

Policy Response of Muslim World to the US Decision Post 9/11, 2001

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors that led to the attacks on US and US decision to declare war on terror in response to 9/11. The study also analysis the response of Muslim World (UN Security Council, OIC, Arab League, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, UAE and Taliban) to the US decision to invade Afghanistan. Declaring of war on terror and invading Afghanistan was not so simple that happened abruptly but it was the process of long clashes of interests between the US and Al-Qaeda that started from the end of the Cold War and sparked on 9/11 2001. The US responded to the attacks by declaring Osama Bin Laden as a master mind behind attacks. The Western community condemned the horrible attacks on US and declare alliance against the equipped Taliban/Al-Qaeda. The Muslim World condemned the attacks but Saudi indirectly criticised the US biased policies in the Middle East supporting Israel against the Palestine. The Iranian religious leader also condemned all types of terrorism including 9/11. The President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein termed the attacks that the American cowboys are reaping the fruit of their crimes against humanity. Keeping in the historical passive responses from the US, Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden to the US. The response of the Muslim World was different due to the individual state relations and its dependency on the US politically, economically and militarily.

KEY WORDS: War on Terror, USA, Muslim World, Osama, Taliban, 9/11 attacks, Cold War, Al-Qaeda

INTRODUCTION

The US emerged as the sole economic, military and political power post WW 2nd. The Western Europe and USSR heavily damaged by the two world wars. The stage was prepared for another Cold War between the two non European powers. The Muslim World was trying to resist the Ottoman Empire with the cooperation of western imperialist powers. The British and French took control of Muslim World when the Ottoman Empire collapsed after the 1st world war. When the European powers were deleted from the International politics scene, most of the Muslim states were directly and indirectly came under the clutches of the American. During the Cold War the US suppressed the resistance of Muslims as evident in Swiss canal crises of 1956, Arab Israel War of 1948, 1967 and 1973. (Terry, 2005)

The US interests in the Muslim World were increased when they experienced defeat in the Arab-Israel war (1973) and faced the Oil embargo. That was the only weapon of the Muslim World and specially Arab World that could remind the American about their bias policies in the Middle East. After the collapse of Soviet Empire in 1998, the US shifted their policies from the USSR to the Middle East and involved in Gulf War of 1991. (Terry, 2005)

Osama Bin Laden found the American like the Soviets, snatching the resources of Muslim World and supplying Arms to those who were fighting against each other. He declared war on American and finally formed Al-Qaeda organization that was not belonging to any state or region. During initial time Al-Qaeda was used by the CIA against the liberation movements in Kosovo and Chechnya but later on it turned against the US and its western allies. From 1990 till September 2001 Al-Qaeda were involved in different incidents that threatened the US security at home and abroad. (Cordesman A. H., 2005)

The attacks of 9/11 2001 was the spark of long and complex war that divided the World in two imbalance blocks, the US and its allies on the one hand and Taliban and Al-Qaeda on the other hand were declared the new war partner. Some scholars also of the opinion that it is fight between two civilizations. The US response to the 9/11 attacks was the declaration of War on Terror. It was a war against the whole Muslim Ummah that not started from Afghanistan, extended to Pakistan Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon and the current Arab Spring is also one of the chapters of this war on terror. About the question of the end of this war on terror the American would be in a better position to answer but one thing is very clear that it targeted the Muslim World as threat to their interest in the region and through the World.

The response of the Muslim World was very supportive and subjugate due its larger dependency on the US politically, economically, militarily and technologically. (F Gerges, 1999)

Afghanistan in 1979 and The US Policy

The US interest in Afghanistan stimulated when USSR wanted access to the warm water through Afghanistan-Pakistan and for that purpose supported a military coup on April 26, 1978. (Kennett, 2010) This act

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was another sign of the Red Army expansionist policies as they practiced in the Eastern Europe post WW 2nd. Moscow experienced different actors who strengthen its position in Afghanistan but they due to the strong resistance groups of Pashtoon and finally at the beginning of the New Year in 1979 all the major cities came under the occupation of Soviet Union. (Arnold, 1983)

the US curtailed aid to Afghanistan and channelized 500000 dollars for CIA to invest in anti-government activities in Afghanistan. This US policy is known as Carter Doctrine which allowed the US to break the Détente or boycott the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, and at the same time cultivated friendly relations with China to advocate her policy diplomatically by getting the back of China as well. (Garthoff, 1984)

The creation of Taliban and Al-Qaeda

The US under the Carter administration and then later on in Reagan administration provided covert military aid with the help of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The US militarily stabilized the mujahedeen under the umbrella of Pakistan security agencies to dismantle the soviet troops in Afghanistan. But the interest of the US lessened when she realized that Pakistani government was enhancing its military assets on the US generous funds allocated for the Soviet destruction. (Gaddis, 1982)

The dismemberment of USSR was the sole dream of the US which compelled her to perpetually carry on the US interests. The Reagan Doctrine gets started with the signing of National security Decision Directive (NSDD) in March 1985. The Mujahedeen of Afghan war was fully facilitated by the US when assistance for them increased from 122 million dollars to 650 million dollars in 1987. The US also provided intelligence and military equipment and strived to organize financial aid from allies like Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. The soviet felt it hard to control the situation in the hand and eventually deployed about 100000 troops to vanquish Mujahedeen and allied forces. But the red army had to face the double force of 250000 mujahedeen in the battlefield with modern arsenals in hand. (Quoted in Kuperman, 1999)

The red army was confronted with seven distinguished Islamic fighters groups funded by the US, allies and security agencies of Pakistan. This battle of communism and capitalism was labeled as international Jihad in Afghanistan. Initially, Mujahedeen could not stand in front of technologically strong superpower of USSR but after the provision of stinger and intelligence support from the US which broke the back of the red army, and victory for the Soviet troops transformed into defeat. As a result, USSR under compulsion signed the Geneva Accord on April 4, 1989 for withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan. However, USSR continued weapons to the pro-communist groups till December 1990 but after a hesitant agreement both superpowers agreed to disengaged from the conflict of Afghanistan. (Lansford, 2009)

Unfortunately after the drawdown of USSR from Afghanistan, a tug of war started between different political leaders to impose their own conceived government which led them to chaos and anarchy. Most of the Pashtuns Islamists belonging to the Deobandi school of thought and Wahabism came under the command of a cleric from a local masjid of Qandahar, Mullah Muhammad Omar in 1993. They have common hallmarks as being local, middle class Pashtuns representing 42 percent of the total population of Afghanistan, and provision of quick justice at the doorstep of a common man. Owing to these characteristics, Taliban gradually controlled the southern city of Qandahar and in 1996 they controlled 90% of Afghanistan. The international community and especially the US did not approve the rigid and conservative policies of Taliban government which were amount to violating human rights, but the liaison between Taliban and Al-Qaida. (Khashan, 1997)

The Link between Taliban and Al-Qaeda

During the decades of 80s and 90s many anti-western Islamic groups spread all around to propagate the anti-western lobbies. Among them many of them were state sponsored like Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestine Islamic Jihad but Al-Qaida enjoyed the financial support of a super-rich Arab, Osama Bin Laden, and the sole financier of Al-Qaida. Unlike other Anti-western Islamist organizations, Al-Qaida avoided in any political engagement, but when Taliban sheltered Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11 attacks, Al-Qaida established itself with the mujahedeen of Afghanistan to delegate an Islamic empire in Afghanistan. (Lansford T. Covarrubias, 2009)

After the collapse of USSR, Osama Bin Laden returned to his home country, Saudi Arabia due to political tug of war among Mujahedeen in 1990. He was a billionaire with construction businesses and was regarded a national hero and Ghazi in Saudi Arabia. He proclaimed a full-fledged Jihad against the west and particularly with the US. Due to the pressure from the US, Saudi Arabia annulled the citizenship of Osama. As a result he went to Sudan and formed Al-Qaida and linked it with other Jihadi organization to scuttle the exploitation and imperialist policies of US. Osama was honoured by the Sudan government to join Mullah Omar's Jihad campaign in Afghanistan. Besides 9/11 attacks, six others incidents were responsible for the worsening relations between the US and Al-Qaida/Taliban. (Doran, 2002)

1. The 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Lebanon
2. In 1996, Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia.
3. Destroying American embassy in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

4. Attack on USS *Cole* in 2000
5. Assassination of Ahmed Shah Masood, the commander of northern Alliance on 9/11, 2001.

The attacks of 9/11 claimed 3000 people from 78 different countries in the destruction of world trade centre in a well-coordinated hijacked aircrafts attacks. The New York City partnership and chamber of commerce on February, 2002 surveyed the direct and indirect economic losses of the World Trade Centre up to 83 billion dollars. The world leaders deemed the attack on World Trade centre and Pentagon as an attack on a civilization. Bush administration reiterated Al-Qaida's 9/11 assaults is not a crime against the US but attack against the whole humanity.(Debate, 2001) He stated his intention in the words,

“Our war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” (Perl R. F., Terrorism the Future and US Foreign Policy. , 2001)

The world community condemned the attack and amalgamated as US-led Coalition force to fight the war on terror on economic, diplomatic, intelligence and military fronts to dismantle the menace of terrorism once for all. The Bush administration quickly responded to the 9/11 attacks by branding Osama Bin Laden and his Jihad sponsored Al-Qaida-cum- Taliban organization as terrorist which was responsible for the destruction of World Trade Centre and Pentagon. US administration and allied forces launched a full-fledged operation to disrupt the Sanctuaries of Al-Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan. (Bush, 2006)The *Operation Enduring Freedom* was started on October 7, 2001 to uproot Al-Qaida training camps and military installations of Taliban regime in Afghanistan. From international community, a total of 136 countries militarily assisted in the war on terror for curbing terrorism and restoring peace in worldwide. This war was different for the US because the enemies were stateless splinter groups inhabiting in caves, jungles and to pursue them needed a different strategy of manoeuvring, warfare and tactics.(F Gerges, 1999)

UNO Response to the US decision

The role of UNO is commendable in establishing human rights standards, legal norms and conflict resolution in the past decades. With regard to the issue of terrorism, the UN took deep interest to devolve effective multifaceted legal response for varied forms of terrorism perpetuated in the last four decades. The Security Council expressed complete solidarity with the terrorism-inflicted victims, families and the US in wake of attacks which targeted New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania, and reckoned it as a peril to the international peace and security. On September 12, 2001, United Nations Security Council passed a resolution 1368 which called all the countries to bring all the criminals, organizers and sponsors to book who supported or harboured the international terrorists. The international community was emphasized to cooperate and implement anti-terrorist resolutions in letter and spirit for curbing the menace from the world, and globally restore security and peace.(Paul Norman, 2004)

OIC and Muslim World response

All the Muslim World leaders strongly condemned the 9/11 attacks including the President of the Presidents of Egypt *Hosni Mubarak*, the Palestinian Authority *Yasser Arafat*, Libya *Muammar Gaddafi*, Syria *Bashar al-Assad*, Iran *Mohamed Khatami* and Pakistan *Pervez Musharraf* but the then President of Iraq, *Saddam Hussein* termed the attacks as, the American cowboys are reaping the fruit of their crimes against humanity. Nevertheless, later on he offered his empathy for the bereaved families of victims.

Different scholars from the Muslim world condemned the 9/11 attack not on the basis of state policy but on humanitarian grounds. Among these leaders were great Islamic scholars and jurists; *Mustafa Mashhur*, general guide of Muslim brotherhood hailing from Egypt, *Ameer e Jamaat-e-Islami* Pakistan and Bangladesh, *Qazi Hussain Ahmad* and *Mufti Rahman Nizami* respectively, the founder of Islamic resistance Movement (Hamas), *Shaikh Ahmad Yassin*, the president of Nahda Renaissance Movement, *Rashid Ghannoushi* and some other 40 Muslim scholars and politicians.(Nimer, 2002)

The well-known Muslim scholar *Yusuf-al-Qaradawi* criticized the senseless killing of innocent Americans as a grisly and heinous crime and pressed Muslims to donate money and blood for the killed and wounded people. Nonetheless, he denounced the US policy as biased policy towards Israel and at the same time he called on the Muslims to concentrate on facing the occupying enemy directly inside the Palestinian territories. Even the spiritual teacher of Lebanese Shia leader, *Fadlallah* criticized the attacks. The greater condemnation was received from the supreme Jurist-cum leader, *Ayatollah Ali Khomani* on September 16, 2001 in the following words, that we condemned all types of terrorism. The leader of Hamas, *Ahmed Yassin* was not in favour of exporting such attacks to any country including the US but he criticized the unfair American position.(Khashan, 1997)

The secretary general of Organization of Islamic Conference or OIC, *Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz* described the 9/11 attacks shocking and extremely saddening which claimed lives and paralyze denizens of America and

other nations on a large number. He condemned the brutal killers act as hostile to the humanitarian values, divine religions and especially Islam.

The above condemnation from the leaders of the Muslim World shows that they are on the same page with the western countries to thwart the menace of terrorism and bring the murderers of 9/11 to book for restoring peace and security in the world.

Arab League

The general secretary of Arab League after 9/11 expressed solidarity and sympathy with the US for the ruthless massacre of its citizens and ruining of its twin towers. He termed these acts as tantamount to killing of defenceless people without any obvious reason to justify their annihilation as valid or sensible. He warned the world leaders that if such coldblooded acts are not checked, then it is more certain that they will engulf more countries with an accelerating pace. He urged the international community to contain and combat it on war footing for establishing durable peace in the world.

The official statement issued by the Saudi government on 11 September, 2001 that, it is regrettable and inhuman bombings which took place today at the World Trade Centre in Manhattan, New York, and the Pentagon building in Washington DC. (Cordesman A. H., 2001) The Saudi government strongly condemns such acts and branded them as the flouting of all religious values and human civilized concepts. The government extended heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, the U.S. President *George W. Bush* and to the U.S. people in general. Unfortunately, Islam was labelled at the time as the preacher of spreading the venom of terrorism which did not hold water. (OIC, 2001) Another renowned legal senior scholar of Saudi Arabia, *Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh* condemned the 9/11 tragic incident on 15 September, 2001 in such words,

The recent developments in the United States constitute a form of injustice that is not tolerated by Islam, which views them as sheer crimes and wicked acts.”

The Supreme Judicial Council Chairman, *Shaikh Salih Al-Luheidan* observed on the 9/11 attacks on September, 14, 2001 in the following words,

“As a human community we must be vigilant and careful to oppose these malicious and blatant evils, which are not justified by any sane logic, or by the religion of Islam.”

In responding to the then President the US policy was, “You are with us or with terrorists,” the Saudi press release stated that, “We are with you, America”, on September 17, 2001. The Saudi government postponed the national day celebrations which were going to be held on September owing to show solidarity and sympathy with the victims of 9/11. Saudi Arabia expressed the desire to see the perpetrators of this horrendous crime to be tried and punished accordingly in the court of justice. (Nimer, 2002) The permanent representative of Saudi Arabia in the United Nation General Assembly, Ambassador *Fawzi Shobokshi* addressed the 56th session in New York on 2 October, 2001 and strongly criticized all forms of terrorism and proposed the comity of nations to foil the threat with iron hand. (Cordesman A. H., 2005)

Pakistan

After 9/11 attacks, the lukewarm relationship between Pakistan and the US again revitalized when the US recognized the geopolitical importance of Pakistan. The US quickly categorized Al-Qaida as the sole responsible organization which was backed and sheltered by Taliban in Afghanistan. To dismantle the sanctuaries of Al-Qaida-cum-Taliban force, the strategic importance of Pakistan cannot be thrown into the back burner by the US government as she did after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. In spite of trust deficit and widened hiatus, the US again played the hard ball by purchasing Pakistan’s strategic services to invade Afghanistan from the soil of Pakistan. (Hussain, 2005)

The US President Bush clarified to the whole world that,

“Every Nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists”. (Akhtar, 2012)

This policy statement created threatening situation for Pakistan because if Pakistan did not support the US policy against terrorism, then Pakistan would be deemed by the international community as an accomplice of Al-Qaeda and its members who they think might be involved in attack on World Trade Centre and Pentagon. Being a neighbouring country of Afghanistan, Pakistan had to jump into the bandwagon of the international community led by the US; otherwise the brunt of 9/11 would fall on Pakistan. Actually, Afghanistan is a land lock country and it was impossible for the US and allied forces to reach out to this land lock country without support of Pakistan. (Akhtar, 2012)

The US forwarded some conditions from the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Among these demands the handing over of Osama Bin Laden who was regarded as the master mind of 9/11 attacks by the US. But Taliban did not comply with these demands. The US used the leverage of Pakistan to convince the Taliban government but in vain. Meanwhile, the strategic, cultural and linguistic importance of Pakistan increased more in the eyes of the US. As a result the US commanded a list of demands from Pakistan in the war on terror.(Akhtar, 2012)

- (1) Stop the Al-Qaida operatives and cease transfer of arms from the Pakistani borders.
- (2) Pakistan should permit the comprehensive over flight rights to conduct air operations.
- (3) Provide territorial access to the United States which is comprised of to use naval ports, air bases, and strategic location and borders.
- (4) Pakistan should share the intelligence support to the US authorities.
- (5) Pakistan should continue to condemn overtly the terrorist attacks of 11 September, and also any other act of terror against the US and its coalition partners.
- (6) Stoppage of all shipments of fuel and any other items to the Taliban.
- (7) Pakistan should cut off all ambassadorial ties with the Taliban.

The then President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf called upon a meeting in Islamabad and consulted people from all walks of life in which the religious forces opposed the US alliance in war on terror. But at this critical juncture he conceded all the seven demands of the superpower with the support of civil-military establishment. It really astonished the Americans as unexpectedly all the seven conditions of the US were acknowledged without much hullabaloo.(Sohrab, 2012)The President Pervez Musharraf faced hurdles especially from the religious leaders who condemned Musharraf as Pro-American and traitor. (Sohrab, 2012)

Taliban Response

There were two hostile camps in the war on terror, on one side the US and international community while on the other was Al-Qaida and Taliban. After 9/11, the statement of President Bush to the joint session of congress, “*You are with us or with the terrorists*” isolated the world into Pro-Al-Qaida-cum-Taliban group for establishing an Islamic empire in the Afghanistan and the US with the allied forces to disrupt the menace of terrorism for the world peace. The President of the US, George, Bush put forward the following demands to Taliban: (Heller, 2005)

- (1) It was obligatory on the Taliban to handover all Al-Qaeda leaders to the US.
- (2) The US urged to stop all terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan.
- (3) Give access to US authorities to authenticate the removal of training camps.
- (4) Taliban should release all foreigners.
- (5) Taliban should guard foreign aid workers. (Katzman, 2010)

The Taliban did not expect much reaction from the US in wake of 9/11, so they completely rejected the handing over of Al-Qaida founder, Osama Bin Laden and other leaders. They based the refusal on the presumption that the previous administrations did not pay much heed to the 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Lebanon, the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre, the 1996 Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia, and the bombing of USS *Cole* in 2000. (Litwak, 2007)

According to some analysts war on terror was pre-planned before 9/11 which was another crusade to collapse the establishment of an Islamic emirate in Afghanistan. *Abid Ullah Jan* in his book “Afghanistan: The Genesis of the Final Crusade” revealed that most of the people were well-aware that Taliban would vanquish in Afghanistan due the allied forces intrusion. He further elaborated that Pakistan also jumped into the quagmire of war on terror due to the pressure of the US. He also unveiled that UN without proper investigation of 9/11 passed a resolution, and NATO also implemented Article 5 for the first time in the history of UN, for the concept of collective security. (Abid, 2006)

In the heat of 9/11, the Taliban were also confirmed guilty due the association with Al-Qaida. The then President, Bush reiterated that he wanted Osama “dead or alive,” and though many found this primeval, very few could understand the desire for retribution. It is interesting that until 9/11, Bush was very much a lame duck president, the butt of jokes. By starting a war, he united his country behind him. Meanwhile, the United States and British politicians and opposition of Northern Alliance within Afghanistan constantly supposed that there are signs of breaches within the Taliban. The Foreign Minister said on September 18, 2001 that Afghanistan might banish Osama, if the United States delivered “solid and convincing” proofs of his involvement in terrorism. Bush told Congress when having no proof, not even a bit of it,

“There will be no negotiations or discussions, there’s no need to discuss innocence or guilt we know he’s guilty.”

The Taliban ambassador to Pakistan and other leaders' kept iterating the appeal for proof. Talks were scheduled between Pakistani diplomats and clerics and the Taliban. In late September and early October 2001, leaders of Pakistan's two religious parties' conveyed Osama's repatriation to Pakistan to face a hearing for 9/11. Nonetheless US official said that "casting our objectives too narrowly jeopardized a premature collapse of the international effort to topple the Taliban, if by some providential chance Mr. Bin Laden was apprehended. Unfortunately, General Musharraf also succumbed to the United States pressure and blindly followed what was directed from the White House. The United States said its demands were "clear and nontransferable. (Abid, 2006)

The *New York Times* on October 9, 2001, reported that a group of the Taliban leadership had met secretly with Pakistani officials and said they would try to talk to them and over of bin Laden, if the US ceased bombing for two or three days. The *Times* reported, however, that Pakistani and US officials were uncertain about the proposal which would resolve the crisis because Bush has obdurately said that he will not negotiate, or even deliberate on any terms for the handover of Mr. bin Laden. (Jan, Afghanistan: The Genesis of the Final Crusade, 2006) In fact, the war was already planned and the stage was set forth, and Osama was the perfect ploy for invading Afghanistan. (Ullah, 2006)

Conclusion

The War on terror was not a sudden incident that happened in hours and transformed the whole world into new alliances and marking foes and enemies. Rather it was the episode of a long story started from the collapse of the Soviet Union following the 1983 bombing in Lebanon, Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia in 1996, Destroyed American embassy in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the Attack on USS *Cole* in 2000 and the Assassination of Ahmed Shah Masood, the commander of northern Alliance on 9/9, 2001.

The US administration estimated and calculated the costs of the attacks and planned a policy of global War on Terror that affect every state foreign policy in every region of the world. This war has great impacts on the Muslim World due to the US declaration of Osama bin Laden was the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. Osama was a Muslim and educated in the *Wahabi School* of thought who are believe in international jihad against the American and the Western powers. No one knows the reality of 9/11 attacks but everyone well understand the consequences of those attacks that heavily damaged the whole Muslim world particularly Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt Lebanon, Syria and now Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The consequences of the War are yet to be face by the Muslim States in the new shape of Arab Spring and the US has to be facing the new enemy in the shape of ISIS.

The response of the UN to the 9/11 attacks were very supportive and passed two resolutions to prevent the spread of terrorism and to punish those who committed the act of terrorism. The UN also mentioned that while using the mandate of UN the US administration must observed international law. OIC and Arab League condemned the attacks could not seriously directed the US to provide proof about Osama involvement in the attacks. These organizations are just the symbol of being Islamic unity while in reality they are unable to implement their policies.

Saudi Arabia condemned the horrible attacks and offer the American every type of its support but indirectly criticised the US discriminated policies in the Middle East. Post 9/11 events in the region for Pakistan offered very little policy choice but to support the US in its global war on terror. For Pakistan all these events were something like destiny to face. Geographic location of Pakistan, along with its decades-long attachment with Jihadi projects, post 9/11 events resulted in bloody events of terrorism across the country. To ensure safety and security, Pakistan again has very little policy choice in dealing with US or its rival resistant groups. At the initial stage Taliban rejected the US demands but latter they agreed while the US had planned a war on Afghanistan.

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