Interagency Coordination: Strengthening the Link between Operational Art and the Desired End State

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Military combat actions are only one facet contributing to the realization of an overall Desired End State. What must take place is an explicit recognition within joint doctrine that not only must post-hostilities operations be planned for, but, to be successful, the planning must be accomplished in the interagency environment as part of operational art. The JTF commander must focus on the desired End State to ensure the success of his operation and he must do this in conjunction with other government agencies. As joint doctrine states, “military victory is measured in the achievement of the overall political aim and associated termination objectives.”
Abstract of

Interagency Coordination: Strengthening the Link between Operational Art and the Desired End State

The thesis of this paper is that the interagency coordination process must be formalized down to the operational level while explicitly incorporating post-hostilities planning into operational art doctrine. By failing to properly plan and coordinate post hostilities actions within the interagency environment of the United States Government, the Desired End State tends to get lost in the aftermath of a conflict. The lessons learned from Operations PROMOTE LIBERTY, Panama, and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, Haiti, reveal that the DoD does not coordinate well within the interagency environment. Crisis Action Planning routinely occurs with in a "close-hold" environment under the guise of operational security. This eliminates the realization of any potential benefits derived from coordination within the interagency arena. Military combat actions are only one facet contributing to the realization of an overall Desired End State. What must take place is an explicit recognition within joint doctrine that not only must post-hostilities operations be planned for, but, to be successful, the planning must be accomplished in the interagency environment as part of operational art. The JTF commander must focus on the desired End State to ensure the success of his operation and he must do this in conjunction with other government agencies. As joint doctrine states, "military victory is measured in the achievement of the overall political aim and associated termination objectives."
In war, nothing is achieved except by calculation. Everything that is not soundly planned in its detail yields no result.

The Maxims of Napoleon

"The defeated State often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date."

Carl von Clausewitz, On War

Introduction and Thesis

The United States military has yet to embrace within its doctrine the principal lessons learned from operations in Panama and Haiti. The thesis of this paper is that the interagency coordination process must be formalized down to the operational level while explicitly incorporating post-hostilities planning into operational art doctrine. As was evident in Operations PROMOTE LIBERTY, the restoration of Panama, and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, the restoration of Haiti, the momentum and legitimacy of these operations was significantly damaged when the military failed to swiftly restore emergency services and provide for the protection of civilians. Had the operational planning begun from the Desired End State and not simply the purely militarily achievable objectives, this situation might have been avoided.

By analyzing the following questions it should become clear that there is a missing link between military operational planning and the interagency process; a
link, that may be established with an adjustment to the doctrine for operational art planning. Should the JTF commander be concerned with planning toward the Desired End State and not just those purely militarily achievable objectives derived from that end state? What responsibility does the JTF commander have for planning the transition from operations that are dominated by the military "hostilities" to those that are or tend to be dominated by other instruments of national power ("post-hostilities")? What is the operational link to the interagency process that will help build a comprehensive end-to-end plan of actions required by the United States Government as a whole, in pursuit of its national security objectives? This paper will explore answers to these vital questions.

Current joint doctrine acknowledges the primacy of politics in determining the national strategic objectives for any operation and it is the theater commander's responsibility to translate the derived political goals into militarily achievable objectives\(^1\). It is here that regressive planning begins to work itself backward to devise a military contribution to the solution of a political problem. As the lessons learned from operations in Panama and Haiti will demonstrate, the linkage between political goals and military objectives can be lost, or at best significantly obscured, in the translation. Many times the Desired End State, for which the actions were undertaken to begin with, is not realized in the transition from war termination to post-hostilities operations. Several studies of the last decade's operations have reached many of the same conclusions\(^2\). Mainly, there is no established mechanism for building a coherent unified plan from policy development through post-hostilities operations, incorporating all instruments of national power. Often, senior civilian and
military leaders agree and understand what should be done strategically, but those
"on the ground" at the operational/tactical level do not share the same granularity of
understanding. They find themselves playing catch-up and reacting to situations of
their own making that should have been anticipated. The Department of Defense
has joint doctrine guiding its operations, and the "government as a whole" has
PDD/NSC 56, Managing Complex Contingency Operations. Still there are no
mechanisms unifying the two at the operational level.

Joint doctrine provides guidance for the development of plans for campaigns
and major operations through the use of "operational art." It is here that a significant
change can be made to elevate post-hostilities operations to a phase within
operational art planning and not simply as an annex. Many annexes tend to be
relegated to "someone else's" area of responsibility and are not on the commander's
"scope" until the end of open hostilities are in view. By then the opportunity to link
other actions to combat operations is lost. Simply put, regressive planning must
begin with a clearly understood Desired End State.

Defining End State

Throughout the post-cold war period much has been written concerning
Military Operations Other Than War, war termination, and post-hostilities operations.
Although these writings have used the same terminology as official government
documents such as the National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, Joint
Doctrine, Presidential Decision Directives, agency directives, etc., they suggest
differing interpretations as to their meaning and intent.
The most overarching of these terms is End State. The DoD dictionary defines it as, "what the National Command Authorities want the situation to be when operations conclude—both military operations, as well as those where the military is in support of other instruments of national power." Joint Pub 3-0 states that a campaign plan "...clearly defines an end state that constitutes success, failure, mission termination, or exit strategy; and serves as the basis for subordinate planning"(emphasis added). In this context the End State may describe what constitutes military victory but by no means should it be confused with successfully achieving the more encompassing Desired End State.

A well-defined military end state (the theater/operational objectives along with the details and supporting objectives to include the ends, ways, and means)\(^5\) helps the warfighter focus his combat operations in a unified effort. Its achievement does not mean that the mission is over; just that major combat operations have achieved an agreed upon situation that will enable post-hostilities operations to commence. End states are the milestones by which success can be measured and plans devised. They need not be static, and, in fact, should constantly be reviewed and updated as circumstances dictate; hence, the classic military dictum that a plan rarely survives first contact. These various end states also help keep the overall goal of the Desired End State in perspective.

The Desired End State is solidified in the second half of the DoD definition: "...operations where the military is in support of other instruments of national power". It is what the policy makers wish the world to look like when all operations have concluded and it is therefore inherently political. It is from the Desired End State that
the overall end-to-end strategy should evolve. Combat operations are only one part or phase of this overall strategy, while military capabilities are effective instruments of national power applicable across the spectrum of operations.

Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY: The Restoration of Panama

Planning for operations in Panama began with the 28 February 1988 JCS Planning order to SOUTHCOM. Execution occurred almost two years later on 20 December 1989. The initial plan, ELABORATE MAZE, consisted of three phases centered on combat operations. These were the build-up of combat forces, Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO), and combat operations. With the JCS approval of ELABORATE MAZE, CINC South, General Woerner, further directed the planning of a fourth phase for Civil Military Operations (CMO). It was recognized that this phase would be required to “seal the deal” following any combat operations. As General Woerner put it, “… it always was the most significant and most difficult phase of the operation.”

It is critical to note that when the JCS approved ELABORATE MAZE, they directed that each phase should be planned so that it could be executed independently, concurrently, or in sequence. This requirement also caused the planning for CMO to be organized in the same manner, forgoing the congruence of phased operations for the advantages of flexibility. The resultant set of plans was called PRAYER BOOK. While ELABORATE MAZE was being developed by the SOUTHCOM J-3, the staff Civil Affairs (CA) expertise was resident in the J-5. Thus KRYSSTAL BALL, the initial CMO plan, was being developed in
isolation from the combat plan. Due to classification and compartmentalization requirements, KRYS TAL BALL (later re-named BLIND LOGIC) planners had little access to the other plans as they were being developed. None of the four reserve CA officers had TOP SECRET clearance. Additionally, because about 97 percent of the CA expertise in the military resides within the reserves, continuous augmentation of the SOUTHCOM staff was required to flesh-out the plan. This caused the planning cell to turn over approximately every 30 days and classification procedures prevented rotating CA personnel from discussing the plan at their home unit.

These “close-hold” procedures also limited planning to DoD channels and precluded any meaningful interagency coordination, to include the country team of the U.S. embassy. Had interagency coordination been accomplished, the military planners might have become aware of other government agencies’ plans that would significantly impact the underlying assumptions of BLIND LOGIC. Specifically, that the administration planned to quickly return the U.S. Ambassador to Panama to assume the role as the principal lead for all U.S. non-combat operations. The military planners might also have learned how long it would take to actually receive any of the required funding for many of the emergency relief operations. “The Embassy had as its watchword from the beginning that Operation JUST CAUSE was a ‘liberation’ and not an ‘occupation’.” Therefore they assumed that the Panamanian government would manage all rebuilding efforts. The fact that all government agencies and institutions would collapse with the fall of Noriega had not occurred to them and therefore little relief planning was conducted.
In 1989 the situation in Panama had deteriorated to a point where forces were designated to plan the execution of ELABORATE MAZE. The XVIII Airborne Corps out of Ft Bragg N.C. was selected, with its commander, General Carl Stiner, designated Commander JTF South. The operational planning of the Corps focused on combat operations, BLUE SPOON, with no regard for follow-on CMO. A multitude of circumstances led to this unfortunate reality. First, General Thurman was replacing General Woerner as CINCSOUTH, and General Woerner had held that CMO was a CinC’s responsibility. Second, BLIND LOGIC was not yet a formally approved plan and pursuit of that approval was lost in the course of the change of command. Third, the Corps felt that their job was to focus on the combat operations and it was “someone else’s” responsibility to manage beyond that.11 These three factors led the Corps planners to regard the BLIND LOGIC planners as irrelevant to their planning operation until the new staff was in place.12 This became more significant later in the execution phase, for while both ELABORATE MAZE and BLIND LOGIC were planned in isolation, they had been reviewed by various sections of the SOUTHCOM staff at various times and therefore had some limited congruency to them. As the XVIII Airborne Corps assumed primary responsibility for planning, an unsuccessful coup attempt against Noriega inspired a significant shift in the focus of the combat operations away from the center of Panama City to the outskirts surrounding the city.13 This shift severely impacted the initial conditions upon which the execution of BLIND LOGIC depended. BLIND LOGIC assumed combat operations would occur in the downtown area and that the same combat units would provide security services in the absence of the PDF. The resulting lack
of security forces led to looting and rioting that threatened the legitimacy of the U.S.
actions, as well as the new Panamanian government. Regardless, international law
holds any invading force responsible for public security and the establishment of
basic emergency services in the absence of government functions.  

The execution of BLUE SPOON, re-named, Operation JUST CAUSE, was
nearly flawless. Virtually all of its objectives were met within a week. BLIND LOGIC,
on the other hand, was executed as Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY and took over
five years before it officially concluded. The fact that it took five years to complete is
not a testament to its problems, rather to the complexities and pervasive
requirements of post-hostilities operations. CMO operations seem rarely to be
concluded in a short period of time.

The operational names for the planned restoration of Panama, KRystal
BALL and BLIND LOGIC, may be a wry testimonial to the problems which faced its
planners. Lessons learned from the planning and execution of JUST CAUSE and
PROMOTE LIBERTY are critical of the military planning process as well as the lack
of interagency coordination and planning.  

First, there was no specific Desired End
State articulated by the Administration, other than the removal of Noriega and the
restoration of democracy in Panama. What that democracy should look like and
what specific steps were required to establish it was left up to those tasked with its
implementation. This was crucial to the concept of translating the Desired End
State into military objectives that describe the military end state upon which the
military planning process is based. Second, for security reasons, ELABORATE
MAZE and BLIND LOGIC planning were kept isolated except at the most senior
levels within the CinC's staff. Virtually all planning was kept strictly within DoD channels to include the Embassy.\textsuperscript{17} It is critical to note here that the Ambassador is the President's representative and has the authority to speak directly for the country. While the CinC may have talked to the U.S. Embassy about the invasion plan, the CMO planners could not coordinate with the embassy staff. Also, General Thurman spent less than five minutes reviewing BLIND LOGIC.\textsuperscript{18} Third, again for security reasons, the reserve component, which contained the majority of the CA expertise, was kept compartmented: those deployed in Panama for planning purposes and those back home at their unit. This prevented any synergism of expertise outside the immediate AOR and limited discussion to those deployed for any given thirty-day period. Fourth, the military bias for combat operations, or to do those things "inherently military," caused Corps planners to assume that "someone else" would take care of the post-hostilities challenge of putting the country back together. That the theater CinC changed shortly before the execution of JUST CAUSE served only to exacerbate the situation. The CinC is the critical link between the strategic and operational levels of those things "inherently military." Fifth, that there was no overall interagency plan for the restoration of democracy in Panama served to demonstrate the disconnect between structured military planning and the \textit{ad hoc} planning process of other government agencies. Although various entities within the government had an idea something was going on at the senior level, there was no overt impetus at the mid-management level for the agencies to begin coordination activities. There is a key distinction to be noted here in that the civilian side of government "coordinates" while the military side "plans." At the time of JUST
CAUSE, there was no institutional process for conducting such coordination. Coordination was ad hoc and fraught with internal bias and competition. And sixth, most federal agencies are not sufficiently manned to support deploying field teams and rely heavily on contractors for their field operations. Therefore, they cannot respond as quickly as the military anticipates, especially in a “close-hold” environment.

The operational shortfalls of PROMOTE LIBERTY were eventually overcome in a manner that speaks highly of the professionalism and dedication of not only the uniformed services but also of those of other agencies. Many times this was by sheer force of will and knowing inherently what the “right thing to do” was. How these “lessons learned” are incorporated into doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) speaks to the military’s ability to actually learn the lessons of their mistakes. Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY was to benefit from many of the lessons learned in Panama.

**Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, The Restoration of Democracy in Haiti**

USACOM began initial planning for operations to intervene militarily in Haiti in October 1993. They would be executed a year later by a JTF in September 1994. As in Panama, the planning for operations in Haiti initially was undertaken in the “close-hold” environment of Crisis Action Planning. Yet, diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis were much more overt domestically as well as internationally. Also, early
in 1994 the after action reports from Panama and Somalia were released, highlighting the lack of interagency planning and coordination. This led Secretary of Defense Perry to specifically direct the start of interagency planning. Until May of 1994, USACOM was planning for an opposed military intervention, while other USG agencies were working under the premise of a peaceful resolution. In May the administration openly confirmed that a military option was being considered. As in Panama, a JTF was designated to conduct military planning and execution at the operational level. The XVIII Airborne Corps, as JTF 180, was again tasked with developing an opposed entry plan (2370), while the 10th Mountain division, as JTF 190, was tasked with an unopposed entry plan (2380). As in Panama the operational level planning was done in isolation of the interagency process, ostensibly for security reasons. Various departments within the USG did accomplish some instinctive coordination within their own perceived areas of responsibility, yet this was accomplished only within Washington circles. The Joint Staff represented USACOM at the NSC Executive-Committee meetings and provided one layer of translation at the strategic level. USACOM then communicated the information to the JTF at the operational level. The JTF staff then did the same for the units at the tactical level. While this stratification of functions is required to maintain the proper focus of the various levels of command, there exists a parallel requirement down to the operational level to communicate with their civilian counterparts.

The first attempt at comprehensive interagency coordination at the operational level did not occur until 12 September 1994, one week prior to execution. The chances of success of this last minute coordination may be best
described by the words attributed to a senior military officer, “This is the kind of planning that gets people killed.”22 This is a statement more about the How and When of the coordination that occurred and not necessarily about the Why or What.

That there were few casualties in the execution phase again speaks highly of the professionalism and dedication of the men and women who serve the United States regardless of organization. It is also an advantage of an unopposed entry. Had JTF 180 been required to execute the opposed entry plan, the results may have been significantly different because the transition from it to post-hostilities operations was less then adequate. The plan was simply to “hand-off” Haiti from the Corps to the 10th Mountain Division. Even with the less dangerous unopposed entry plan, most of the conflicts had to be worked out “on the ground.” As in Panama, security and the restoration of emergency services fell to the forces on the scene, the military. Unfortunately no one had planned for the dissolution of the Haitian security forces or the total collapse of the government. It was not until scenes of beatings and intimidation by Haitian soldiers were broadcast around the world that the U.S. military reinterpreted their Rules of Engagement and acted to restore order.23

The after action reports hold a mixed bag of lessons learned. On the plus side, there was more interagency coordination at the strategic level for Haiti than previously in Panama. But, there still was no singular universal plan covering end-to-end operations. Planners at the operational level were unaware of the agreements at the strategic level. “U.S. military planners were surprised that their civilian counterparts were not immediately ready with nation-building programs. Development planners were upset that the military refused to accept responsibility
for civic action and nation-building efforts at the outset, although that policy had been determined at the strategic level. In the end, a plan came together linking the transition from a primarily US operation, to a multi national operation, and finally to a primarily UN operation. Yet many holes were left at the operational level. A study by the National Defense University outlined the major interagency planning problems with the Haiti operation. They read much like those of Panama:

- Policy debate delayed planning
- Operational coordination incomplete
- Interagency logistics support initially confused
- Civilian-military coordination of nation-assistance efforts incomplete
- Military/NGO organization coordination incomplete
- Civilian-military command arrangements ad hoc
- Plans for Haitian security forces overly ambitious and complex
- Rules of Engagement ambiguous

While the operation in Haiti has been deemed a success for many reasons, it should be noted that the last U.S. service member did not leave the country until January of 2000, six years after the start of UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. The complexity and duration of such an undertaking should not be lost on those within the government tasked with planning and executing the details. Even if a plan does not survive first contact, at least it has a point of departure. Executing without a plan leaves the outcome to fate.
Conclusion and Recommendations: Linking Joint Doctrine with the Desired End State

Today's Joint Doctrine is an outgrowth of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. Written doctrine is used to pass on the lessons of past wars and to describe how our military will plan, organize, and fight future wars. It is instructive and authoritative while attempting to be dynamic. Much of current joint doctrine has its roots firmly planted in Army doctrine. A review of FM 100-5, Joint Pub 3-0, and Joint Pub 5-0, demonstrates verbatim quotes from the manual to the joint pubs both in content and form. It also carries with it a focus on combat operations at its core while sprinkling bits and pieces of those things beyond combat planning. FM 100-5 discusses conflict termination twice over a total of one-half a page.²⁶ It defers any discussion of post-hostilities operations to chapter 13, Operations Other Then War, roughly seven pages, which is dedicated to listing the potential types of military missions derived from core military capabilities. Only one paragraph on page 3-7 mentions interagency coordination. The Keystone Joint Pubss (JP 3-0 and JP 5-0) continue this sprinkling of post-hostilities consideration and interagency coordination with a little more depth then FM-100, yet lack any bold statement as to its criticality to overall mission success, nor the mechanisms by which it can be accomplished.

Joint Pub 3-08 (volume I), Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations, was published in 1996. While this pub goes further to identify with somewhat greater clarity the need for interagency coordination, it is long on the “What” and “Why” and very short on the “How”. It tells the Combatant Commander and the JTF
commander that it is imperative to coordinate operations with the other instruments of national power, but does not suggest the mechanism with which to accomplish it. Volume II of JP 3-08 details the structure and capabilities of those organizations within the interagency arena and other NGO and PVOs that the JTF may encounter on the ground. It even suggests certain organizational charts for coordination, and even includes phone numbers. Yet, since these agencies do not fall under the DoD and are structured and operate along different lines, they are not subject to the planning requirements of the military.

On the civilian side of the interagency process are PDD 25 and PDD 56. PDD/NSC 56: Managing Complex Contingency Operations was written in 1997 in recognition of the lessons learned from Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia. It explicitly recognizes the requirement for a fully coordinated Political-Military (Pol-Mil) plan to achieve unity of effort among U.S. Government agencies. Additionally it recognizes that "civilian components of an operation must be integrated closely with the military components to maximize effect." While PDD 56 is a significant step in the right direction, currently its benefits are realized only at the strategic level of policy coordination within the Beltway. The first attempt by a theater CinC to operationalize a Pol-Mil plan will occur in SOUTHCOM's BLUE ADVANCE exercise in the spring of 2000.27

The following is a recommendation on how to link the JTF planners with their counterparts in the interagency arena. How do we break the paradigm of "closehold," compartmentalized, planning in order to allow the synthesis of all elements of national power at the point of execution? It is here that the rubber meets the road
and where we need to focus our efforts. A review of PDD 56 annex A: Illustrative Components of a Political-Military Plan for a Complex Contingency Operation, highlights significant parallels with the military planning process. The effort must be made to merge the processes outlined in PDD 56 with the planning processes outlined in JP 5-0 and the fundamental concepts of operational art described in JP 1-0 and JP3-0. What this means in operational terms is a shift in regressive planning from the military end state to the Desired End State. A complete end-to-end strategy that incorporates every phase of an operation designed to achieve the Desired End State for which the operation was undertaken.

Such a change in the mindset of military planners can only be accomplished through a change in doctrine. This would also serve to force the inclusion of the USG interagency process into the planning and exercise of military operations. Once part of our doctrine, the professionalism and ingenuity of our people will devise ways to make it successful. Post-hostilities planning would become a natural part of the planning process from beginning to end. It is only in this way can it avoid being an afterthought. The concepts are already being taught in our military schools and our current doctrine flirts with its requirements. The shift must become internalized to avoid being trivialized.

It is obvious that over the past decade the United States military has been increasingly involved in Military Operations Other Then War. It is also obvious, based on the improvements between operations PROMOTE LIBERTY and RESTORE DEMOCRACY, and successes in the Balkans, that the United States government is getting better at recognizing those things that need to be
accomplished to make the transition from combat operations to post-hostilities operations. What must take place is an explicit recognition within joint doctrine that not only must post-hostilities operations be planned for, but, to be successful, it must be accomplished in the interagency environment as part of operational art. The JTF commander must focus on the desired End State to ensure the success of his operation and he must do this in conjunction with other government agencies. As joint doctrine states, "military victory is measured in the achievement of the overall political aim and associated termination objectives."²⁹
End Notes


2 John T. Fishel, "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama." Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, April 1992


4 Phone interview with Lt Col Hank Anderson, ASD SO/LIC Peacekeeping, 26 January 2000. Lt Col Anderson verified that currently there only exists a link at the theater Cinc level. Although it was desirable to establish a link at the operational level, the associated government agencies were not yet staffed to provide this capability. Exercise Blue Advance is viewed as a significant milestone in the evolution of PDD 56.

5 John T. Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1997. Pg 7. Fishel makes the argument that end states apply from the National Strategic down through the operational level. These end states consist of not only the stated objectives but also a thorough analysis as to what defines achievement of these objectives and how they are to be achieved in consideration of potential consequences. He makes the case that this top-to-bottom analysis should ensure the linkage from the desired end state to the operational level. Also see 239-242.

For a discussion on practical application in regards to Panama see pg 25-27

6 "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama," pg 14

7 Ibid, pg 15


9 "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama." Pg. 23

10 ibid pg 43

11 ibid pg. 27

12 *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, pg 46

13 "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama." Pg. 26

Civil Military Operations in the New World, pg3

15 see note 2
16 Schultz, Richard H, Jr. In the Aftermath of War: US Support for Reconstruction and Nation-Building in Panama Following JUST CAUSE, Extracts as reprinted by the Naval War College, Newport RI, pg 17

17 Ibid, pg 18. Mr. Schultz provides possible explanations based on statements from some of those involved in the planning process. None of them seem acceptable. As he quotes General Thurman observing, "It is a deficiency of a very tightly held plan that it does not get discussed in the governmental apparatus. This is where the post-conflict problem for Panama originated."

18 Ibid, pg 16


20 Ibid, pg 29 This begins a significant chapter specifically outlining the problems associated with interagency planning and the consequences of not doing it.

21 Ibid, pg 35

22 Ibid, pg 33. More discussion of this meeting is recounted on pg 16.

23 Ibid, pg 17

24 Ibid, pg 37

25 Ibid, pg 31


27 Phone interview with Lt. Hank Anderson, ASD SO/LIC Peacekeeping, 26 January 2000


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