#3: "Ansaris vs. the Muhajir" (Somalia)

Synopsis: Replicate the story of wayward American foreign fighter Omar Hammami as he stumbles through Shabaab's downturn. Detail infighting between local Somali members of Shabaab and foreign fighters.

Key Themes & Supporting Evidence:

- Fratricide
- Rejection & Abandonment
- Folly
- Brutality
- Hypocrisy

Languages: Filmed in Arabic or Somali, Subtitled in English & Swahili

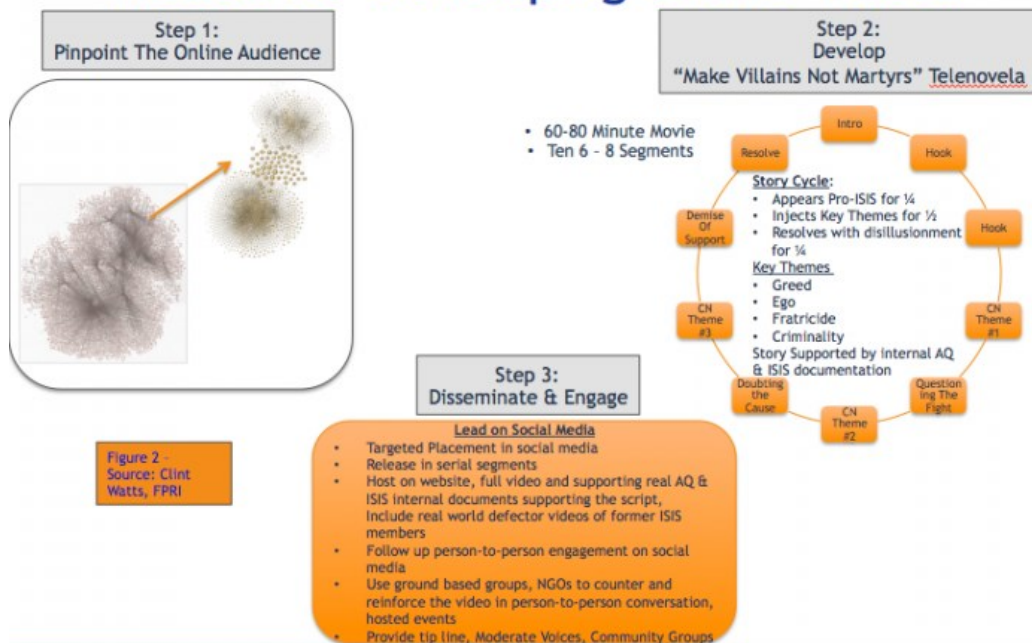
Figure 1 -
Source: Clint
Watts, FPRI

Three videos for ISIS counternarrative engagement

The scripts for these three videos would not be propaganda as the content is already written by jihadis who've spilled their betrayals online ([Omar Hammami's biography writes its own screenplay](#)). Each movie would be roughly 60 – 80 minutes in length, but told in chapters of 5 – 10 minutes suitable for dissemination in a serial trough YouTube and other video hosting sites.

Each of the videos would follow a similar build up as well (See Figure 2). The videos would need to appear, in at least the first three episodes, to be somewhat sympathetic to joining a jihad – tracing the introduction, immersion and initial reception of a foreign fighter. After three episodes, dreams of jihad glory would fade as softer themes undermining ISIS enter the storyline—foreign fighters participating in criminal activity for example. As the story continues, the video would shift to real stories of horrid ISIS behavior—barbaric torture, sexual enslavement, killing of innocent women and children. The video series would conclude with a foreign fighter watching the fratricidal killing of a fellow foreign fighter at the hands of a corrupt jihadi leader. The foreign fighter would manage to defect from ISIS to return home, finding he had shamed his family.

Process for Developing Online Videos



Process for developing online videos

Host and disseminate the videos: The video chapters would be released one per week. After release of the tenth episode, the entire movie would be hosted in multiple locations in the jihadi online environment (i.e. YouTube, etc.). The videos would then also link to the actual documentary interviews of real foreign fighters that have traveled the journey of the foreign fighters described in the telenovela serial. The internal documents of al Qaeda, ISIS, AQIM and other terror groups detailing internal conflict and deceit (i.e., Harmony Documents, Bin Laden's Bookshelf, etc.) would also be linked to these videos so that those on the radicalization path can see for themselves the disingenuous nature of all these jihadi campaigns. The hosting locations would allow for comments and debate, further refining the application of other CVE programs. These online debates along with standard social media viewer metrics would provide the basis for true measurement of online CVE efforts.

Follow up with on-the-ground CVE efforts: Effectively engaging in the online space with these videos would reveal hot spots where other CVE efforts can be employed more effectively. Those jihadi digital enclaves most engaged on ideological issues would be ideal for a ["Moderate Voices" CVE efforts](#) and some physical communities might also surface appropriate for the application of CVE community outreach programs. Essentially, the videos will act as blood in the water for jihadi sharks. Engagement, regardless of whether its positive or negative, will illuminate what we currently cannot see—the fault lines in ISIS popular support that we need to exploit.

Ultimately, this type of a program will likely not make it out of the concept phase. It will be plagued by interagency infighting and will take so long to produce through the U.S. bureaucracy it will be available right about the time ISIS collapses.

In actuality, an online defector video series like this would not take that much time or resources to execute. The scripts are practically written and the production will be more effective and efficient if done in the Middle East or North Africa. (Off the cuff, I'd recommend looking first at Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon for video production—they've got some good capacity.) The online analytics, hosting, and dissemination can all be done from a few laptops armed with a couple credit cards. So again I ask, do we really want to do online CVE? It seems the CSCC can do it, but will we let them?

About the author:

Clint Watts is an FPRI Senior Fellow with the Program on National Security and President of Miburo Solutions, Inc. His research focuses on analyzing transnational threat groups operating in local environments on a global scale. Before starting Miburo Solutions, he served as a U.S. Army infantry officer, a FBI Special Agent on a Joint Terrorism Task Force, and as the Executive Officer of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (CTC). Clint's publications include: al Qaeda's (Mis) Adventures in the Horn of Africa, Combating Terrorism Center, 2007 (Co-editor, Co-author); "Can the Anbar Strategy Work in Pakistan?" Small Wars Journal, 2007 ; "Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: What Foreign Fighter Data Reveals About the Future of Terrorism?" Small Wars Journal, 2008; "Foreign Fighters: How are they being recruited?" Small Wars Journal, 2008; "Countering Terrorism from the Second Foreign Fighter Glut," Small Wars Journal, 2009; and, "Capturing the Potential of Outlier Ideas in the Intelligence Community," Studies in Intelligence – CIA, 2011.(Co-author). He is also the editor of the SelectedWisdom.com blog.

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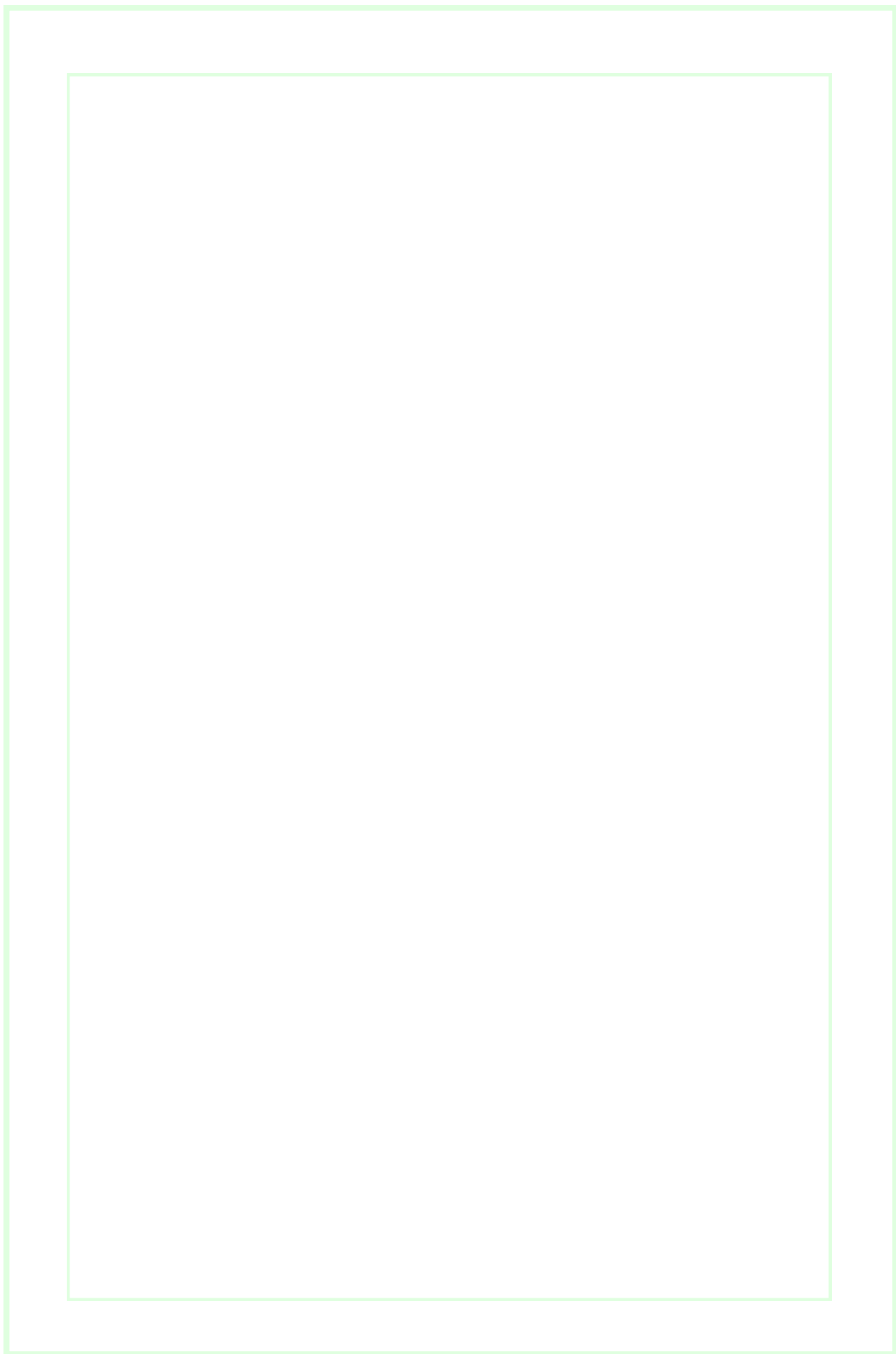
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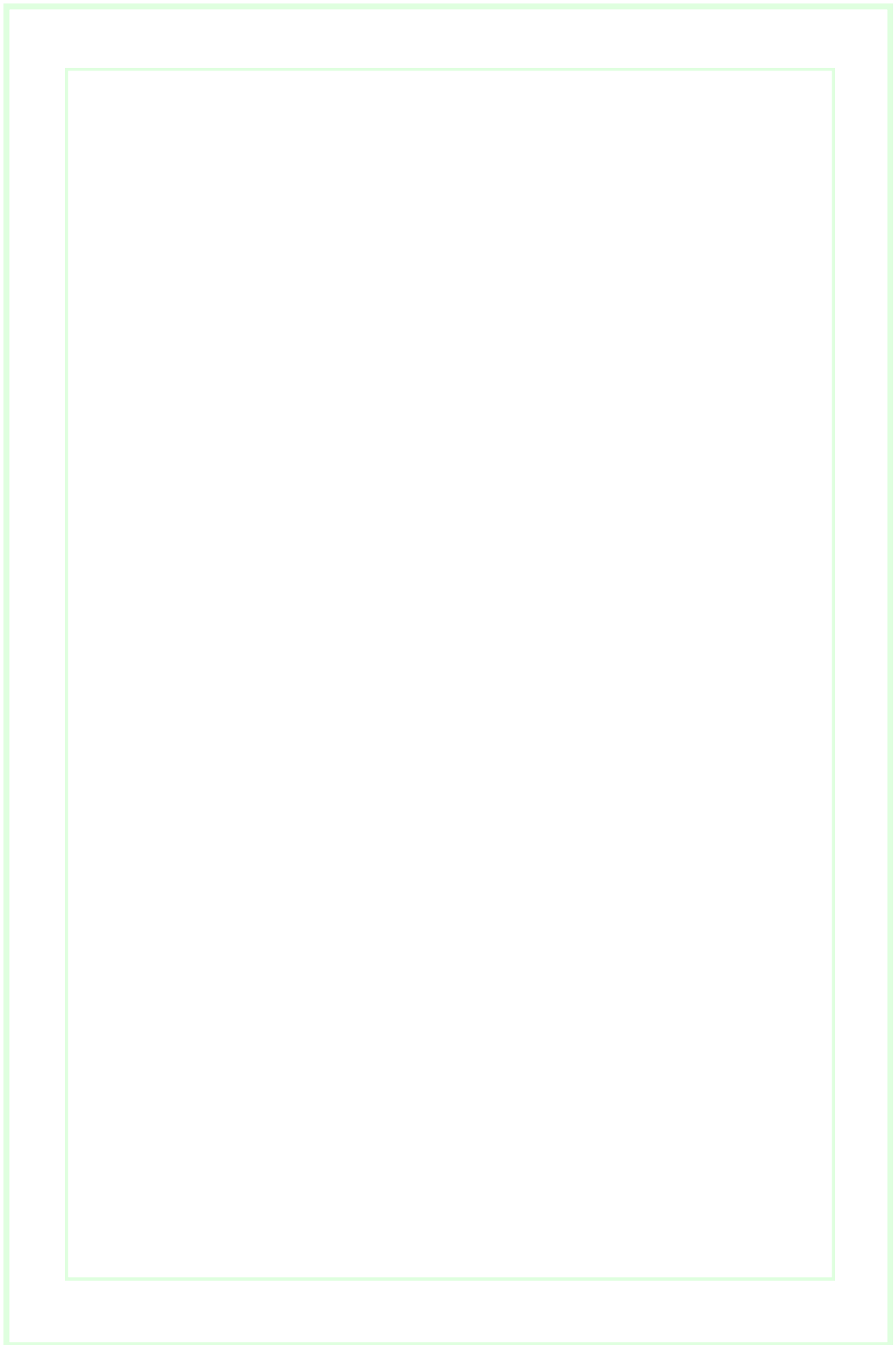
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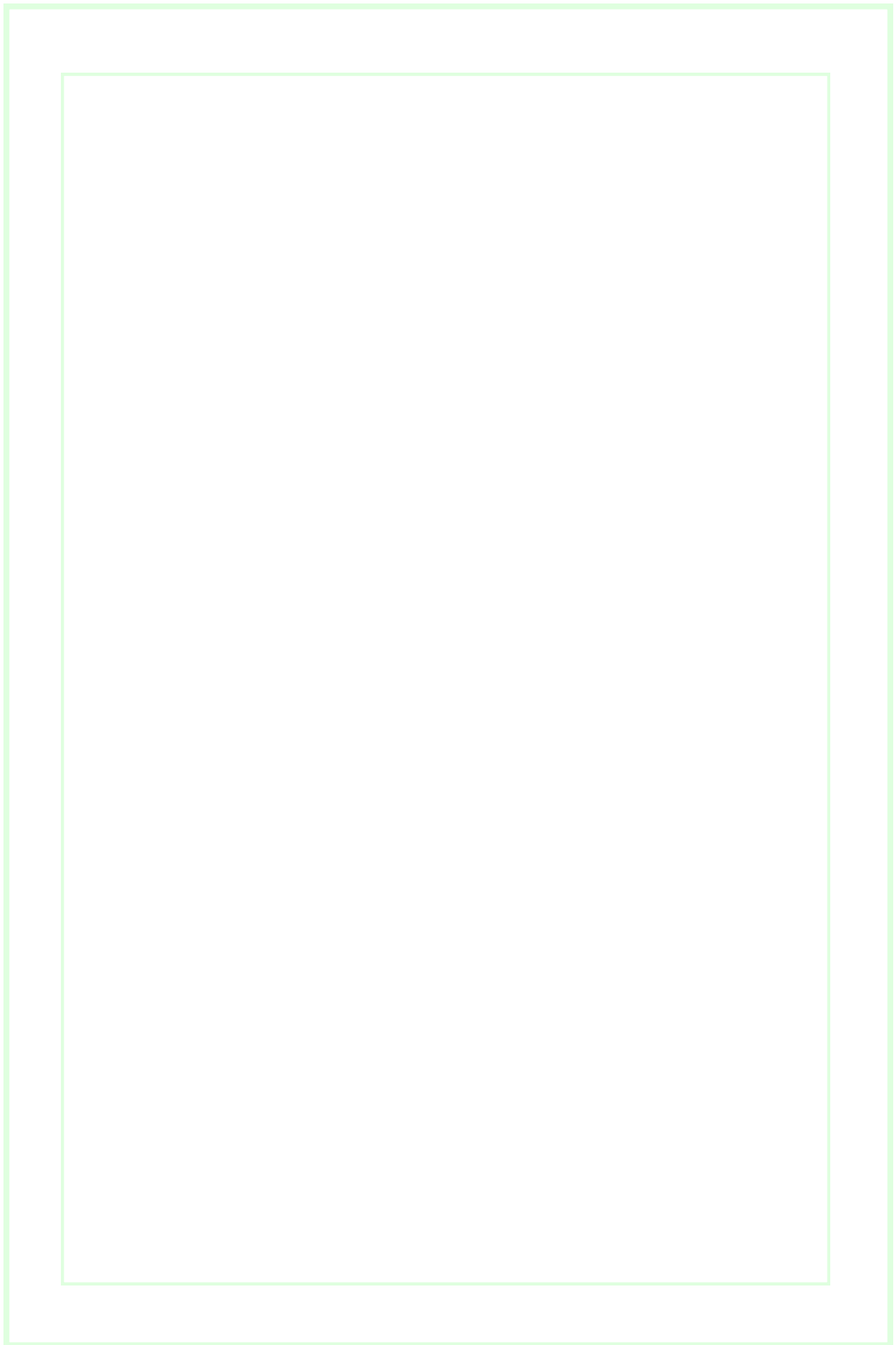
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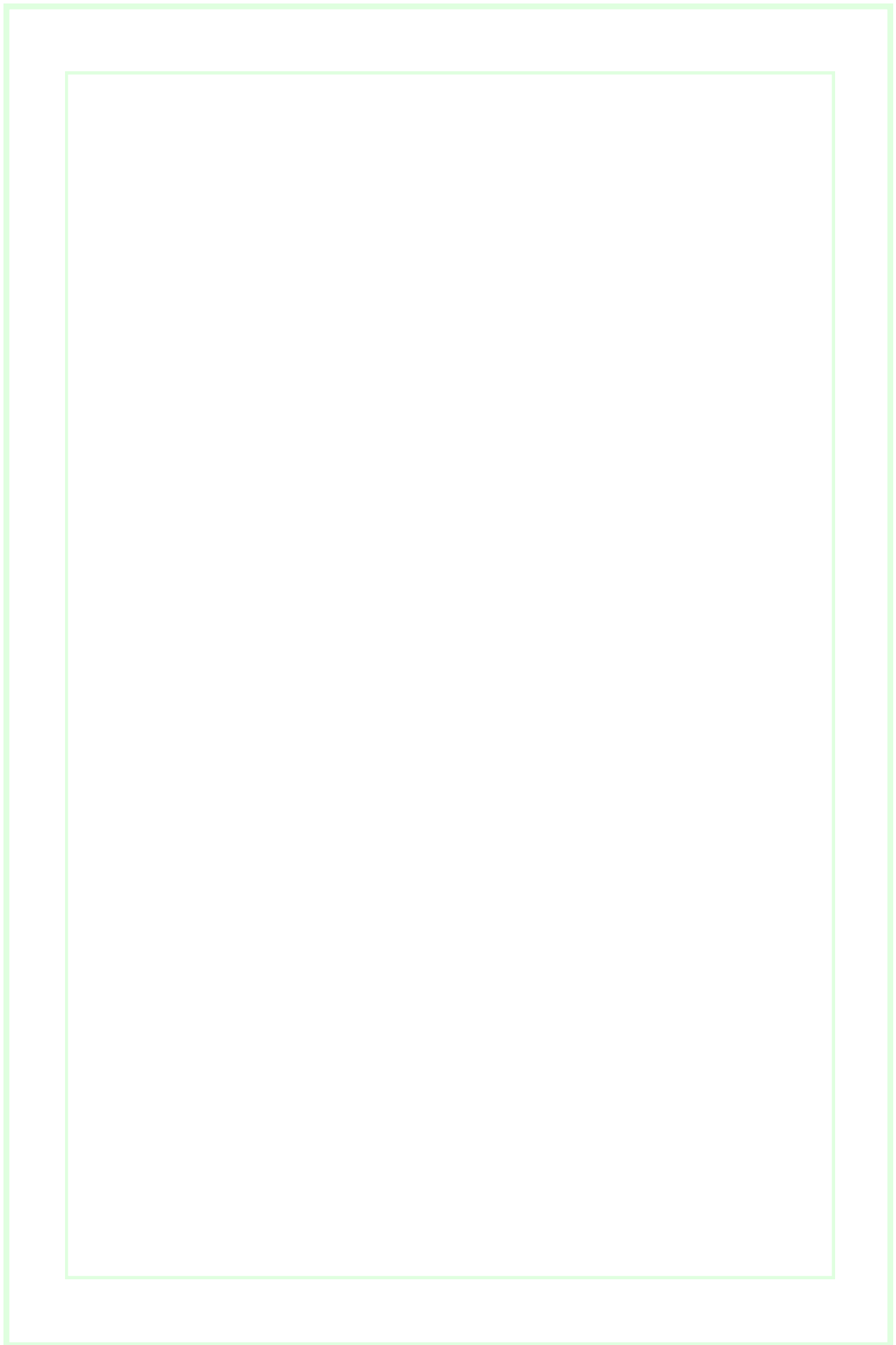
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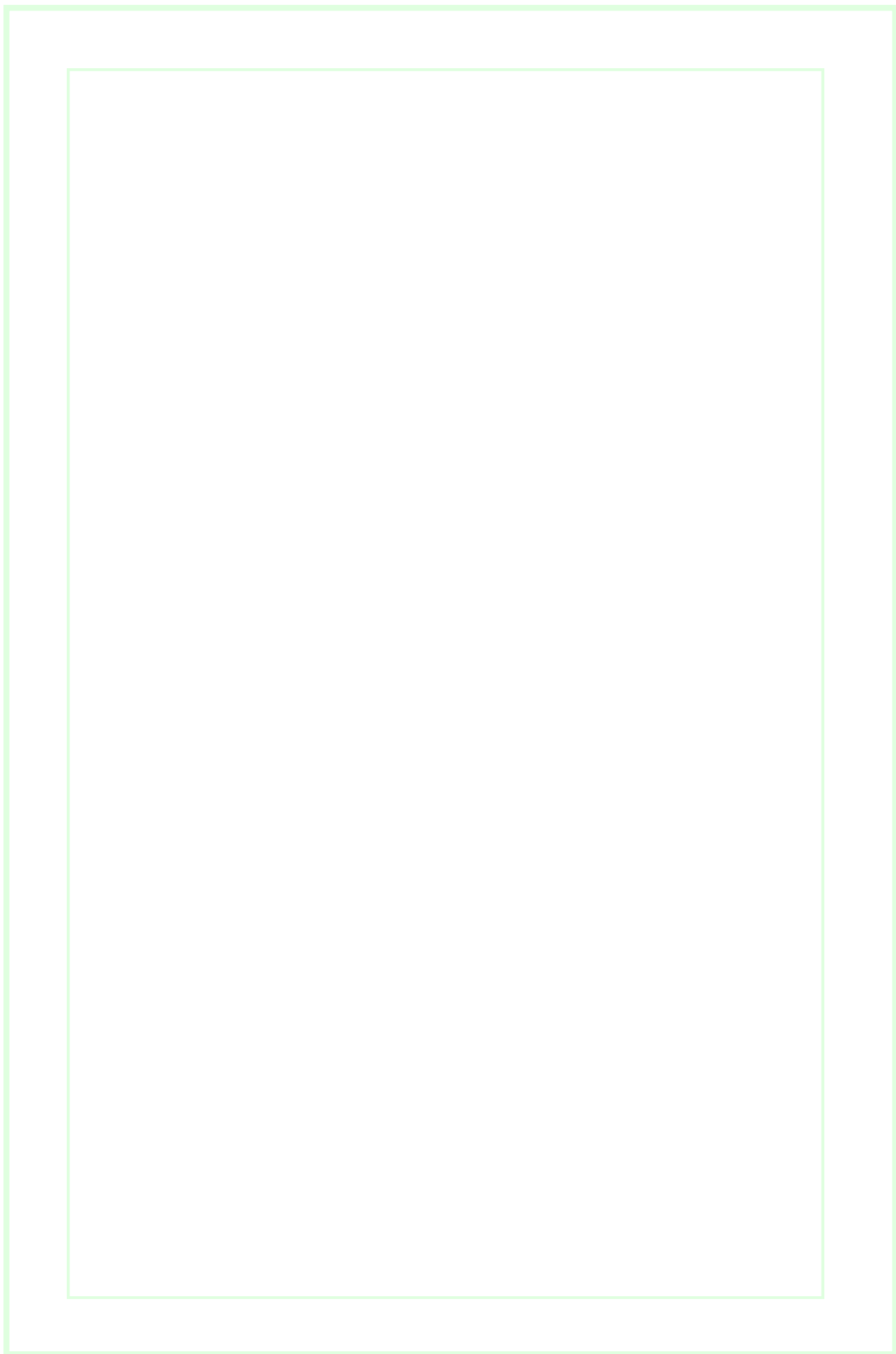


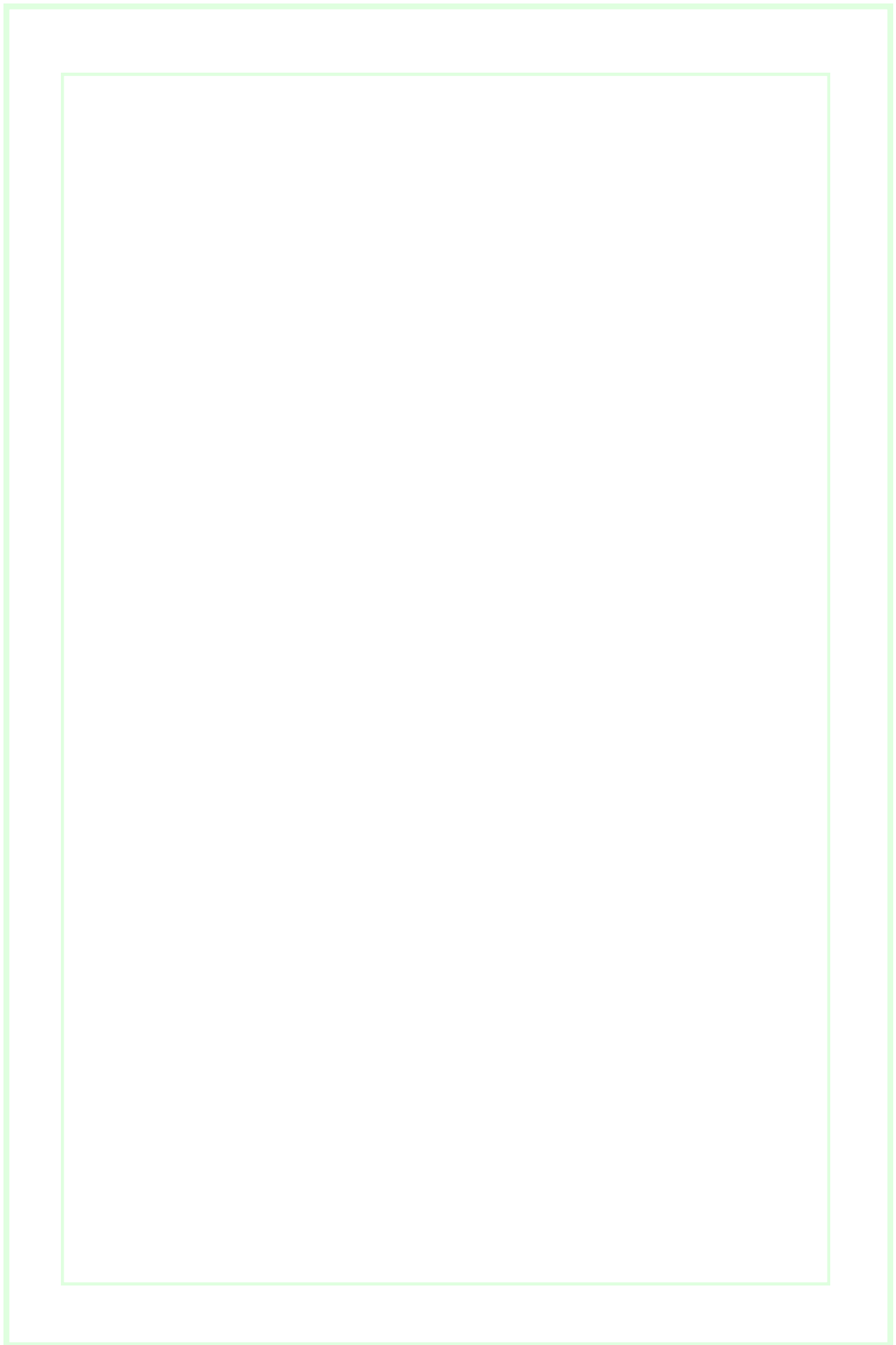




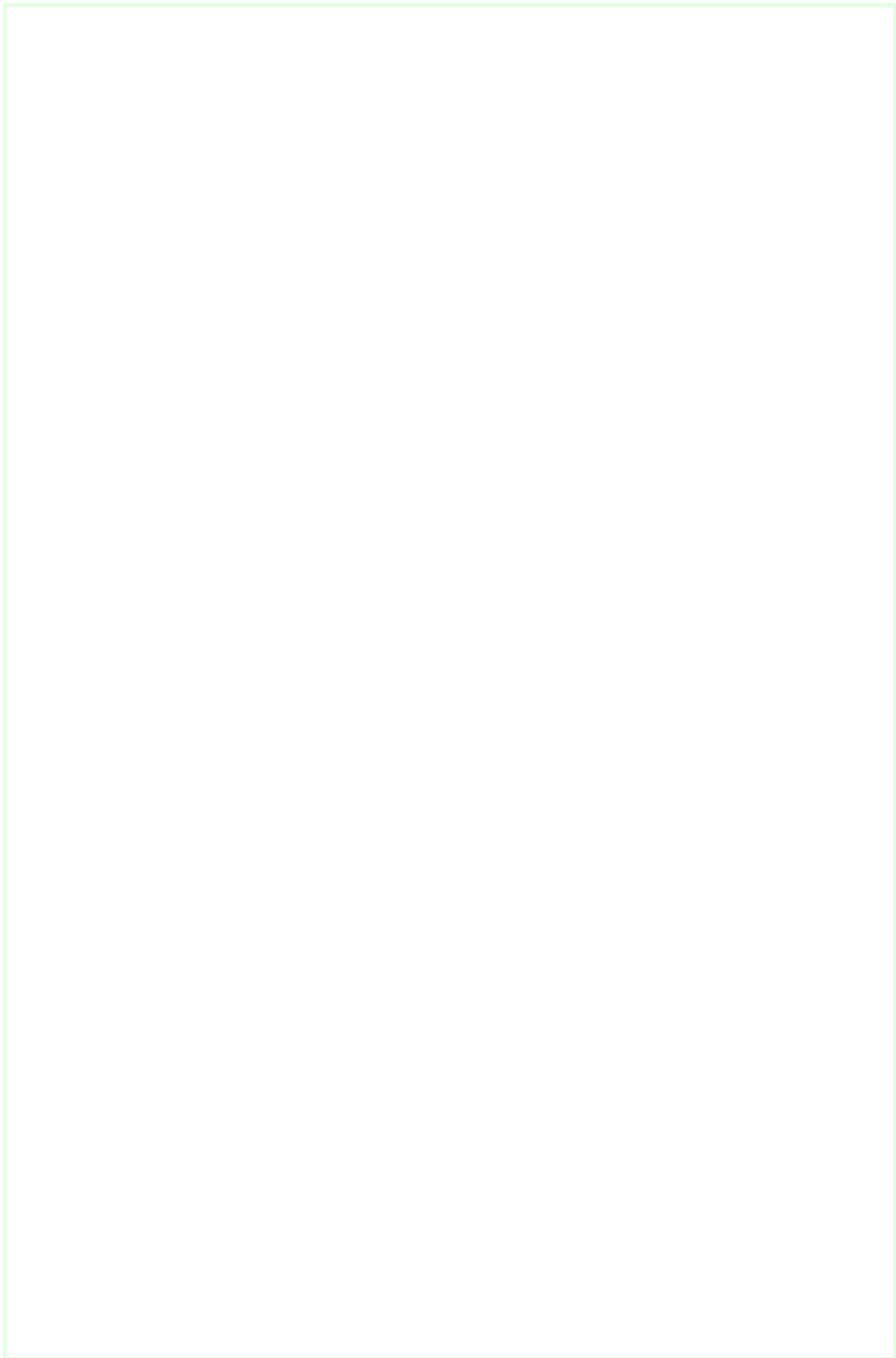
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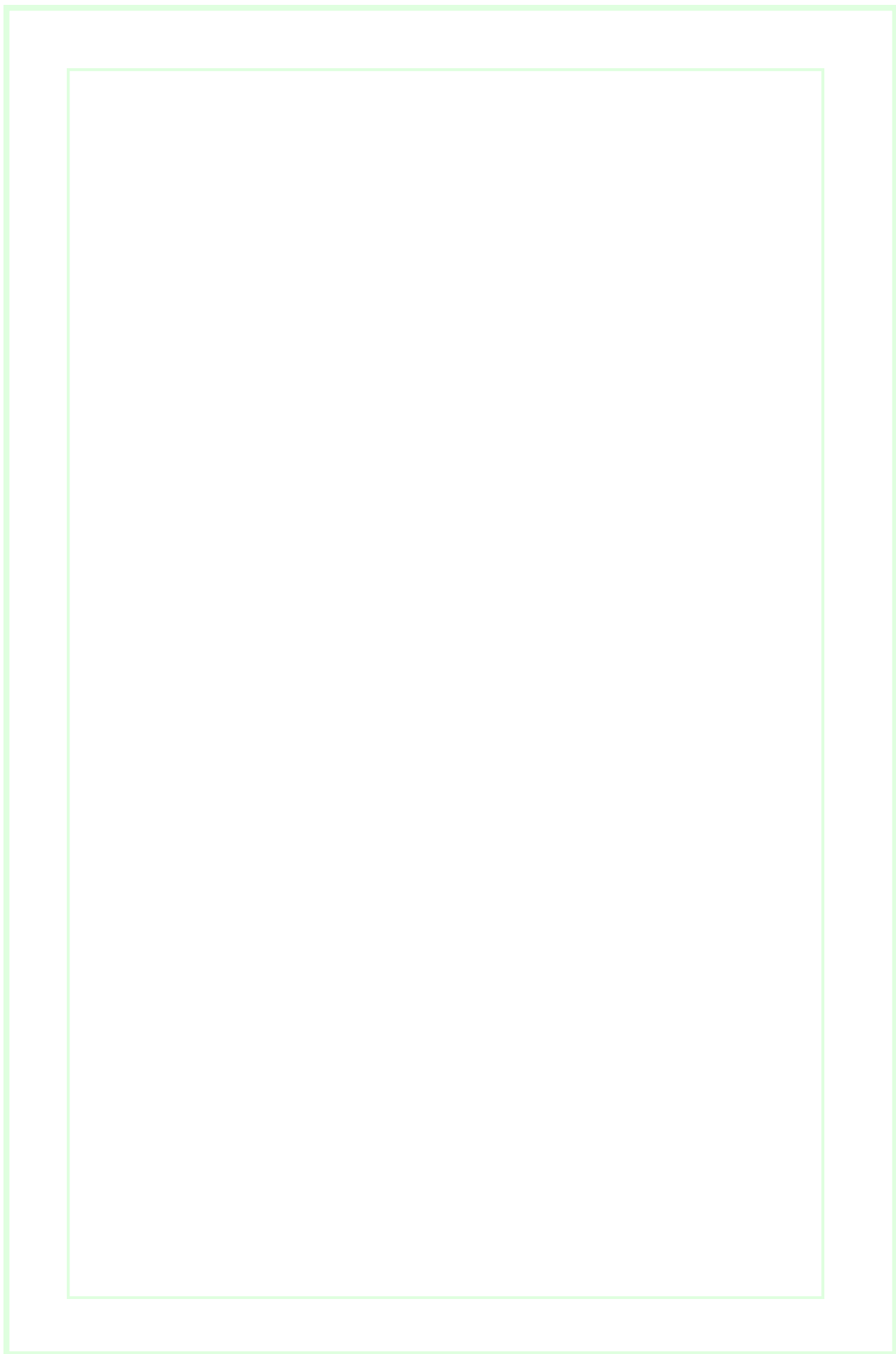


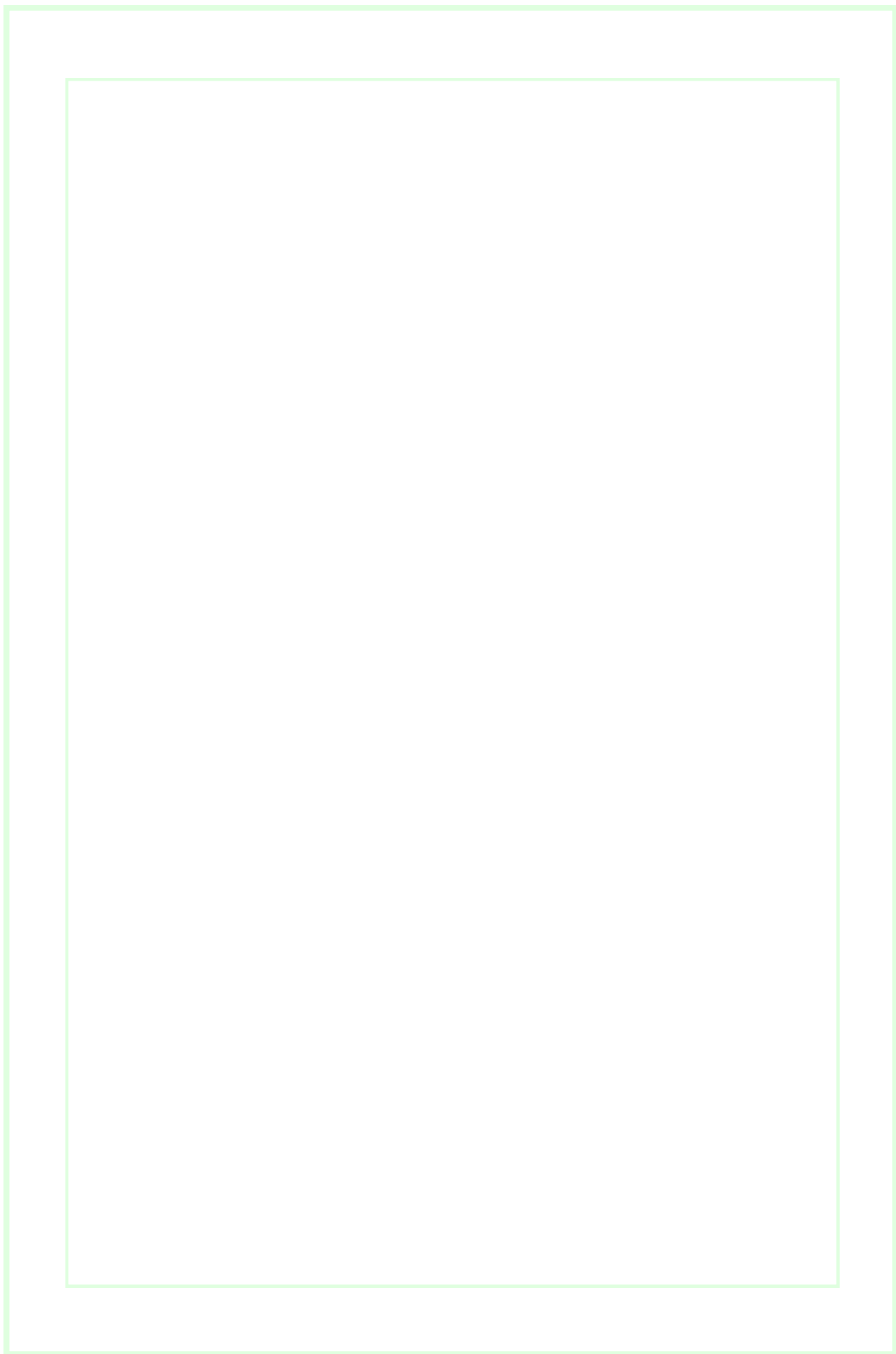


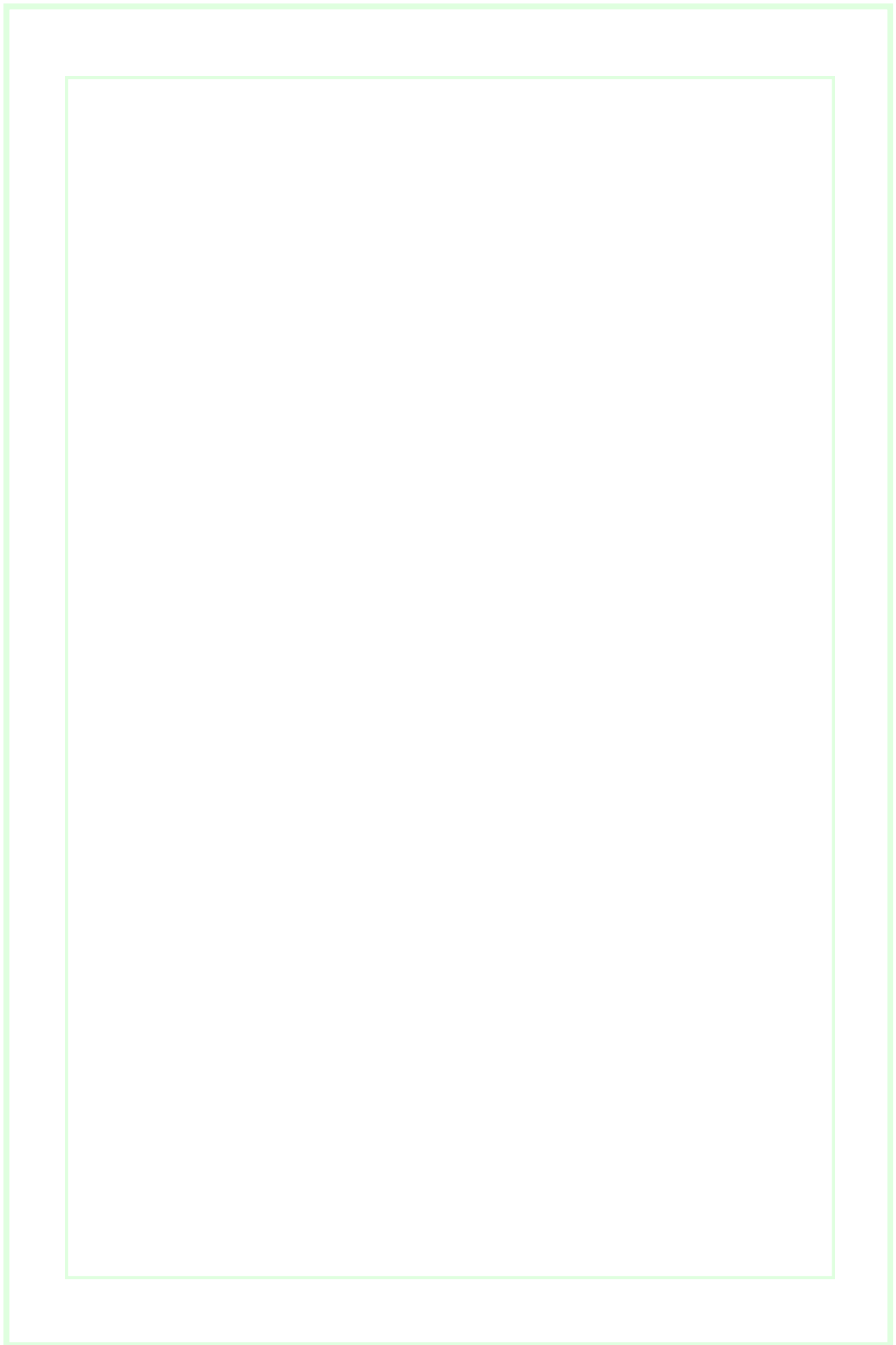


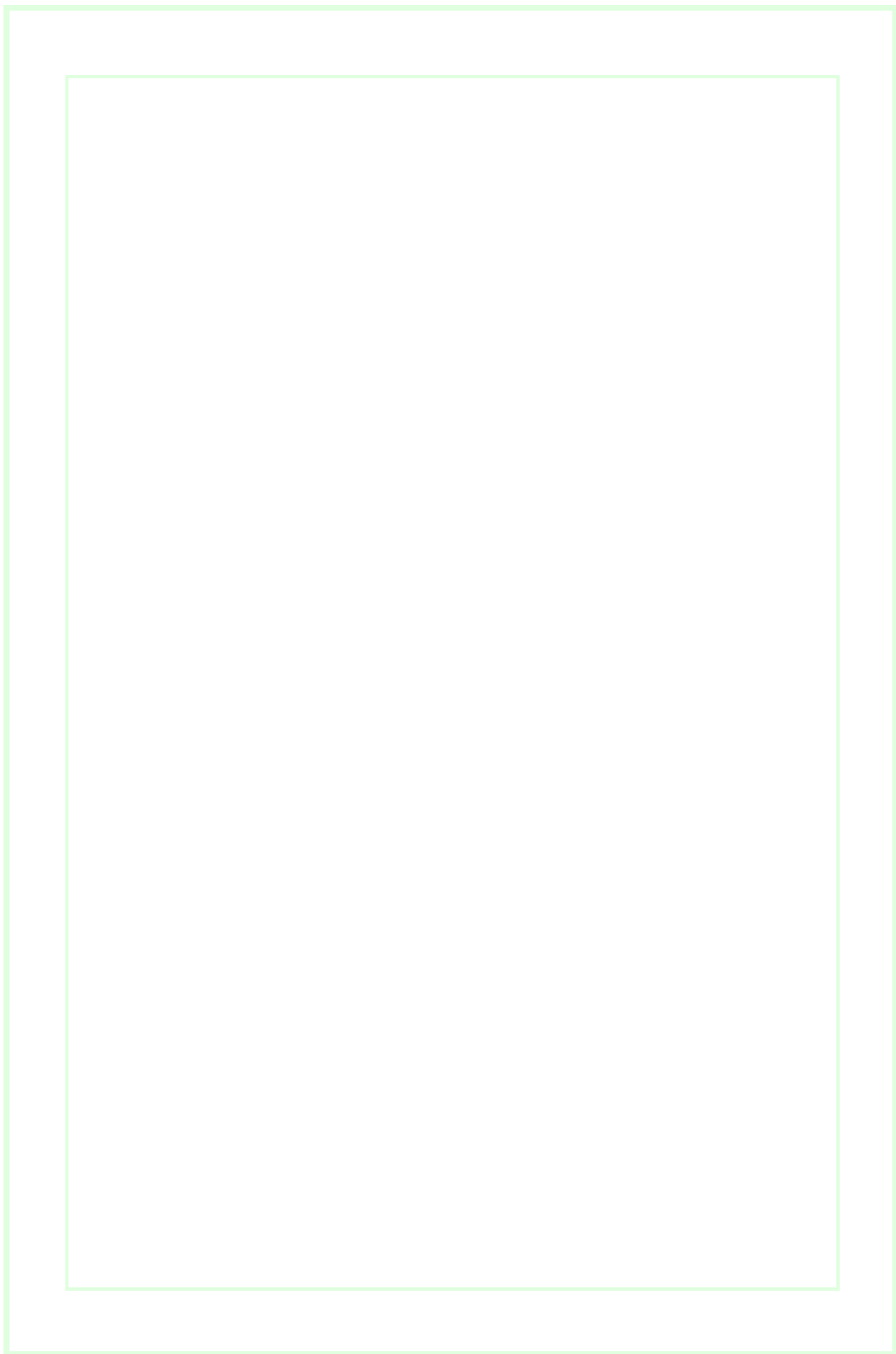
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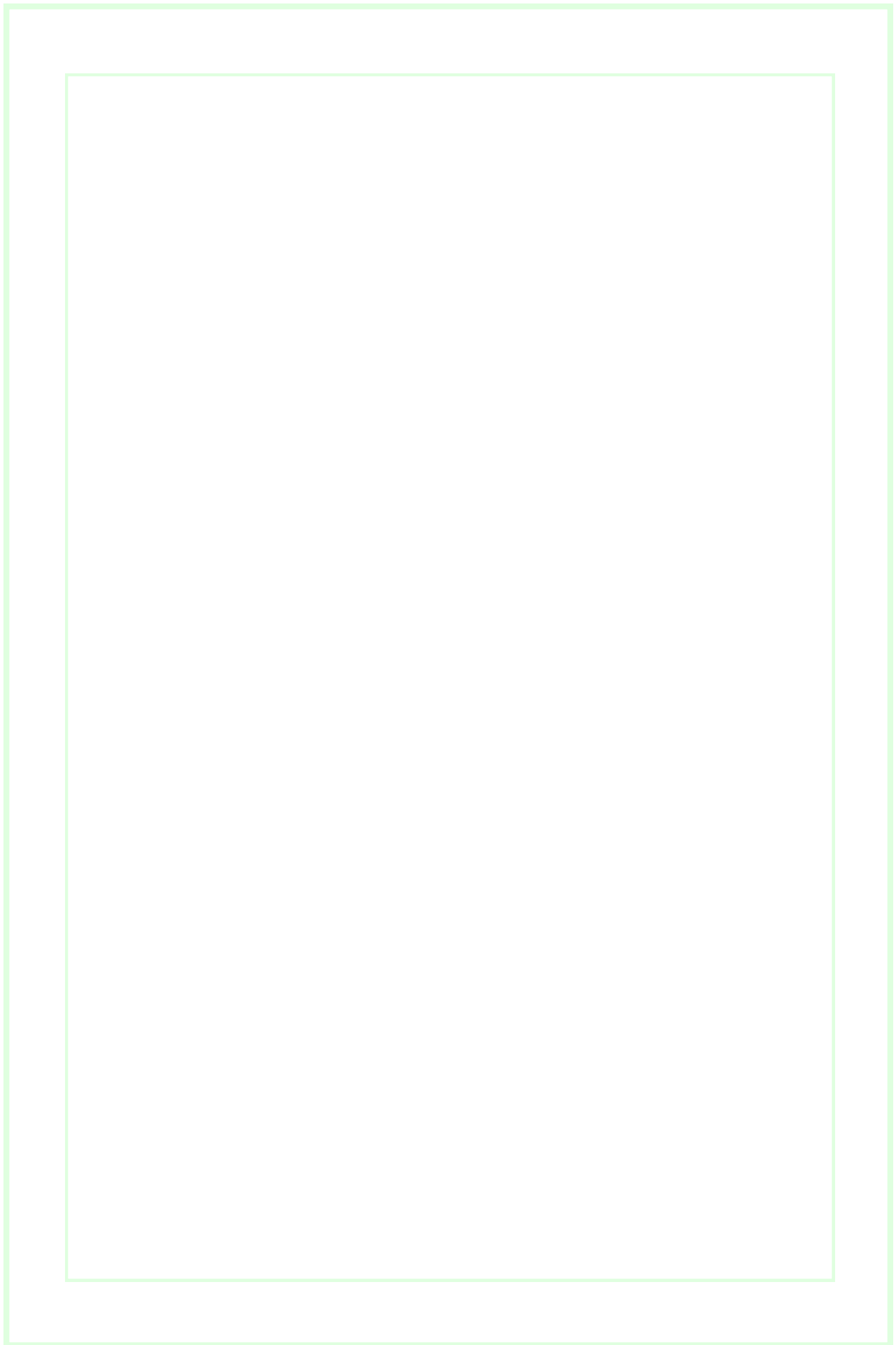


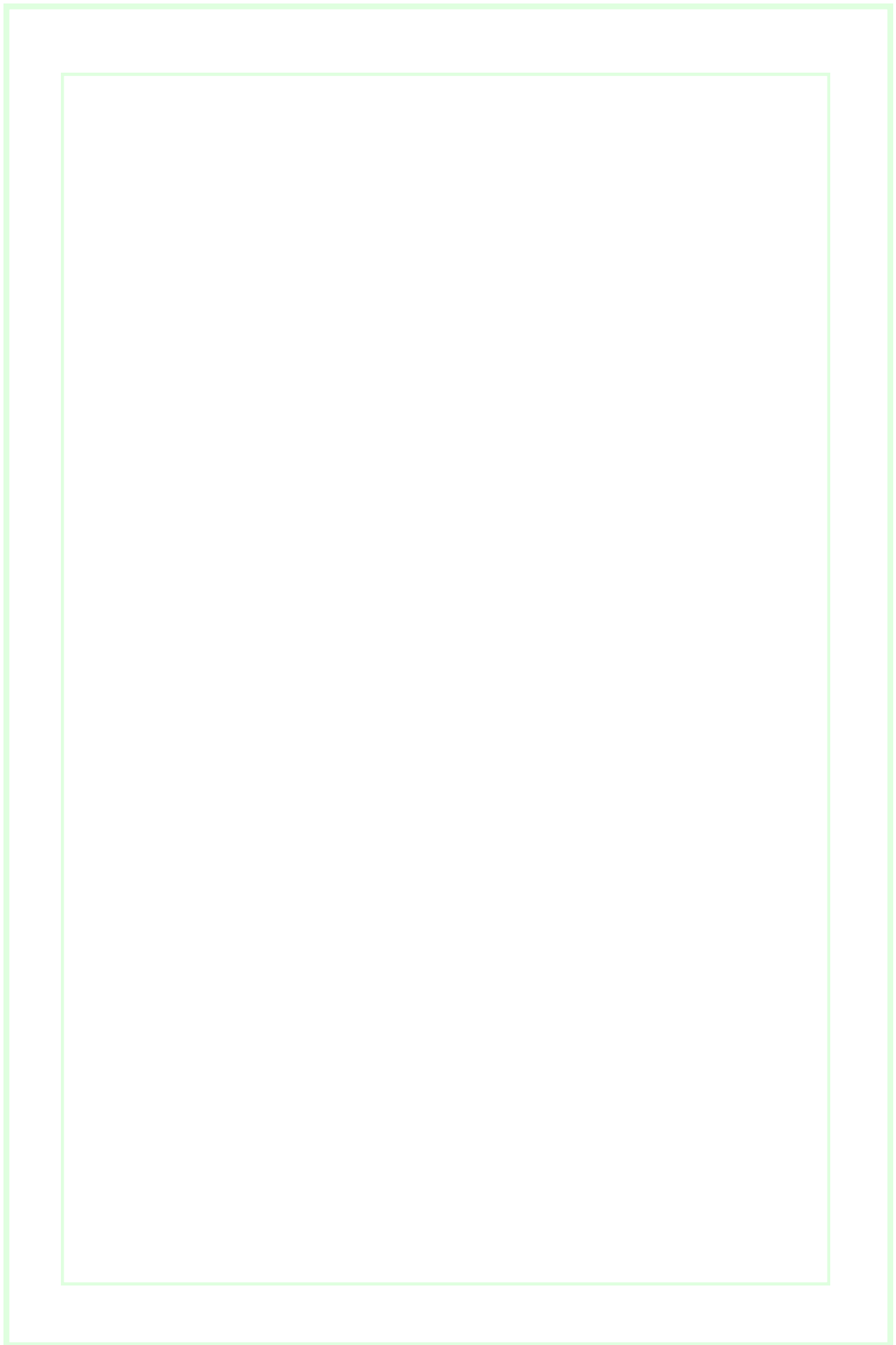


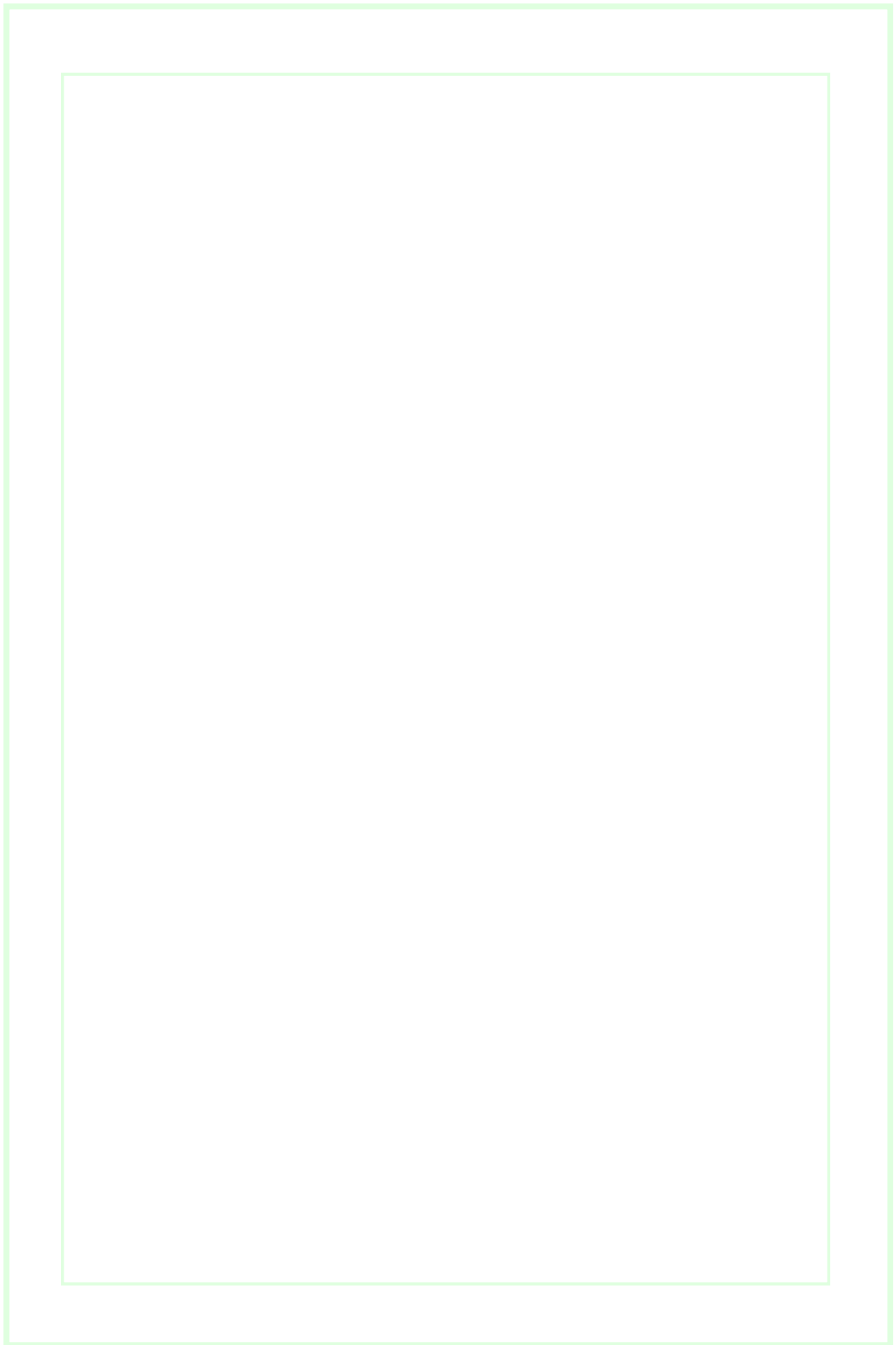


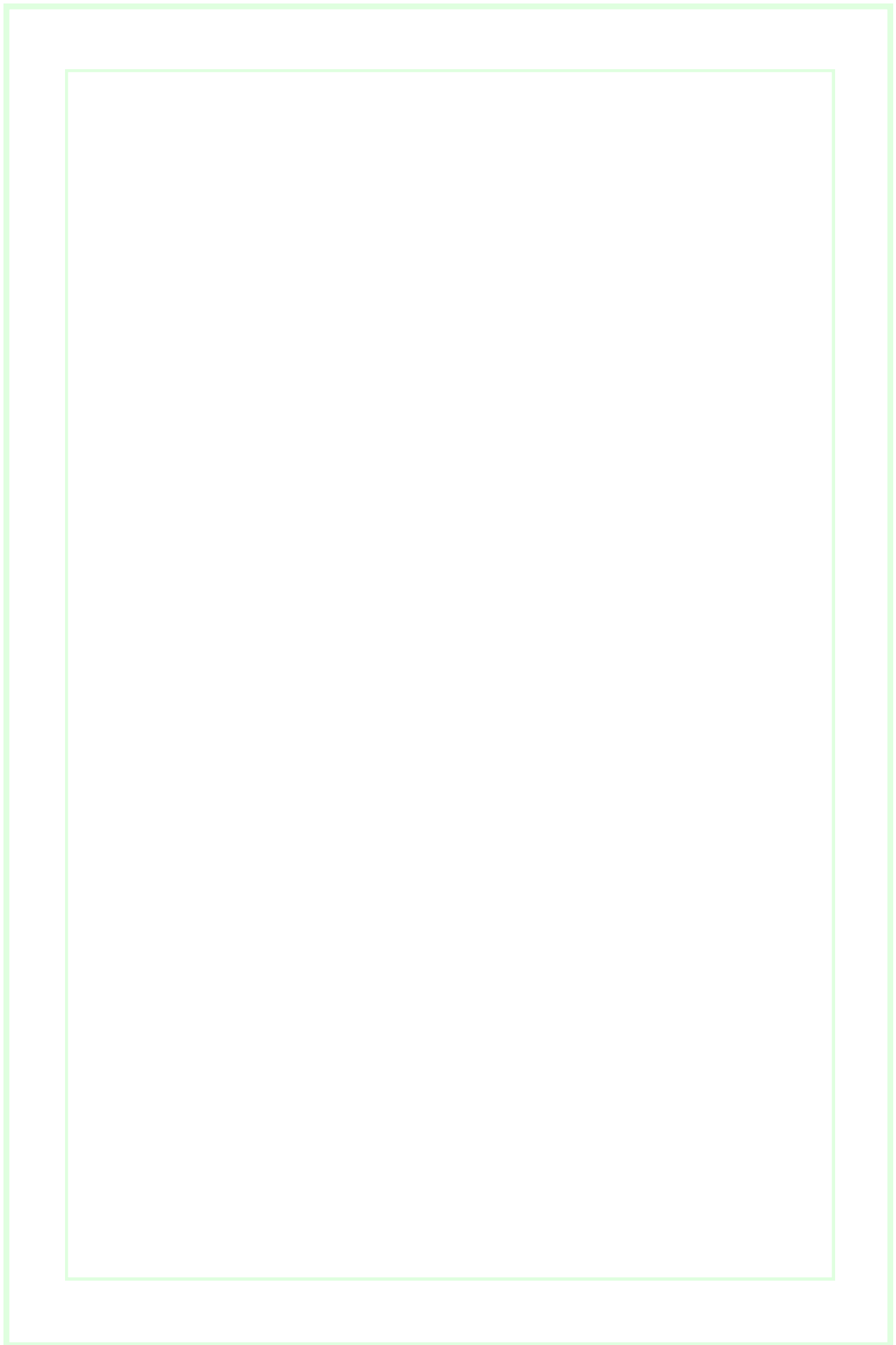


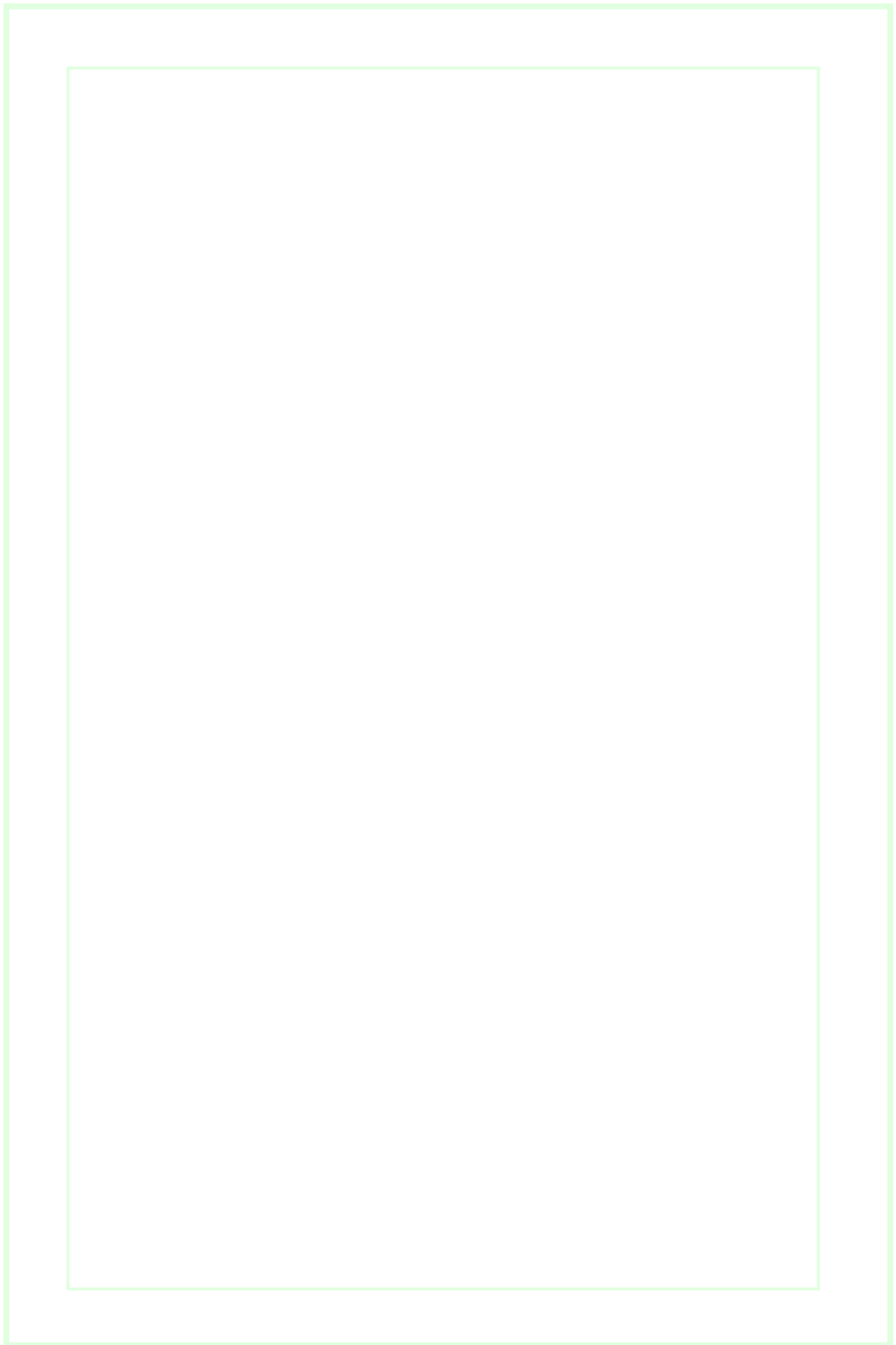


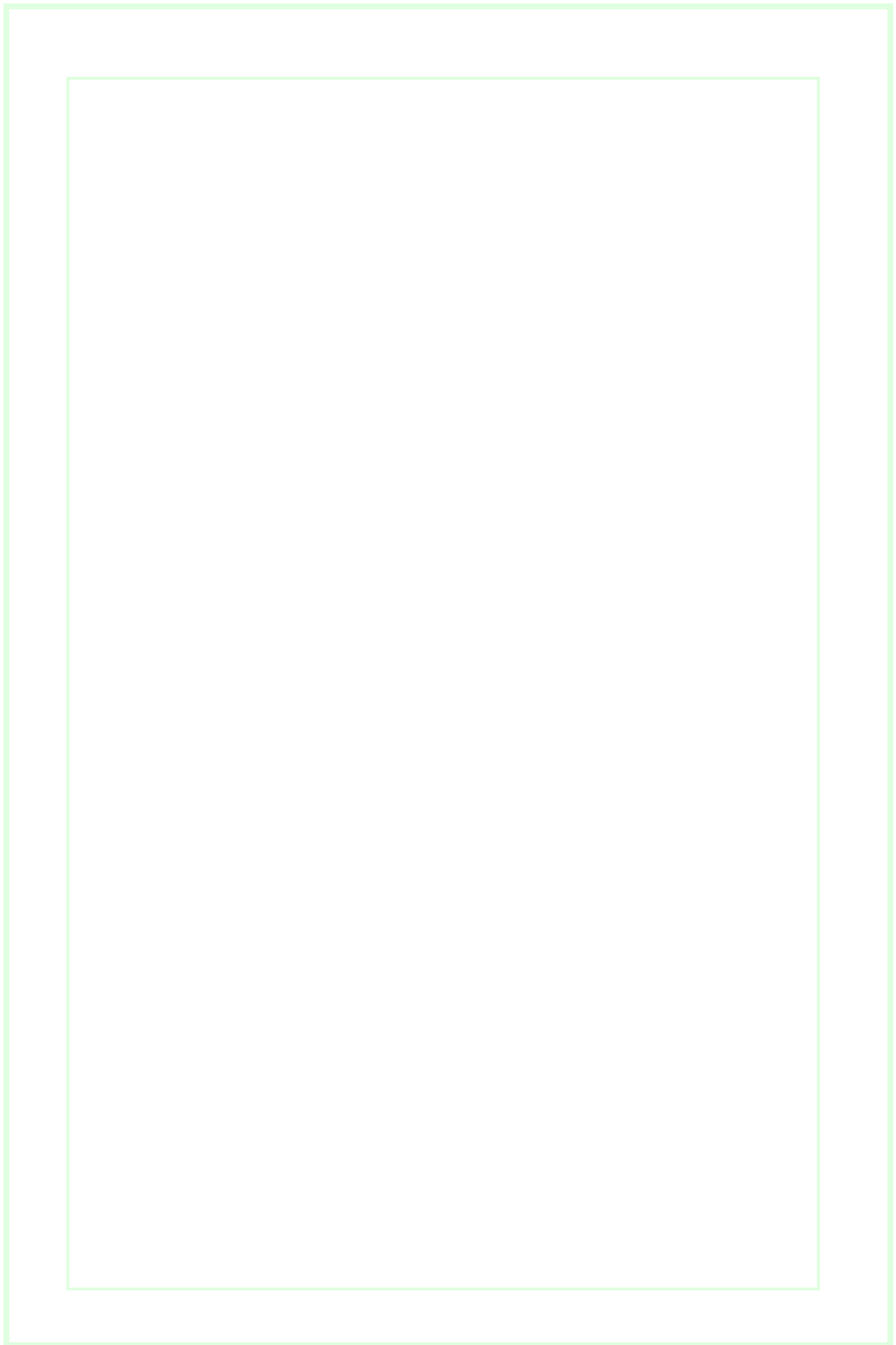


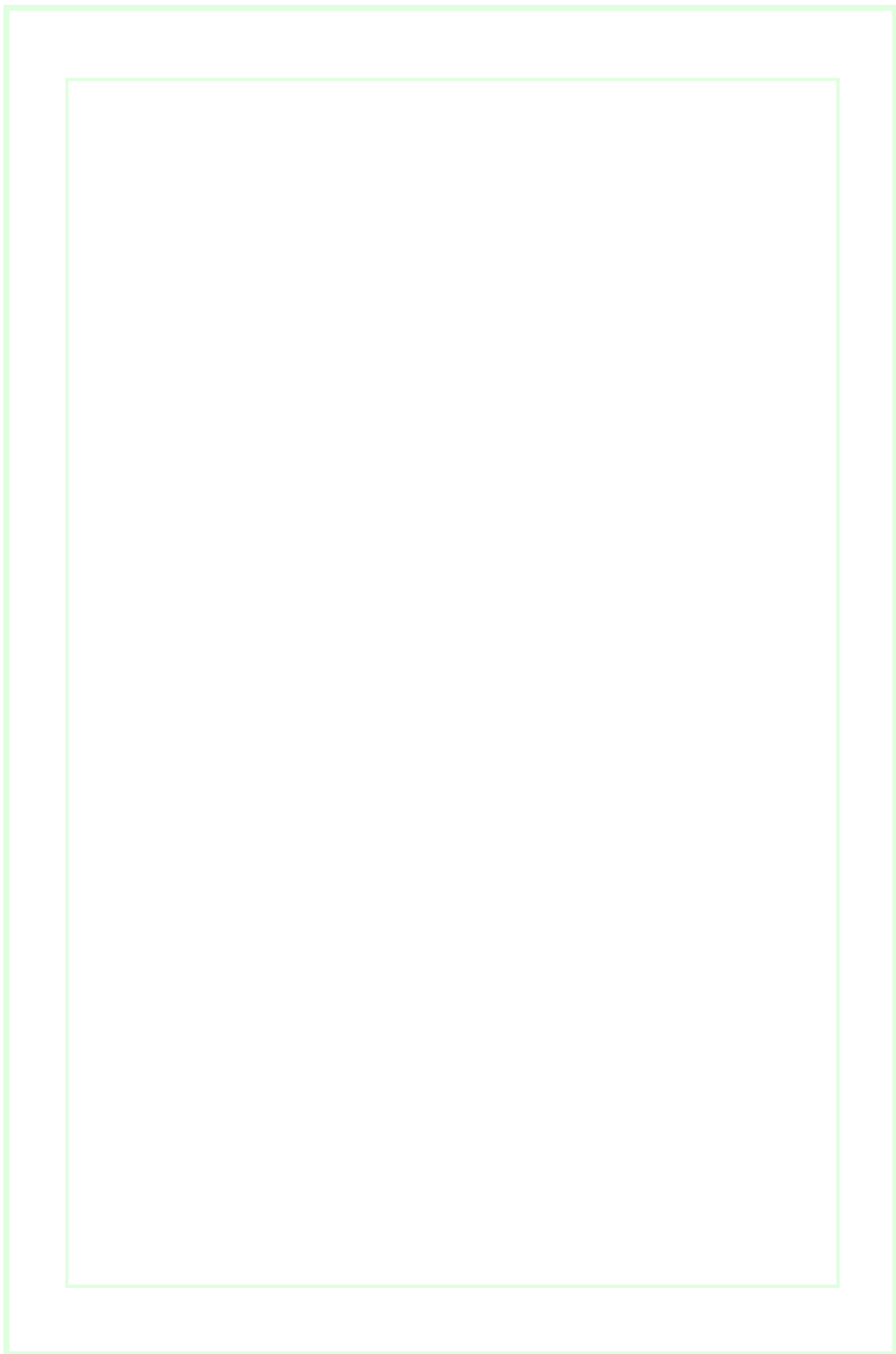






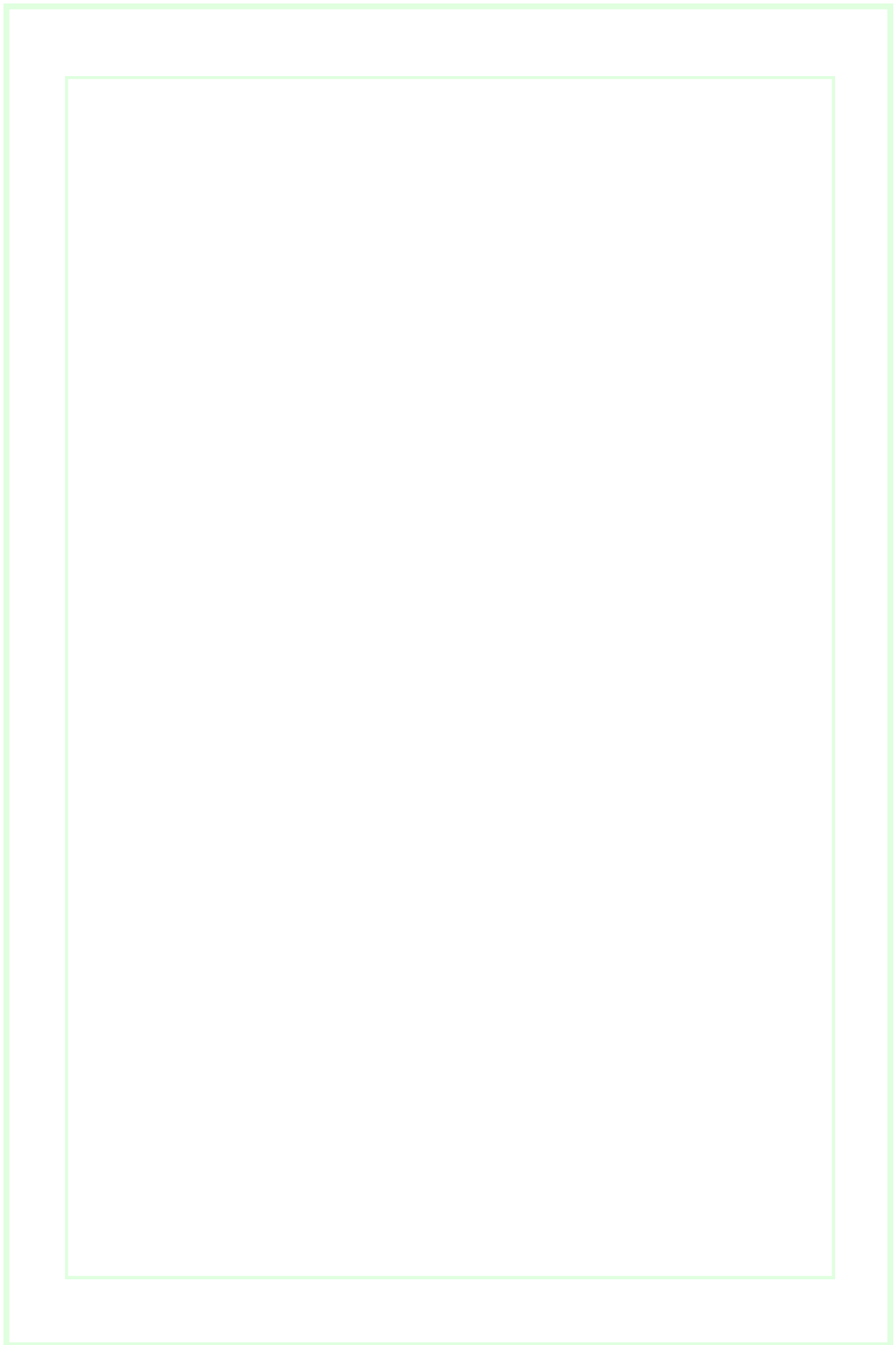


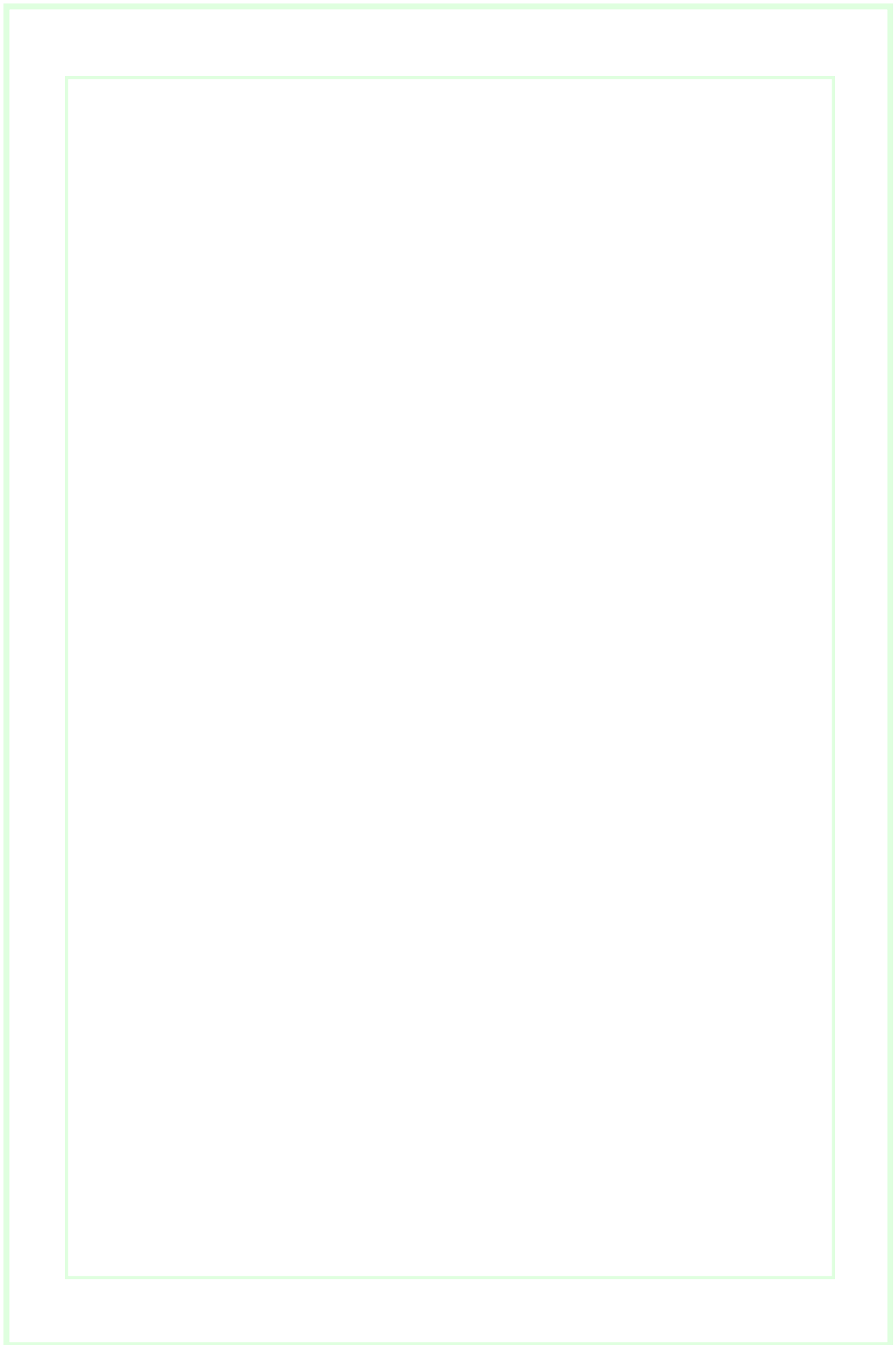


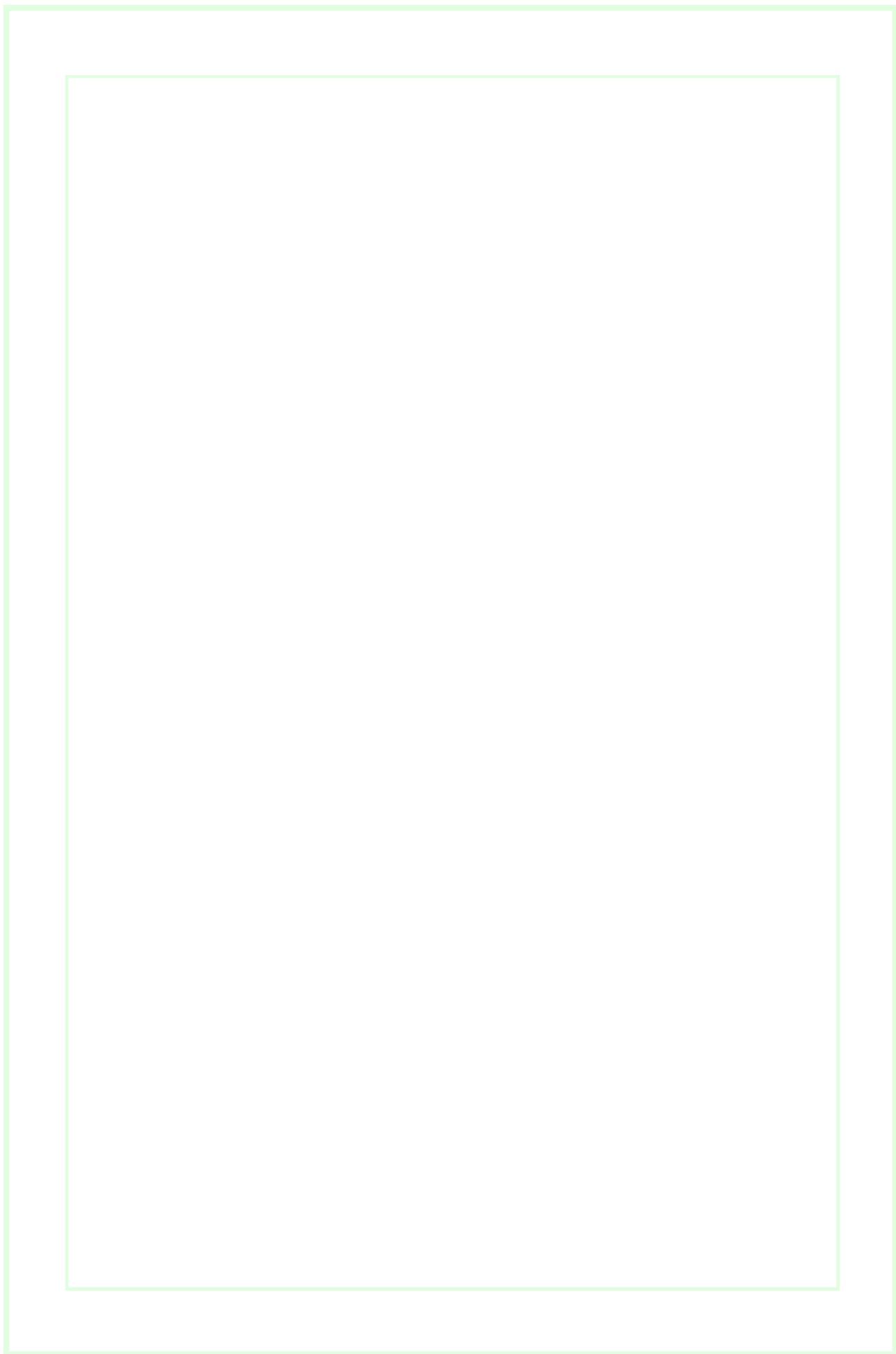


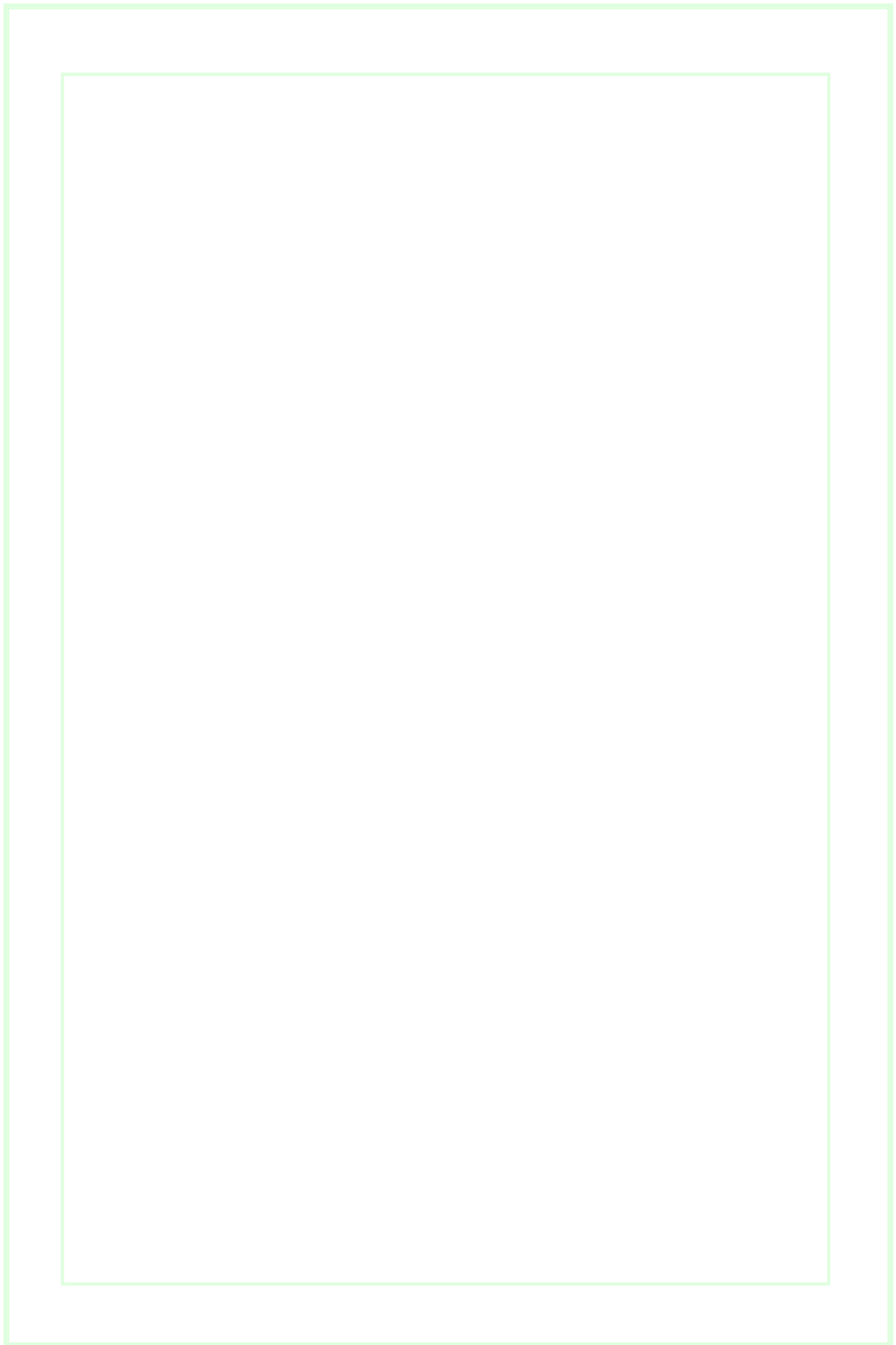
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