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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

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18 December 1967

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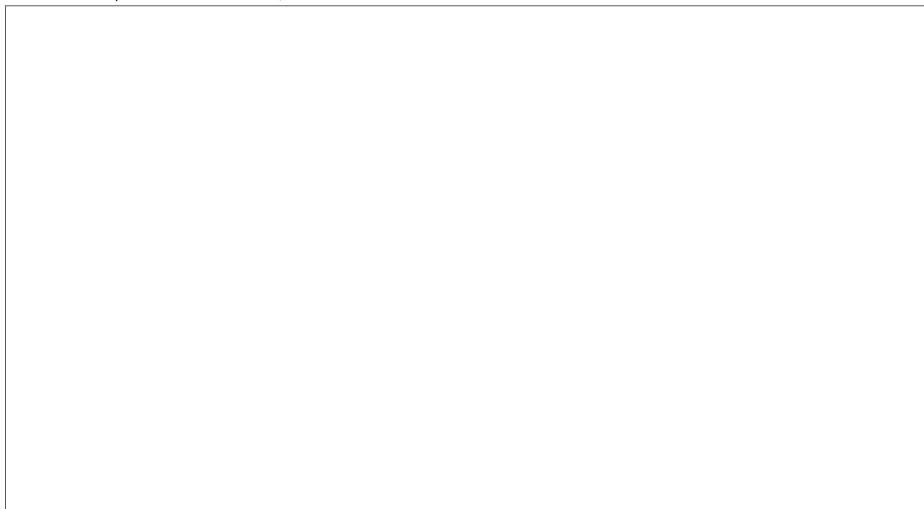
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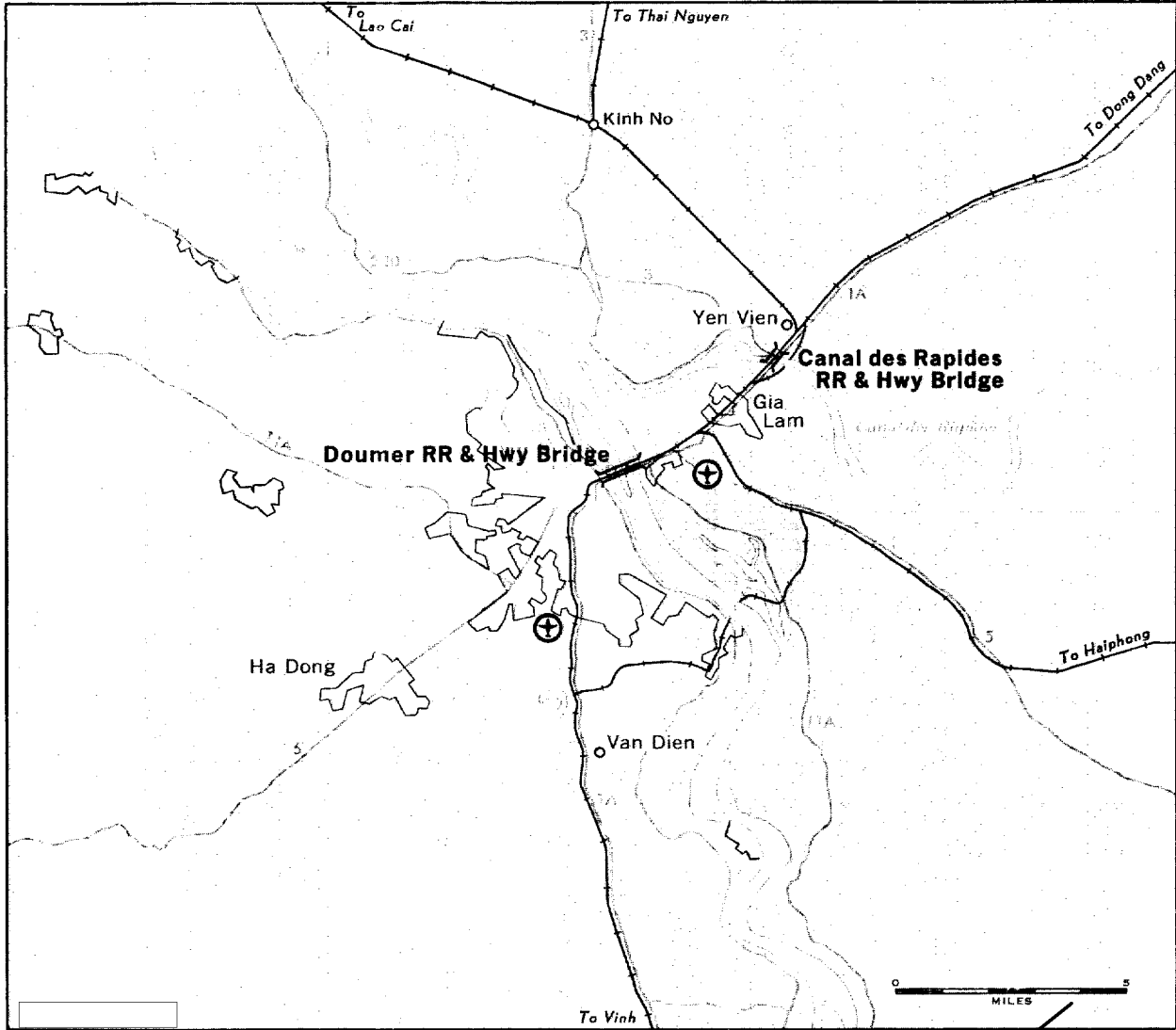
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\*Vietnam:

North Vietnam: [US strike aircraft have again interdicted the two major bridges on the main rail line leading from Hanoi to China.]

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[redacted]

[redacted] Six US aircraft were lost on 16 and 17 December in heavy raids throughout North Vietnam. Three of the aircraft were shot down by MIG fighters--two by air-to-air missiles and one by cannon fire. A Korean piloted MIG-21 was responsible for one of the air-to-air missile shootdowns. US fighters probably downed one MIG-17.

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South Vietnam: Scattered fighting was reported over the weekend in various parts of South Vietnam.

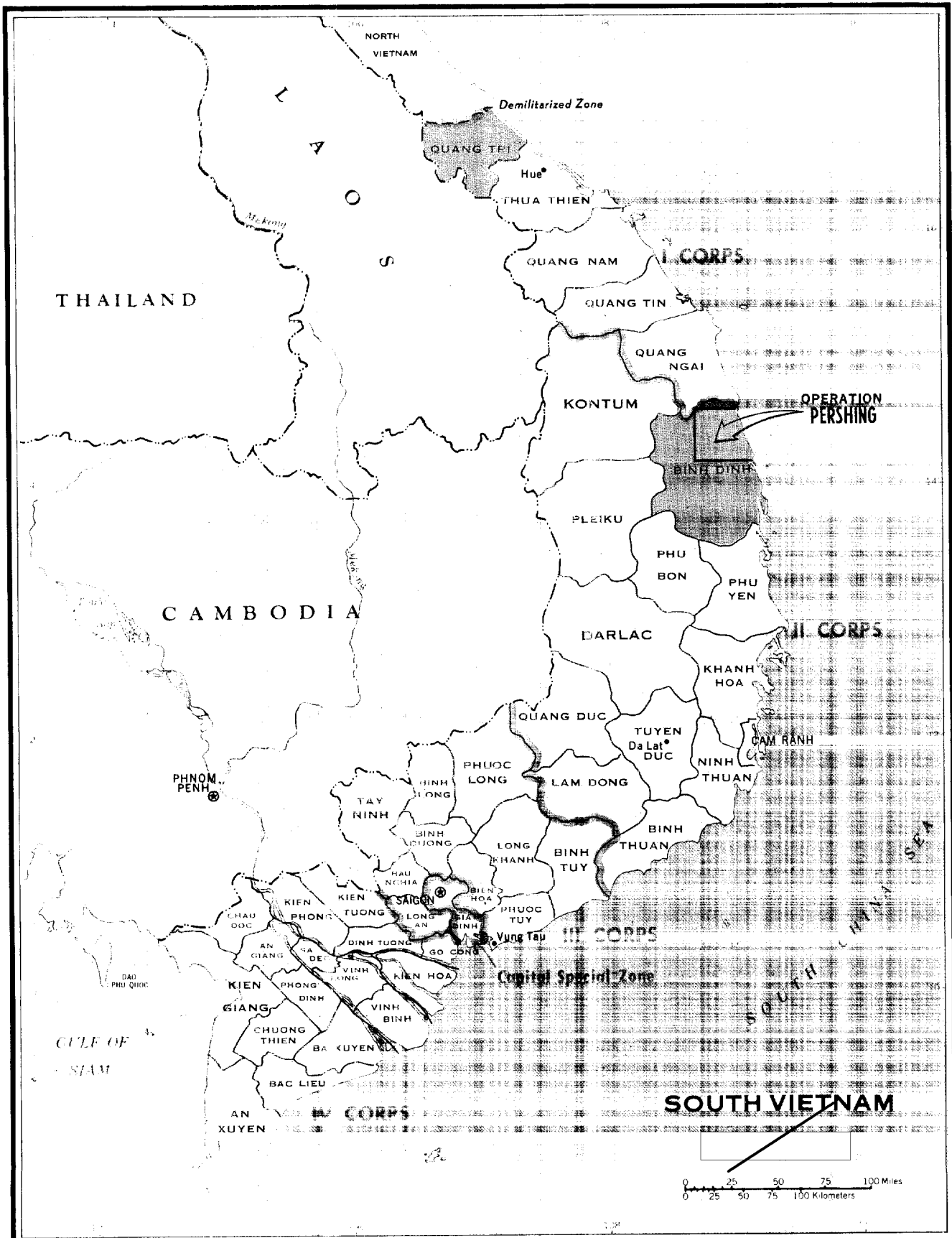
US Army forces of Operation PERSHING reported killing over 100 soldiers, believed to be from the 22nd regiment of the 3rd NVA Division, in an engagement on the Bong Son Plains in northern Binh Dinh Province on 15 and 16 December. US losses were 22 killed and 52 wounded.

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MACV has accepted two more North Vietnamese regiments [redacted] into its order of battle. These two units, both in Quang Tri Province, raise the number of North Vietnamese regiments in South Vietnam to 28.

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[ A member of South Vietnam's new Senate expects that body to play a forceful role, not only in the legislative process but in prodding the executive branch into action. ]

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[ Senator Tran Van Don [redacted]

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[redacted] remains optimistic over the new government's prospects, primarily because he believes that the Senate--an essentially conservative group--will be able to apply more cohesive pressure than will the lower house. [redacted]

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Greece: King Constantine and emissaries of the ruling junta are negotiating the King's return to Athens.

The junta leadership in Athens met in emergency session yesterday to consider Constantine's response to their "unofficial" overtures carried to Rome last Saturday by Greek Orthodox Primate Archbishop Ieronymos. Foreign Minister Pipinelis and Ieronymos returned immediately to Athens Saturday night after lengthy discussions with the King.

King Constantine is [REDACTED] ready to return to Greece if a face-saving formula can be found. He apparently feels he has a strong bargaining position and almost certainly has demanded assurances from the junta that it will move rapidly to restore full constitutional government in Greece. The junta will probably insist on a commitment from Constantine to stay aloof from further involvement in Greek politics.

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[REDACTED]

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Nonetheless, the junta is going to considerable lengths to leave the way open for Constantine's early return. Deputy Premier Patakos told a press conference on Saturday that the Greek throne belongs to Constantine, and that the King's rather substantial properties in Greece remain intact. Constantine's portraits have been restored to the walls of government offices.

The full impact of the abortive countercoup will be far-reaching. Within the military regime, Papadopoulos, as the new premier, has emerged more powerful than ever. Apart from the junta leaders, virtually the entire top leadership of the armed forces

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is being changed. The officers arrested for involvement with the King apparently will be amnestied and then dismissed. In addition, the Greek people probably are now more sharply divided than ever, between supporters and opponents of the military regime. [redacted]

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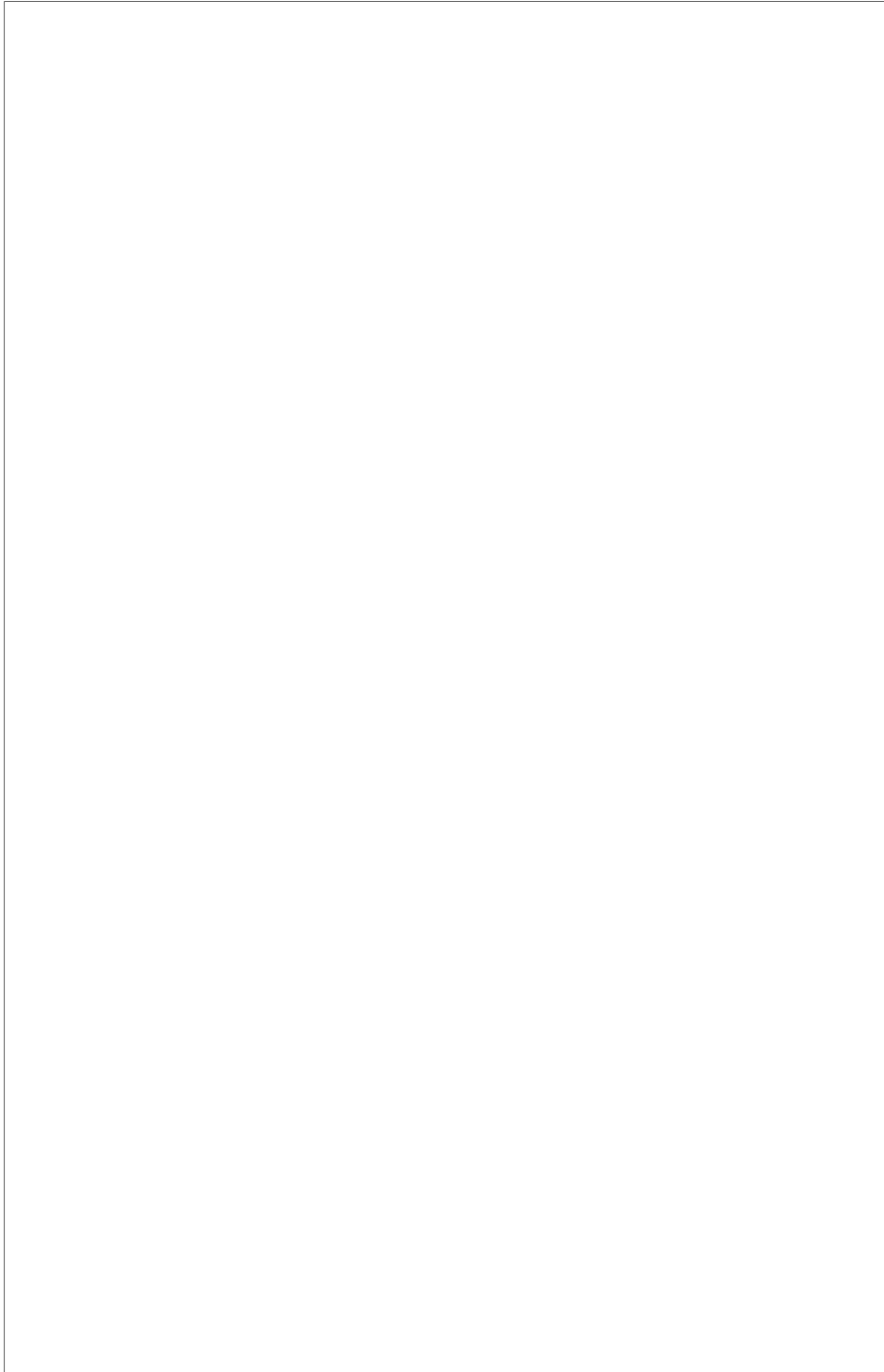
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Dahomey: Key army elements ousted President Soglo's military government yesterday and announced a take-over by young officers.

Paratroop and armored units placed Soglo and most senior officers under house arrest during the night of 16-17 December. The politically important chief of staff, Lt. Col. Alley, whose role in the coup is still uncertain, reportedly was escorted to the coup group for discussions. A Revolutionary Military Committee consisting mostly of little-known junior officers has promised to form a new provisional government and to submit a new constitution to the people within six months.

Junior army officers had long been dissatisfied with their limited influence under Soglo's regime and had complained of corruption and mismanagement. The coup occurred as the general strike which paralyzed Dahomey last week was subsiding as a result of new concessions by Soglo. Midway through the strike, Alley had ordered into Cotonou the forces that staged the coup.

Basic economic ills have been the root cause of every crisis in Dahomey's short history, including previous military coups in 1963 and 1965. France, whose financial support keeps the country functioning, seems reconciled to Dahomey's chronic instability and is unlikely to increase its aid to ease local pressures resulting from austerity measures. [REDACTED]

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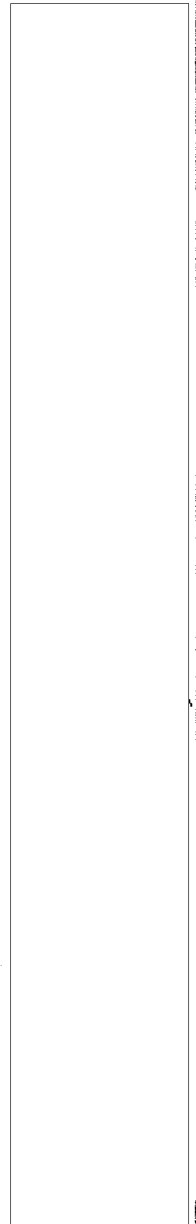
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NOTES

Algeria: Forces loyal to Boumediene apparently have put down an attempted revolt of dissident army units that began on the night of 14 December, but scattered outbreaks of fighting may still occur as the rebels are rounded up. The leader of the attempted coup, former army chief of staff Z'Biri, apparently has not been captured. Boumediene's success in crushing the revolt, the most serious threat to his government since he ousted Ben Bella in June 1965, may encourage him to move more confidently against other disgruntled elements. [REDACTED]

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Australia: The death of Prime Minister Holt will probably not produce any immediate changes in the composition of the government or in its domestic and foreign policies. Deputy Prime Minister McEwen, leader of the junior party in the governing coalition, will assume the prime ministership, at least for an interim period. He has been closely identified with his predecessor's policies, but the dominant Liberal Party may soon elect a permanent replacement from among its own members. [REDACTED]

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