



The Indo-Afghan Nexus and its Implications for Pakistan from 2001 to 2014

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Abstract: India and Pakistan have been colonized at different times, but Afghanistan has never been colonized. The people of Afghanistan have always had friendly ties with the people of the United Subcontinent. However, the development of a new country called Pakistan was seen as both a threat and a way for the people of Afghanistan and India to become less connected to each other historically. The friendship pact of 1950 strengthened the relationship between India and Afghanistan. In fact, Afghanistan was the only country that voted against Pakistan's membership in the UN. Pakistan and Afghanistan have a lot in common, including language, culture, and religion, but their relationship has not been strong. With its many-sided strategies, India has been trying to undermine Pakistan's peace and security ever since it was formed. India's plan to cut Pakistan off from its neighbors is a very bad sign for Pakistan. Pakistan is very worried about the Indian presence in Afghanistan because there are consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad, which are close to the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban were very angry at Pakistan because of the US war on terror and Pakistan's change in policy towards the Taliban.

Introduction

The regional and world powers both understand how important Afghanistan is from a strategic point of view. Pakistan and Afghanistan are closely linked to each other because they share a long border (Basit, 2021). A safe and quiet Afghanistan would be good for Pakistan's military, as well as its politics, economy, and people's lives. However, India's quickly growing presence and influence in Afghanistan is a very big worry for Pakistan (Ganguly et al., 2009). India wants to meet a lot of different needs from Afghanistan in several different ways. India is planning to play a big part after the US security forces leave Afghanistan. India's main goal is to cut Pakistan off from the rest of the world by surrounding it with several countries (Merrington, 2011). The Indian government carefully follows the Kautilyan philosophy, which says that all neighbors should be seen as enemies and all neighbors of enemies should be seen as good friends. I.K. Gujral's theory also shows that

India wants to keep Pakistan from talking to other countries. Gujral was India's 12th Prime Minister. He set India's foreign policy so that it would be peaceful with its neighbors but not with Pakistan. Indian plans for Afghanistan are based on these ideas, which were given to them by their leaders and Gurus. Afghanistan, unlike India and Pakistan, has never been a colony. It is known as the "Graveyard of Empires" because of this (Wajedidi, 2021). The people of Afghanistan were nice and cooperative with the people of the Subcontinent because they lived close by. A well-known Afghan leader named Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was very active in India's fight for independence from the British Raj in the 1940s. In exchange, India helped him push back against the Pakhtunistan (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) region of Pakistan's new government.

On the other hand, both India and Afghanistan saw the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan as acts of aggression. Even though there

are religious, cultural, and social links between the two states, relations have been tense ever since Pakistan was formed. The only country that voted against Pakistan's UN membership was Afghanistan. Kabul's irrational claim over NWFP (K.P.K.) land was at first the source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In fact, India and Afghanistan made peace with each other in 1950 (Horn, [1983](#)). The treaty not only guaranteed peace and friendship for a long time, but it also set up formal ties between the governments of India and Afghanistan. The Soviet Union attacked Afghanistan in 1979 with the goal of setting up a pro-Soviet government there (Taylor, [2014](#)). India, which was a Soviet friend, helped the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan with its social and economic problems. With help and aid from the US, Pakistan began teaching Afghan mujahedeen to fight back against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. After invading Afghanistan for ten years, the Soviet Union had to pull its troops out. The Taliban were able to make their own government by overthrowing Rabbani's rule in 1996, thanks to the chaos in Afghanistan's civil war. During the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, ties between India and Afghanistan were tense for the first time in their history. During the rule of the Taliban, India had almost no effect on Afghanistan. India shut down its offices and consulates in Afghanistan until the Taliban lost power. It then began giving money to the Northern Alliance, an opposition party that didn't have much control over some parts of Afghanistan. At the same time, Pakistan had its first period of good ties with Afghanistan when the Taliban were in charge. The episode of 9/11 on U.S. soil has changed the way things were done around the world (Contributors, [2021](#)). It was said that al-Qaeda was behind the killings. The US asked the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden, who planned the 9/11 attacks, but the Taliban refused. Operation Enduring Freedom was started by US security troops in Afghanistan with the goal of capturing Osama bin Laden. When the Bonn Conference 2001 ended, an interim government was put in place for two years. It was mostly made up of Northern Alliance figures. The 9/11 attacks

turned out to be a disguised blessing for India because they gave the country a long-awaited chance to regain its lost power in Afghanistan and fight its rival Pakistan. India backed the interim government of Pakistan and gave it a lot of money as "developmental and socio-economic aid."

In the years since India has been involved in Afghanistan through several infrastructure and development projects. Indian builders have finished a 218-kilometer road in Afghanistan's Herat province (India Global Business Staff, [2021](#)). This road will connect to the border with Iran and allow trade to flow through Chahbahar port. New Delhi will have a safe way to get into the energy-rich Central Asian market thanks to Indian investment and power in Kabul. Furthermore, the Indo-Afghan strategic deal of 2011 gave India the chance to enter Afghanistan and train Afghan military troops. India wants to cut Pakistan off from the rest of the world, and its spy agency, RAW, is doing a lot of work to do just that. Kalbhusan Jadev, a RAW agent, was arrested near the Chaman border in Baluchistan, and his statement makes it clear that India wants to hurt the province of Baluchistan, especially CPEC, by backing militants and separatist groups (DAWN, [2019](#)). As a country that faces threats from both its western and eastern borders, Pakistan strongly condemns India's goals and its involvement in Afghanistan. To keep China from having too much power in the area, the US is strengthening its links with India. As of 2017, the Pentagon's "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan" report named India as Afghanistan's most reliable partner in the area (TOLONews, [2017](#)). On the other hand, this story said that Pakistan was helping militant groups in Afghanistan. Ashraf Ghani, the president of Afghanistan, toured India later in 2017 and said that Trump's new strategy for South Asia was a big deal for the whole area. The Afghan President also said that he would stop Pakistan from getting to Central Asia through Afghanistan if Pakistan did not let Kabul connect to India through CPEC.

Significance of the Research

The paper is extremely important for understanding the complex geopolitical dynamics of South Asia during a crucial moment. This text explores the complex and varied relationship between India and Afghanistan, focusing on the strategic partnership that developed after the United States intervened in Afghanistan in 2001. The paper offers a significant analysis of the impact on Pakistan, including insights into regional power dynamics, security issues, and the geopolitical equilibrium within the context of the War on Terror. This resource is highly important for policymakers, scholars, and analysts who aim to comprehend the intricate dynamics of interests and tensions among these neighboring nations during a crucial period in recent history.

The objective of the Research

- The objective of the article is to find out how India and Afghanistan came together in a nexus and benefited each other at different levels.
- How Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan affects the Indo-Afghan nexus.

The rationale of the Study

The rationale behind the article is to understand the intricate interaction of geopolitical factors in South Asia during a crucial period. Following the 2001 U.S. involvement, India and Afghanistan established a strategic relationship, which had significant consequences for neighboring Pakistan. The article seeks to address a significant lack of knowledge by conducting a thorough investigation into the diplomatic, security, and economic aspects of the Indo-Afghan relationship. The paper aims to provide significant insights for policymakers, scholars, and analysts who are seeking to comprehend the complex relationship between the geopolitical landscape of the region and its impact on stability, security, and strategic decision-making in Pakistan.

Indian Objectives in Afghanistan

From the inception of Pakistan till now, our relationship with Afghanistan has not been smooth and steady. The two Islamic Nations confront each other several times. Pakistan's archrival India exploits these ups and downs and tries hard to make the relationship between the two neighbors from bad to worse. Keeping this view in mind, India has different motives in Afghanistan, including political and strategic motives, economic motives, and security motives. All these objectives will be discussed one by one.

Political Motives of India in Afghanistan

Indian aid to Afghanistan is motivated by several political factors. The choice made by New Delhi to include Kabul in SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) was both highly strategic and commercialized. China and India are currently competing to establish regional dominance in South Asia (Brattberg et al., [2021](#)). India seeks to curtail Beijing's influence over Afghanistan by offering social and developmental assistance to Kabul. China, as a developing superpower, seeks to meet its energy demands by tapping into the untapped resources and minerals of Central Asian governments. Given that Afghanistan serves as the entry point to Central Asia, it will provide India with the opportunity to establish connections with these nations. India has established a military camp at Farkhor in Tajikistan to provide help and assistance to Afghanistan. This military installation offers India the chance to uphold its physical presence in the South Asian region and monitor its primary adversaries, Pakistan and China. India would have surface route access to the Farkhor base via Afghanistan through Chahbahar port.

The Economic Objectives of India in Afghanistan

The economic objectives of India in Afghanistan are equally significant as its political objectives. After the Taliban's reign ended in Kabul, the primary focus was on the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. India's substantial aid and investment in Afghanistan have enabled it

to implement a "soft power" strategy in the country. Joseph Nye is credited with coining the term "soft power" (Nye, [2017](#)). Soft power refers to the capacity to achieve desired outcomes by attractiveness rather than force or payments. India's demonstration of soft power in Afghanistan is evident through several projects, as listed below. India annually grants scholarships to approximately 500 Afghan students through the Indian Council for Culture and Relations scholarships program. India is offering complimentary medical services and facilities to almost 30,000 Afghan individuals in five prominent cities and clinics in Afghanistan. India constructed a cricket stadium in Kandahar, Afghanistan, while also enhancing the Afghan national television network and upgrading telephone lines in some provinces (Iwanek, [2019](#)). The popularity of Bollywood culture is steadily growing among the Afghan population. India annually trains approximately 500 Afghan public personnel. There has been a substantial rise since 2009. India's economic presence in Afghanistan is evident through several developmental projects, such as the Salma Dam, also known as the Indo-Afghan Friendship Dam, located in the province of Herat. Another significant project is the construction of the International North-South Trade Corridor (INSTC), which will serve as a vital link between Chahbahar and Kabul (Contessi, [2021](#)). Afghanistan, being a landlocked nation, lacks a direct trading route to India. Pakistan has declined India's request to utilize the Wagah border for the purpose of selling its commodities to Afghanistan. The Chahbahar port in Iran, which is backed by India, will offer India an alternate pathway for doing trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia. Afghanistan has extended an invitation to Indian enterprises to investigate the vast natural riches in Afghanistan, which are valued at trillions of dollars. India's strong diplomatic relations with Afghanistan facilitate India's establishment of a presence in the Central Asian region. New Delhi is actively pursuing several bilateral agreements with these Central Asian countries. India will gain access to Turkmenistan's gas through the TAPI gas pipeline

project. India and Kazakhstan have entered into a bilateral agreement for cooperation in the fields of energy and industrial development. Astana has agreed to supply New Delhi with nuclear fuel from 2015 till the end of 2019 (WNN, [2015](#)).

Security Motives of India in Afghanistan

India is the most populous and largest country in South Asia, both in terms of population and area. The region faces significant security challenges on its northern and western borders. India has engaged in three military conflicts with Pakistan in the western region, as well as a war with China in the northern region in 1962 (Tourangbam, 2020). The rise of the Taliban administration in Kabul led to an increase in the insurgency in Indian-held Jammu & Kashmir. India's primary security objective is to combat both domestic and external upheavals led by the Taliban and Jihadists. India's primary objective is to effectively manage and contain the militancy of Jihadists and the Taliban in the regions of Kashmir and Afghanistan. India had previously experienced estrangement with Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. India was excluded from Afghanistan's politics throughout the duration of the Taliban's administration due to the Taliban's strong alignment with Pakistan (Stobdan, [1999](#)). India is taking measures to prevent the recurrence of its loss of influence in Afghanistan by actively suppressing any form of Islamic militancy or Jihadist activity within its own borders and in Afghanistan. India is concerned that any jihadist rebellion in Afghanistan will directly affect India's security. The continuous acts of violence inflicted against the residents of Indian-held Kashmir, particularly the Muslim population, by the Indian armed forces have significantly deteriorated their quality of life. The Indian government is currently engaging in human rights crimes, including forced arrests and disappearances, against innocent Kashmiris. The Indian PM Narendra Modi's rule is adhering rigidly to the "Hindutva" philosophy, which advocates for the dominance of Hindus and their culture. India is concerned that any rebellion in Afghanistan may potentially lead to instability in Indian-administered Kashmir. In

addition, India has established an extensive network of its intelligence agency, RAW, agents near its consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad (Mazari et al., [2006](#)). The primary objective of this deployment is to undermine stability in Baluchistan by providing support to militant organizations, thereby generating widespread disorder and chaos throughout Pakistan, with the intention of attributing it to being a terrorist state. India, as one of the major contributors to Afghanistan, is expanding its involvement in the country under the pretext of the reconstruction process. India's multifaceted initiatives in Kabul are evident in numerous areas and projects, many of which have already been finalized. Road construction, Afghan Parliament building construction, Indira Gandhi Children Hospital reconstruction in Kabul, Dam construction. Furthermore, the areas of focus include the establishment of powerhouses, the expansion of media channels, and cooperation in trade as well as mining.

Implications for Pakistan

The establishment of Pakistan was perceived as a hostile move by both Afghanistan and India. Pakistan is the sole obstacle impeding India's path to achieving regional hegemony. Pakistan is the primary adversary and neighboring country of India, while Afghanistan is the direct neighbor of Pakistan. India has consistently regarded Pakistan as an adversary and is determined to undermine its stability at whatever expense. Both India and Pakistan engaged in armed conflicts in 1948, 1965, and 1971, and the Kargil conflict in 1999 (Hashim, [2019](#)). Pakistan has experienced significant security challenges because of Afghanistan's association with India, as documented in historical records. Although Afghanistan has rejected Pakistan's membership in the United Nations, Pakistan still desires to establish fraternal relations with Afghanistan. Despite sharing religious, cultural, ethical, and social principles with Pakistan, the government of Afghanistan maintained a strong alliance with India and pursued pro-Indian policies until the Taliban came into power from 1996 to 2001.

Pakistan played a significant role in offering refuge to Afghan refugees during the Soviet invasion, which resulted in numerous challenges for the country, including the foremost refugee problem, heroin and opium production, suicide bombing, blame game, Kalashnikov culture, and more. The Indian presence in Afghanistan, particularly its consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad, which are located close to the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, is a source of concern for Pakistan. Pakistan is concerned that these consulates are nothing more than a propaganda tool designed to provide shelter to Indian intelligence agencies, allowing them to covertly carry out their missions and launch attacks against Pakistan. Indian multidimensional intentions in Afghanistan and its struggle to encircle or restrict Pakistan across its east and west border have caused severe concerns and unrest among government officials and policymakers in Islamabad. These concerns and unrest have been brought about in the following ways.

The fast-growing influence of India in Afghanistan will result in Pakistan losing its strategic leverage in Kabul significantly. When Islamabad is engaged in a confrontation with its adversary India, the neighboring state of Afghanistan will not provide any assistance to the political capital. The Indian government can wage a water war against Pakistan through Afghanistan while simultaneously persuading Kabul to bring up the Durand line issue with Islamabad once more. If Pakistan is marginalized and ringed, it will be unable to reach Central Asia for the purpose of trade through Afghanistan. The large presence of India in Afghanistan, as well as its continued struggle to acquire its status as a regional hegemonic power, is posing an alarming threat that is not just confined to Pakistan but also encompasses the entire South Asian area. As a result of the fact that it would provide India leverage in the event of a future conflict with Pakistan, the air base known as "Farkhor Airbase" in Tajikistan is also a possible threat to Pakistan (Kavalski, [2010](#)). Despite Pakistan's unwavering

support for Afghanistan, the Afghan government, which is led by Hamid Karzai, has accused Pakistan of being responsible for the insurgency that is taking place in Afghanistan. Having received his education in India, Hamid Karzai and the policies that he has implemented in his government are more beneficial to India. His baseless charges against Pakistan have always been a source of satisfaction for New Delhi, which further strengthens the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Conflict Over Water Resources between India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan

In Afghanistan, India wants to build strong ties with Central Asia, but it also has many other goals it wants to achieve there. India has often stopped Pakistan from getting water and has even started a "water war" against Pakistan to make it dry and deserted. More than twelve large and small hydropower plants have been built in India along its three main rivers, the Chenab, the Jhelum, and the Indus. The flow of water towards Pakistan has slowed down a lot since these hydropower projects were built. It is clear that these Indian hydropower projects broke the Indus Water Treaty that India and Pakistan signed in 1960. In Afghanistan, India also wants to build similar hydropower projects on the Kabul River. The government of Afghanistan has started talking with the World Bank about these hydropower projects. There are 12 small and large hydropower projects that Afghanistan wants to build on the river Kabul (Varad, 2011). This will greatly reduce the flow of water to Pakistan. Since Pakistan does not have any dams or water-holding reservoirs, it is very likely that it will need to ask Afghanistan for water in the future to meet its energy and farming needs. India already knows how to use this to its benefit and has planned to cause Pakistan to have a water crisis. India fully backs Afghanistan's government in its plans to build these dams on the Kabul River as soon as possible. Pakistan is already going through a lot of problems, both inside and outside the country. Businesses are leaving Pakistan because they can't get enough energy, and prices are going up. There

isn't enough clean drinking water in big towns like Karachi. The water problems in Pakistan have gotten worse because of the Indo-Afghan alliance.

Insurgency in Baluchistan

In addition to the link between India and Afghanistan, Pakistan also sees direct threats from India in the form of an uprising in Baluchistan, one of its provinces. India could not handle the responsibility of running Gwadar Port (TRIBUNE, 2013). The Gwadar port, which was built with help from the Chinese government, could be a threat to India's plans to become the most powerful country in the area. The Deep-Water port in Gwadar was built by China. This project will not only strengthen Pakistan's economy but also help trade between South Asia, Central Asia, and other Arabian states. People in India think that this project is their worst fear. China will never be happy about the economic help that this Gwadar port will bring to Pakistan. India's intelligence services are helping several militant groups and anti-government groups in Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan and FATA, to cause chaos and lawlessness all over the country. To compete with Pakistan's Gwadar Port, India has begun to invest in and improve Iran's Chahbahar Port. India wants to achieve the following gains through Chahbahar port. Gwadar Port will be replaced by Chahbahar Port, which will give India a way to fight back against Gwadar Port. It will be possible for India and Iran to build strong economic and political links through Chahbahar port. In the future, these ties may also become strategic. India wants to connect land-locked Afghanistan to Iran by building the Deelaram Zaranj highway. This will make Afghanistan less reliant on Pakistan to use its Karachi port for trade. India wants to get cheap oil through Chahbahar port to meet its energy needs, and it has already increased the amount of oil it buys from Iran. Baluchistan is Pakistan's biggest province, but it doesn't have many resources (TRNN, 2020). It has the fewest people of any province and is full of natural riches that haven't been used yet. Sadly, most of Pakistan's governments did not meet Baluchistan's needs

and give them the means they needed. Since the beginning of Pakistan, many militants have been working in Baluchistan to cause chaos and instability across the country. With India's help, a lot of Baluch figures, including Harbiyar Marri and Brahamdad Bugti, began to work against Pakistan. Some people say that Ahmad Shuja Pasha, who used to be the Director General of Military Operations in Pakistan, told the parliament of Pakistan that India and Russia are both behind the uprising in Baluchistan. He also said that India has set up nine training camps across the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. These camps are where Indian troops train and supply the Baluch Liberation Army and its militants with weapons. He said that India was giving money to the Baluch Liberation Army because Pakistan was building Gwadar port with help from Beijing. During any battle or war between Pakistan and India, Afghanistan was seen as a strategic depth and a backyard for Pakistan. Unfortunately, when the Taliban's rule in Kabul fell, the strategic depth shifted towards India because of an interim government in Afghanistan that supported India and gave the interim government a lot of money.

Strategies to Address Indian Threats

After the inception of Pakistan, India has never missed a chance to hurt Pakistan's image and reputation in the area and around the world. India has always wanted to have some kind of effect on Pakistan, but it has failed miserably almost every time. India never missed a chance to make Pakistan less stable in its economy, government, and own country. To bring peace to Afghanistan, Pakistan needs to put in a lot of work and use all of its choices. When making a strategy for Afghanistan, you should think about the threats that India makes. Here are some of the things that Pakistan can do to protect itself from Indian danger. Pakistan should make sure that its foreign policies are consistent by keeping its own national interests in mind. Pakistan should try to keep its politics calm so that it can show the rest of the world and other countries in the area that the country is united. For the good of Pakistan, both

the civilian and military leaders should make decisions about the country's foreign and domestic policies. Foreign countries shouldn't be able to tell or pressure Pakistan what to do. Instead, Pakistan should work to achieve its own national goals. Pakistan needs to get the attention of people around the world and in the area on the horrible things that the Indian military and security forces are doing in Kashmir, which they have taken over. For the UN and other foreign bodies to believe that India is involved in Baluchistan, Pakistan should provide them with enough proof. Another war should not be started, but talks with the Taliban should be started instead. It is recommended that Pakistan sign a number of bilateral and strategic deals with China. Rising China, which is becoming the new world power, is what India is most afraid of right now (Khanna, [2007](#)). Close links between Pakistan and China will always be a source of tension for India and its leaders. In order to start calm talks with India about the Kashmir issue and other problems between Pakistan and India, the Pakistani government should stick to its position that any mistake made by India in Pakistan will be dealt with in the same way. It is very important for Pakistan to build dams and water reserves right now. India plans to flood Pakistan from both the east and west with water from both its own rivers and the River Kabul. This will wipe out all the crops in Pakistan.

Way Forward of Pak-Afghan relations

In their long past, Pakistan and Afghanistan have had many problems, including border disputes, cultural ties, and problems with other countries. To get along better, both countries need to put diplomatic efforts and open lines of contact at the top of their lists. Building trust and knowledge through regular high-level conversations and one-on-one interactions is a key part. These kinds of conversations can help people from different cultures understand each other better and accept each other. Managing the borders is an important issue that needs to be looked at. Both countries should work together to make the border safer, solve problems that happen across the border, and

stop terrorists from coming in. Working together to fight terrorism and extremism can make the region more stable, which is good for both countries and makes it easier for businesses to grow. Working together on the economy is another important way to improve ties between two countries. Joint infrastructure projects, trade agreements, and business partnerships are all examples of things that can bring people together who have economic interests in common. These projects can help both countries' economies grow, which can raise living standards and make it easier for people to work together. Helping people in need and working on development projects are also important ways to build trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Taking on common problems together, like healthcare, schooling, and reducing poverty, can bring people together and help them work together. Promoting cultural exchanges and training programs can also help people understand each other better and lead to long-term peace. Both countries need to accept each other's sovereignty and stay out of each other's internal affairs. Using conversation to work out old grudges, with a focus on compromise and reconciliation, can help heal wounds and make the relationship stronger. To make things better between Pakistan and Afghanistan, they need to do more than just talk to each other. They need to manage their borders, work together on the economy, help people in need, and protect each other's sovereignty. The two countries can work together to build a stronger base for lasting peace and cooperation in the area by addressing all of these issues.

Conclusion

Since its founding in 1947, the Afghanistan nexus with India has been a major factor in threatening Pakistan's safety and unity. The Indo-Afghan nexus has a strategy of isolating and surrounding Pakistan with its neighbors. Both countries are working against Pakistan's goals in Afghanistan. India is only in Afghanistan to hide its true intentions. It is there to help rebuild the country,

but it really has bad intentions. India and Afghanistan have already signed a strategic deal that gives the Indian military a way to continue its policies against Pakistan through Afghanistan. Islamabad has a good reason to be afraid that the Indian consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, which are close to the border with Afghanistan, are only trying to make Pakistan less stable by supporting anti-government groups and separatist movements in Baluchistan province. This will eventually make the Gwadar port less useful. The fact that India is in Afghanistan is a major threat to peace and unity in South Asia as a whole, not just to Pakistan. The ongoing race between world powers to gain control over Afghanistan and Central Asia has made South Asia a dangerous place to live. Indian officials have worked hard to reduce Pakistan's power in Kabul, but Islamabad is still an important part of Afghanistan's peace and stability process.

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