



# USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

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Issue No. 551, 19 January 2007

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Washington Post

January 18, 2007

Pg. 18

## **U.S. Open To Bilateral Talks On Ties With N. Korea**

*Envoy's Offer Linked to Shutdown of Nuclear Programs, as Pyongyang Had Vowed*

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

BERLIN, Jan. 17 -- If North Korea gives up its nuclear programs, the United States is willing to engage in "a bilateral process" to establish "a normal relationship," the chief U.S. negotiator said here Wednesday after two days of one-on-one talks with his North Korean counterpart.

"We are prepared to go on that road and to really offer North Korea a hand as it moves along the road," Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill said in a speech here in the midst of his talks, the first time he has met with senior North Korean officials outside Asia. He said he has been trying to "make sure they understand very clearly what we are intending to do, what our intentions are."

Hill's comments mark the first time a U.S. official has publicly emphasized the possibility of such bilateral discussions, something the Pyongyang government has long sought. Ever since the North Korean nuclear crisis began in 2002, the Bush administration has resisted such negotiations, preferring to work through a somewhat cumbersome forum that also includes China, Russia, South Korea and Japan.

The question of how normalization would take place was contentious during the negotiations that led to a September 2005 joint statement, in which North Korea pledged to abandon its nuclear programs. The U.S. delegation

specifically sought the removal of the word "dialogue" from the section describing the normalization of relations from the final draft of the statement.

Critics of the administration have urged it to provide North Korea more detail on possible enticements for giving up its weapons program. Hill's comments appeared to be part of an effort to flesh out the details.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was briefed by Hill on the talks after she arrived here from Kuwait for discussions with German officials on the Middle East. Asked at a news conference about Hill's statement, Rice emphasized the 2005 document, noting that it would "lead to a bilateral, a normalization of relations."

The agreement "is very clearly in the context of the denuclearization -- complete, verifiable denuclearization, and I should say irreversible denuclearization -- to the Korean Peninsula," Rice said. "We believe that the six-party context might allow that evolution to take place."

Hill also noted the September 2005 agreement in his speech, which was organized at the American Academy in Berlin. But the final draft of the agreement is vague about the process of normalization.

The key sentence, using the abbreviation for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said, "The DPRK and the United States undertook to respect each other's sovereignty, exist peacefully together, and take steps to normalize their relations subject to their respective bilateral policies." That sentence was crafted after the United States balked at a version referring to "bilateral policies and dialogue."

On Wednesday, Hill said that "we have an adequate bilateral mechanism within the six-party talks to exchange our views with the North Koreans." The comment appeared to refer to the increasingly frequent meetings he has held with his counterpart, Kim Gye Gwan, when the six-party sessions were not taking place. Previously, the meetings with Kim were held in Beijing, generally in preparation for another round of six-party talks, but no new round is currently scheduled.

At the last round of six-nation talks in December, North Korean officials balked at substantive discussions, insisting that the United States lift punitive measures intended to halt alleged money-laundering operations.

Rice flew to Germany after four days in the Middle East, visiting Israel, the West Bank, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Germany currently holds both the rotating presidency of the European Union and the chairmanship of the Group of Eight industrialized countries, giving it substantial diplomatic clout in the first half of the year. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has made it known she is eager to elevate the European role in the search for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Rice will fly to London on Thursday to meet with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and plans to return to Washington on Friday.

*Special correspondent Shannon Smiley in Berlin contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/17/AR2007011700828.html>

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Los Angeles Times

January 18, 2007

## Some Aid To Iran Is Suspended

By Associated Press

VIENNA — The International Atomic Energy Agency has suspended some aid to Iran in line with U.N. Security Council sanctions calling for an end to assistance for programs that could be misused to make an atomic weapon, diplomats said Wednesday.

The diplomats said the freeze was temporary and subject to review and approval by the agency's 35-nation board. Agency officials are looking at the list of technical aid programs to Iran, and when the board meets in March they will propose culling those that could serve nonpeaceful aims. Board members will make the final decision.

A United Nations official and a diplomat accredited to the IAEA said the suspension was imposed in recent days. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment.

Another diplomat said the aid was suspended for programs "where there is a clear prohibition by the Security Council, specifically applying to enrichment, reprocessing and heavy water."

He said the agency planned to separate the projects into those in which the Security Council bans applied, those deemed not controversial and a "gray list" of projects that needed closer examination.

"Whatever is absolutely clearly banned by the resolution is now on hold," the diplomat said.

Tehran says it wants to develop a uranium enrichment program to generate energy, but some Western nations suspect that Iran is more interested in producing nuclear weapons.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran18jan18,1,7850836.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post  
January 18, 2007  
Pg. 12

## Two Minutes Closer To Doomsday

*Scientists Change Symbolic Clock to Recognize New Dangers*

By Elizabeth Williamson, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Doomsday Clock, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' ticking nudge to the world's conscience, moved two minutes closer to nuclear midnight yesterday, the closest to doomsday it has been since the Cold War.

North Korea's nuclear bomb test, Iran's nuclear plans, and atomic energy projects posed as an answer to climate change prompted the scientific journal to move the hands of the clock on its cover to 11:55. Midnight represents doomsday on the clock, for six decades a symbolic indicator of the threat posed by nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear science has changed the world, "but it hasn't managed to change the way that people think about the world, and that's why we're here," said Mark Strauss, editor of the journal, founded by University of Chicago scientists whose work on the first atomic bomb led them to anti-nuclear advocacy. Decisions to change the clock come from the bulletin's board of sponsors, a group of scientists and policymakers that includes 18 Nobel laureates.

The group unveiled the new clock and made a statement at a joint news conference in Washington and London yesterday. "Not since the first atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has the world faced such perilous choices," the statement declared.

Nuclear weapons expansion, renewed emphasis on nuclear weapons in war and poor safeguards of nuclear materials "are symptomatic of a failure to solve the problems posed by the most destructive technology on Earth."

This is the 18th time the clock's hands have moved since it was created in 1947. At the start of the nuclear arms race in 1953, the timepiece came within two minutes of midnight. In 1991, after the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the clock moved the farthest from doomsday it has ever been, to 11:43.

"Bush the father's policy decisions produced the biggest one-time move away from midnight the clock ever experienced and Bush the son's policy decisions have pushed the clock almost as close to midnight as it's ever been," said Thomas Blanton, director of the National Security Archive at George Washington University and a former member of the Atomic Scientists board that sets the clock.

Yesterday's announcement was attended by scientists and policymakers including Stephen Hawking, an astrophysicist, author and University of Cambridge mathematics professor; Sir Martin Rees, president of the Royal Society; and Leon Lederman, director emeritus of the Fermi Laboratory.

Thomas Pickering, co-chairman of the International Crisis Group, sounded one of the news conference's few semi-bright notes by pointing to renewed talks with nuclear aspirants: "Diplomacy ought to be our first resort, especially when there is time."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/17/AR2007011701783.html>

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New York Times  
January 19, 2007  
Pg. 8

## Gates Says U.S. Has Few Options To Halt Iran's Atomic Plans

By David S. Cloud

MANAMA, Bahrain, Jan. 18 — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates on Thursday played down the possibility of American military action against Iran but said it was not the right time for diplomatic engagement, either.

"Frankly, right at this moment there's really nothing the Iranians want from us, and so in any negotiation right now we would be the supplicant," Mr. Gates told reporters after talks with allies in the Persian Gulf.

His comments were a blunt acknowledgment that the Bush administration, despite its increasingly tough comments toward Iran in recent weeks, has limited options to compel its leaders to halt their nuclear program or to play a more supportive role in Iraq.

Mr. Gates said he told the emir of Qatar, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, over lunch on Thursday "that the Iranians were being very aggressive" because they believed that "they have the United States at some disadvantage because of the situation in Iraq."

He said he had told the emir that the United States did not intend to retreat from its commitments to defend the region's Sunni Arab governments.

In meetings late Wednesday with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Gates said the United States viewed Iraq, despite the close ties between some in its Shiite-dominated government and Shiite Iran, as a bulwark against Tehran, said a senior Defense Department official.

"Our Arab friends tend to see Iraq in the context of the new challenge from Iran," the official said. "That's clearly the Saudi perspective. So the secretary was able to reassure them that we want an Iraq that is a barrier against Iranian expansionism."

Mr. Gates also met with Bahrain's leader, King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, on Thursday night.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said Thursday that Iran was prepared for anything in the standoff with the West over its nuclear program, which Iran says is for peaceful energy purposes and the United States contends is aimed at producing nuclear weapons.

"Today, with the grace of God, we have gone through the arduous passes and we are ready for anything in this path," Iran's state-run television quoted Mr. Ahmadinejad as saying, The Associated Press reported.

He was apparently referring to the United Nations decision to impose sanctions on Iran for its nuclear activities and to the American decision to move a second aircraft carrier, the John C. Stennis, to the Persian Gulf and to extend deployments of Patriot antimissile defense systems in Kuwait and Qatar.

Commodore Keith Winstanley of Britain, who is second in command of coalition naval forces in the region, told reporters at a briefing on Thursday that the carrier deployment should not be seen entirely as a move aimed at intimidating Iran, but he added, "I'm sure there's a message there for Iran."

Mr. Gates, who also met with the top American Navy and Air Force commanders in the region, said the deployments were meant to show that, for all its problems in Iraq, the United States could still fulfill its security commitments in the Persian Gulf.

He added: "Nobody wants another conflict in this region. My view is that there are many courses of actions available that do not involve a conflict with Iran. There is no need for that."

He acknowledged that the United States' troubles stabilizing Iraq had given Iran an opportunity to seek to expand its influence in the region but that the Iranians were "overplaying their hand."

Even though Iran is worrying its neighbors, he said, he disagreed with critics, including the Iraq Study Group, who have called for the Bush administration to hold talks with Iran and enlist its support in stabilizing Iraq. Mr. Gates had been a member of the group before resigning to become defense secretary.

Perhaps seeking leverage, the White House late last year approved a stepped up campaign of going after Iranian operatives inside Iraq, who United States officials say have been involved in supplying materials for the homemade bombs that are the largest killer of American troops in Iraq.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/19/world/middleeast/19gates.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/19/world/middleeast/19gates.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

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Washington Times

January 19, 2007

Pg. 13

## **Gates Sees Tehran As Overly Ambitious**

*Pentagon chief warns against its intent in Iraq*

By David R. Sands, Washington Times

MANAMA, Bahrain -- Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates warned yesterday that Iran is "overplaying their hand" in trying to exploit U.S. difficulties in the war in Iraq.

Following private meetings for the past two days with Saudi King Abdullah and Qatar Emir Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Mr. Gates said he found deep concern about Iran's ambitions in Iraq and the wider Middle East.

"I think the Iranians are overplaying their hand. They have raised real concerns in the region and beyond about their intentions," said the Pentagon chief said in a briefing last night with reporters.

But Mr. Gates also said he found no appetite in the region for another conflict and said recent U.S. moves to bolster its military presence in the region and increase troops levels in Iraq were not a prelude to action against Tehran.

"Our difficulties have given them a tactical opportunity in the short term, but the United States remains a very powerful country," Mr. Gates said.

The dispatch of a second naval carrier strike group to the Persian Gulf by President Bush last week was a clear sign "we are going to remain [in the region for a long time]," Mr. Gates said.

The defense chief, who finishes his regional tour with a stop in Iraq today, said he found support from U.S. allies for the strategy behind Mr. Bush's increase in troops and aid to Iraq as a means to control the violence and aid the beleaguered government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

But he said many Arab regimes are still not convinced that Mr. Bush's plan can achieve his goals.

"I would say they expressed hope" that the plan will work, he said.

Although he co-authored a 2004 Council on Foreign Relations study urging engagement with Tehran to solve the region's security problems, Mr. Gates said yesterday Tehran's assertive new stance and its unwillingness to halt its suspect nuclear programs meant direct engagement now would not be wise for the United States.

"Frankly, right at this moment, there's really nothing the Iranians want from us," he said. "In any negotiation, we would be the supplicant."

"We need some leverage, it seems to me, before we engage with the Iranians," Mr. Gates said. "And I think at some point engagement probably makes sense."

Nearly four years ago, Iran offered to cut off aid and support for the Lebanese Shi'ite militia Hezbollah and the Palestinian group Hamas, and promised full transparency on its nuclear program, in a secret letter to the United States soon after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported on Wednesday.

According to the BBC, the letter, which it obtained, was unsigned, but the State Department understood that it came with the approval of the highest Iranian authorities.

The Islamic republic also offered to use its influence to support stabilization in Iraq, and in return asked for a halt in U.S. hostility, an abolition of all sanctions, and the pursuit and repatriation of members of the Mujahedeen Khalq (People's Mujahedeen).

The People's Mujahedeen is an exiled Iranian opposition group that fought alongside Saddam Hussein's army in the eight-year war with Iran, and is currently based in Iraq.

Initially, the State Department was receptive to the offer, according to Lawrence Wilkerson, former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's chief of staff, who spoke to the BBC.

"As soon as it got to the White House, and as soon as it got to the vice president's office, the old mantra of 'we don't talk to evil' ... reasserted itself," Mr. Wilkerson told the broadcast company.

*This article is based in part on wire service reports.*

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20070118-101337-7123r.htm>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

January 19, 2007

## **Iran Underestimates U.S., Defense Chief Says**

*Gates said Iranians may be seizing chances in Iraq but are wrong to think setbacks weakened the U.S.*

By Robert Burns, Associated Press

MANAMA, Bahrain - The Iranians are "overplaying their hand" on the world stage in a belief that setbacks in Iraq have weakened the United States, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said yesterday.

He said that now was not the time to negotiate with Iran because the United States lacked leverage, but that talks probably would make sense at some point.

The United States has been applying more pressure on Iran, blaming Tehran for giving bombs and other help used against U.S. troops in Iraq. President Bush has warned that the United States will "seek out and destroy" the networks providing that help.

In addition, American raids inside Iraq have netted Iranian prisoners, and the United States is sending a second aircraft carrier and missiles to the region.

The bipartisan Iraq Study Group recommended including Iran in regional talks on ending the violence in Iraq, a path the Bush administration has so far declined to take.

Gates said he had told the leaders of U.S. allies Saudi Arabia and Qatar that the Iranians "believe they have the United States at some disadvantage because of the situation in Iraq."

"To be precise, I told them both that I thought the Iranians were overplaying their hand and that one of the consequences of that is that they have raised real concerns on the part of a number of countries in the region and beyond about their intentions," he told reporters.

Many Persian Gulf nations are worried about a rising Iranian influence - a concern made more acute by the prospect for a further slide toward civil war in Iraq.

With regard to U.S. failure thus far to achieve stability in Iraq, Gates said: "I think that our difficulties have given them [the Iranians] a tactical opportunity in the short term, but the United States is a very powerful country."

Asked about prospects for military conflict with Iran, whose nuclear program is seen by the Bush administration as a growing threat to U.S. interests, Gates said: "There are many courses of action available that do not involve an open conflict with Iran - there's no need for that."

Gates said that although he had publicly advocated negotiating with Iran as recently as 2004, he now advises against that.



"Right at this moment, there's really nothing the Iranians want from us," he said. "And so, in any negotiation right now we would be the supplicant," asking Iran to stop doing such things as enriching uranium for its nuclear program.

"We need some leverage, it seems to me, before we engage with the Iranians," he said. "And I think at some point engagement probably makes sense."

Until the Iranians are persuaded that, despite being bogged down in Iraq, "the United States is in fact a formidable adversary, there's not much advantage for us in engaging with them," he said.

On his second overseas trip since replacing Donald H. Rumsfeld as Pentagon chief, Gates visited the headquarters of Central Command's naval staff, which is located here with the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. Then he flew to Qatar for a meeting with that tiny gulf state's top leader, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Afterward, he visited an air base from which Central Command's air staff plans, runs and monitors air operations throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. Under ground rules imposed by U.S. officials, reporters traveling with Gates were prohibited from identifying the base or the country in which it is located.

Gates also met with Gen. John Abizaid, the head of Central Command, whose forward headquarters is in Qatar. Abizaid is due to retire in March; Adm. William Fallon has been nominated to replace him.

### **Iranian Leader Ramps Up on U.S. Buildup**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad lashed back over the U.S. military buildup in the gulf, saying yesterday that Iran was ready for any possibility in its standoff with the West over Tehran's nuclear program.

The president made clear he was not backing down in his tough rhetoric toward the United States, despite criticism at home.

Washington has accused Iran of backing extremists fueling Iraq's violence and has tried to rally its Arab allies in isolating Tehran.

The United States sent an aircraft carrier, the USS Stennis, to the gulf this week - the second to deploy in the region - in a buildup that Defense Secretary Robert Gates said was intended to impress on Iran that the nearly four-year-old war in Iraq had not made America vulnerable.

In an apparent reaction to the deployment, Ahmadinejad vowed yesterday that Iran would not back down over its nuclear program, which Tehran says is being developed only to produce energy.

"Today, with the grace of God," state-run television quoted the leader as saying, "we have gone through the arduous passes and we are ready for anything in this path."

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/16494106.htm>

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New York Times

January 19, 2007

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## **Rebuke In Iran To Its President On Nuclear Role**

By Nazila Fathi and Michael Slackman

TEHRAN, Jan. 18 — Iran's outspoken president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, appears to be under pressure from the highest authorities in Iran to end his involvement in its nuclear program, a sign that his political capital is declining as his country comes under increasing international pressure.

Just one month after the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on Iran to curb its nuclear program, two hard-line newspapers, including one owned by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called on the president to stay out of all matters nuclear.

In the hazy world of Iranian politics, such a public rebuke was seen as a sign that the supreme leader — who has final say on all matters of state — might no longer support the president as the public face of defiance to the West. It is the first sign that Mr. Ahmadinejad has lost any degree of Ayatollah Khamenei's confidence, a potentially damaging development for a president who has rallied his nation and defined his administration by declaring nuclear power Iran's "inalienable right."

It was unclear, however, whether this was merely an effort to improve Iran's public image by lowering Mr. Ahmadinejad's profile or was signaling a change in policy.

The presidency is a relatively weak position with no official authority over foreign policy, the domain of the supreme leader. But Mr. Ahmadinejad has used his post as a bully pulpit to insert himself into the nuclear debate, and as long as he appeared to enjoy Ayatollah Khamenei's support, he could continue.

While Iran remains publicly defiant, insisting that it will move ahead with its nuclear ambitions, it is under increasing strain as political and economic pressures grow. And the message that Iran's most senior officials seem to

be sending is that Mr. Ahmadinejad, with his harsh approach and caustic comments, is undermining Iran's cause and its standing.

The Security Council passed a resolution on Dec. 23 with sanctions intended to curb Iran's uranium enrichment program, which Iran says is for peaceful purposes but the United States and some European nations contend is for the purpose of creating nuclear weapons. The measure bars the trade of goods or technology related to Iran's nuclear program. Enriched uranium can be used for making nuclear fuel but also for making nuclear weapons.

The president dismissed the Security Council resolution as "a piece of torn paper."

But the daily Jomhuri-Eslami, which reflects the views of Ayatollah Khamenei, said, "The resolution is certainly harmful for the country," adding that it was "too much to call it 'a piece of torn paper.'"

The newspaper added that the nuclear program required its own diplomacy, "sometimes toughness and sometimes flexibility."

In another sign of pressure on the president to distance himself from the nuclear issue, a second newspaper, run by an aide to the country's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, also pressed Mr. Ahmadinejad to end his involvement in the nuclear program. Mr. Larijani also ran for president and was selected for his post by the supreme leader.

"They want to minimize the consequences of sanctions now that they have been imposed," said Mohammad Atrianfar, an executive at the daily Shargh, which was closed last fall, and a reformist politician. "But they don't have clear strategy, and they are taking one step at a time."

Mr. Ahmadinejad took office more than a year ago as an outsider, the mayor of Tehran who promised to challenge the status quo, to equally distribute Iran's oil wealth and to restore what he saw as the lost values of the Islamic revolution. His was a populist message, centered on a socialist economic model and Islamic values. He found opposition from the right and the left, in Parliament and among so-called pragmatists.

That pressure has continued, and the criticism now seems to have gained more credibility in the face of the sanctions and Iran's troubled economic standing. The United States increased pressure on Iran over its role in Iraq has also raised concerns in Tehran and may be behind efforts to restrain the president, political analysts in Tehran said.

"The resolution has decreased Iran's political credibility in the international community, and so other countries cannot defend Iran," said Ahmad Shirzad, a reformist politician and a former legislator.

Although the Security Council sanctions were limited to Iran's nuclear program, they have started to cause economic disruptions.

About 50 legislators signed a letter this week calling on the president to appear before Parliament to answer questions about the nuclear program. They need at least 22 more signatures.

In another letter, 150 lawmakers criticized the president for his economic policies, which have led to a surge in inflation, and for his failure to submit his annual budget on time.

The Iranian stock market, which was already in a slump, continued to decline — falling more rapidly in the past month — as buyers stayed away from the market. The daily Kargozaran reported last week that the number of traders had decreased by 46 percent since the Security Council resolution was passed.

"The resolution has had a psychological effect on people," said Ali Hagh, an economist in Tehran. "It does not make sense for investors not to consider political events when they want to invest their money."

Kargozaran reported that a group of powerful businessmen, the Islamic Coalition Party, met with Mohammad Nahavandian, a senior official at the Supreme National Security Council, and called for moderation in the country's nuclear policies to prevent further damage to the economy.

In the past year, several major European banks have severed their business ties with Iran. Economists say the banks' actions will also lead to an increase in inflation because importers must turn to complicated ways to finance purchases.

"The nuclear issue has paved the way for other forms of pressures on Iran," Mr. Shirzad said.

Despite Mr. Ahmadinejad's harsh language since the resolution was passed, Ayatollah Khamenei has not referred to it directly and only once said that Iran would not give up its right to pursue its nuclear program.

Mr. Larijani has said that Iran will not quit the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or bar international inspectors despite earlier threats to do so.

*Nazila Fathi reported from Tehran, and Michael Slackman from Cairo.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/19/world/middleeast/19iran.html>

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