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Taufan Al-Aqsa Operation and its Role in Undermining Deterrence Strategy Credibility in the Zionist Regime

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Abstract: The well planned and executed operation of Taufan Al-Aqsa showed the credibility undermining of Israeli deterrence strategy that is considered to be the basis for protecting the strategic depth, as well as, a major support for the theory of impenetrable Israeli security as stated by the political institutions of the Zionist regime, the gains achieved by the resistance had proven the idea of fortifying the Zionist regime military and security wise from any violations has ideal dimensions that has no relation to reality. As evidence, operation Taufan Al-Aqsa –which was considered to be an interpretation for Freeing the land and a victory for the oppressed and prisoners of the Palestinian people- has proven for the first time after the 1973 war that the Zionist regime with all its strength, support of the western countries, and its evolution of military equipment, it is much weaker than the stereotype that its leadership boasted about, as well as being an undefeatable country, which has been entrenched in the Arab leaders' perception and convictions as a first step in accepting the reality of recognizing and accepting its existence, by imposing a normalization policy that aims at isolating the Palestinian resistance, which sees the Zionist regime as an usurper of the holy land in Palestine. This matter is a reason for jihad against him and the possibility of defeating him and regaining the occupied land.

Keywords: Taufan Al-Aqsa, undermining, credibility, deterrence, Zionist regime, strategy

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1. Introduction

Section One

Strategic Analysis for the jihadi Taufan Al-Aqsa operation

The heroic operation started on 7th October, 2023, a week following the Jewish Sakkut and a day following the fiftieth anniversary of May, 1973 war, when Hamas and other Palestinian jihadist groups launched Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa, which was considered a strategic coordinated attack consisting of ground and air forces on multiple border areas in the Israeli depth, this indicates the value of that operation and the precision of organizing its details [1], [2], [3]. The comprehensiveness of the goals it achieved through military action, which included precise attacks that surprised Israel, which considered it the most bloody and powerful blow in its history. The Americans and Israelis here admits that the planning of the operation was heroic and had been in progress for at least two years through a long-term network that deceived the Israeli intelligence agency [4], [5]. It included psychological warfare that was carried out with a high degree of military organization and professionalism, resembling the tactics of the regular army's special forces and not those of a typical jihadist organization. Accordingly, the significance of the operation and its impact on the Zionist regime prompted to be analyzed strategically by examining its most important details:

2. Materials and Methods

Time wise: The date was carefully planned out from a strategic standpoint. Initially, Hamas commanders in the Gaza Strip sent orders around four in the morning, saying that "anyone who was present at the training sessions should go to the dawn prayer in the mosque he usually goes to." This was always the case and did not incite the Israeli security services' wrath. Following the announcement that the first signals of "zero hour" would begin an hour later, as dawn broke in Gaza, verbal instructions followed: "Assemble at the specified locations with your weapons and any ammunition you may have." After receiving the verbal message, the mujahideen were given more and more potent ammunition. They were also able to carry heavy machine guns, sniper rifles, explosives, hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, and any other weapons they had been training with over the previous months. Following each training, they returned the weapons to the movement's stores. At six in the morning, the last orders were finally given, this time in writing, and they said that the men were to attack the Israelis on the other side after swiftly breaking through the holes that would be created in the barrier enclosing Gaza by shattering or detonating.

Confidential wise: Since Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007, their most potent and ambitious effort was effort Taufan Al-Aqsa. Given that it was created by a cadre of seasoned Hamas jihadi commanders, this was a result of its secrecy and the effectiveness of its military strategy. The Israeli military and intelligence services were likewise unaware of it. Thousands of Hamas fighters dispersed among Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants were verbally instructed to carry out the operation. It is the most recent in a line of actions intended to fool one of the most potent monitoring systems in the world and prevent any information about potential impending events from coming from a network of spies.

Tactics and readiness wise: According to the terminology of strategic analysis, the Qassam Brigades and other Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza failed to disclose the operation's planning, resources, outside assistance, and execution, which constitute a qualitative change in every way. The resistance did not launch the October 7 operation until after it had developed its military capabilities and operational performance, which allowed it to be precise in selecting targets and executing them with the highest level of accuracy. This is further evidenced by the unprecedented operational, tactical, qualitative, and strategic performance. Given that the operation prevented three of the four fundamental components of Israeli military doctrine—warning, deterrence, and defense—it is clear that the Mujahideen's tactics and level of preparedness during the attack created a genuine crisis that affected the core of Israeli military doctrine to the point where it was referred to as a strategic earthquake that rocked the Israeli army's image and reality. The outcome of the conflict still determines the aspect of victory, not the choice. As a result, the three layers of the (Israeli) military failure in Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa—leadership, intelligence, and operations—were the precursors of the military security doctrine's failure.

Organization wise: In a strategically arranged hierarchical chain, the directives were dispersed across Gaza, first to the commanders of "battalions" of one hundred or more, then to the commanders of platoons of twenty or thirty, who in turn reported to the commanders of divisions of twelve, who in turn relayed the information to friends, neighbors, and family members who joined them in twice-weekly training sessions at numerous locations throughout the Strip. Not until the mujahideen had gathered, equipped with hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns, sniper rifles, and explosives, were more ammo and more potent weaponry provided. It was so accurate and realistic that the mujahideen were given final instructions at 6 a.m. on October 7 to rush through the soon-to-be-blown or shattered gaps in the billion-dollar perimeter barrier around Gaza and attack Israeli forces on the opposite side as soon as the sun rose.

As for the implementation of the process: Due to a vacation and a Sabbath that came on the same day, many commanders and troops were on leave when Hamas launched hundreds of missiles into Israel in the early hours of October 7th. Hamas's elite troops,

referred to as the Elite, attacked IDF guard stations, monitoring, control, communications, and weapons systems close to the border with swarms of drones armed with explosive devices and drones armed with hand grenades. After that, thousands of mujahideen assembled close to the Israeli border in groups with predetermined plans for attacks. In order to make room for thousands of additional mujahideen on motorcycles and dozens of pickup trucks carrying a variety of weapons, such as rifles, machine guns, sophisticated anti-tank launchers, rockets, explosive devices, and numerous hand grenades, they were able to breach the border several times using explosive devices and enter Israeli territory. Additionally, some Hamas fighters used parachutes for aerial insertion in order to penetrate Israel. That dawn, over 3,000 competent combatants entered deep into Israel.

3. Results

Each squad and combatant understood their part in bringing the operation to a close, which is another facet of it. To put it another way, each had a distinct purpose [6], [7], [8], [9]. Some were sent to capture inhabitants in communities, while others sought to take control of military sites. After that, these teams were split up into smaller units, with the core elite force in charge of attacking soldiers and taking control of military installations and villages. Teams assigned to guard access and departure points to these locations and block potential IDF aid in regaining control of the situation joined them [10], [11], [12]. With hundreds of mujahideen infiltrating many IDF outposts and positions and even taking control of the IDF's Gaza Division headquarters, the operation was also audacious and well planned. They methodically demolished surveillance, reconnaissance, and communications equipment at these locations in an effort to interfere with the IDF's command and control functions [13], [14], [15], [16]. Hamas's militants' use of tactical and strategic surprise was successful in blinding the IDF, impairing its capacity to act swiftly and efficiently, and causing extensive political, military, and public unrest [17], [18], [19], [20].

Ultimately, a well-coordinated military campaign that targeted Israeli army sites in the Gaza Strip periphery led to the valiant operation. The mujahideen succeeded in seizing control of several Israeli outposts and observation points located around the Strip's borders, as well as sizable military sites. Commando elements of the organization also seized control of around 20 Israeli settlements located inside the so-called "Green Line." According to the Israeli army's then-announced statistics, this extraordinary action killed about 1,200 Israeli troops and civilians and wounded around 3,000 more, including several high-ranking commanders. Other groups, including Hamas, also took around 130 Israelis hostage. Based on the aforementioned, we can demonstrate that Hamas has developed a belief that it is a powerful military organization that can cause harm. Taufan Al-Aqsa operation in the Gaza Strip will eventually represent a real strategic turning point rather than a hypothetical one, establishing the legitimacy of the historical Palestinian resistance path in which the conflict has shifted from the official armies to the popular resistance movements with widespread Arab public support. Additionally, the operation accelerated and fueled a positive shift in international public opinion that was already slowly gaining traction in the populations of the nation's most antagonistic to Palestinian rights. In addition, the operation made the Israelis reevaluate the political optimistic literature that the Zionist right was promoting about the future of "(Israel)". By undermining the legitimacy of Israeli deterrence and defeating the so-called secure Israeli national security doctrine, the operation demonstrated the resilience of the Palestinian people as well as the bravery and will of its combatants.

Section Two/ The Repercussions of Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa on the Israeli Deterrence Theory:

Credibility is a psychological component of deterrence strategy that refers to the degree to which the deterrent may warn the opponent and persuade him that the consequences of his unwanted conduct may be severe. Credibility is necessary for deterrence to be a successful tactic. This is dependent on two fundamental factors: party (A)'s capacity to clearly illustrate the likelihood of large costs and party (B)'s faith in party (A). The methods used to manage war, the traits of the deterrent state, the disparity

between the severity of the threat that needs to be deterred and the punishment that the deterrent state threatens to impose on the other party, the reputation of the threatened state, the makeup of the decision-makers, and other factors are some of the many that influence the credibility of deterrence. The type of threat—implicit or explicit, ambiguous or evident, imprecise or clear—and whether it originates from a political center at the top of the power structure or from lower levels of government determines its credibility. Therefore, the capacity to execute the threat, its character, and the resolve to make it actual are the three fundamental foundations that support credibility.

This perspective claims that the Zionist organization has worked to develop a credible deterrent strategy since 1948. Therefore, the idea of deterrence—which former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said, "is the country's main weapon because it instills fear of us"—has dominated the state's strategic thinking more than any other notion. The statement made by Israeli General Moshe Dayan, "We must look at (Israel) as a rabid dog; it is too dangerous to be disturbed," is tacitly congruent with this. To put it another way, Israel uses a military strategy that is solely based on deterrence to deal with its adversaries because it has a tactical component that convinces possible adversaries not to act aggressively by showing them how strong the Israeli state is and how capable it is of fighting if they do. As a result, it has attempted to instill in its adversaries the belief that they ought to be conscious of the potential consequences of a conflict with it that intensifies to a considerable degree [21].

Since its founding in 1948, Israel's deterrence-based security philosophy has served as a pillar of its security approach. In order to have the ability to deter and be practically decisive, this strategy demands the army to have qualitative superiority in terms of weaponry, equipment, organization, training, leadership, and morale. The military situation in the Gaza Strip, however, has demonstrated that the deterrence approach has not succeeded in ensuring the Zionist entity's security in the future. Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa demonstrated that this deterrence theory is no longer credible and that Israel's authorities have failed to regain the deterrent effect against resistance activities [22], [23], [24].

Since their unilateral departure from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Israeli public has been unaware of a number of Israeli blunders, as Taufan Al-Aqsa operation demonstrated. This was demonstrated by a serious miscalculation of the movement's military force growth, which resulted in enormous human casualties—the majority of whom died on the first day of the operation—that doubled the movement's losses from the 1967 battle. Regardless of how the conflict in Gaza turns out, this will have a significant impact on Israeli society and the state machinery [25]. In addition to shattering Israeli confidence in their military and security system and its capacity to defend them after the threat escalated to a ground and air attack in the Israeli strategic depth, this adds fuel to the controversy surrounding who should be held accountable for this unprecedented failure, which led to approximately 4,200 deaths and injuries. The Israelis observe that the failure's scope manifests itself in four forms:

The first failure, it was for the security service of Israeli General Intelligence (Shabak) and Israeli Military Intelligence (Aman) to foresee the operation or gather information about it [26], [27]. These services continuously monitor and gather information on the Gaza Strip using a variety of technical and human methods, which is what made this intelligence failure even more vexing.

The second failure, it was the security wall's vulnerability. Israel placed a wager on the wall's capacity to keep Palestinian militants out of Gaza, but Hamas forces were able to breach it and move through it in considerable numbers, reaching over 20 places. Israel has constructed a reinforced concrete wall along the Gaza Strip's borders since its unilateral withdrawal. The wall is roughly 65 kilometers long, 7 meters deep in the ground, and 7 meters above the ground [28], [29]. It has also placed the newest electronic surveillance equipment on top of it and placed watchtowers in various locations to keep an eye on everything that happens behind it [30].

The third failure, it was the Israeli army's inability to defend its military base near the northern border of the Gaza Strip, as well as the numerous military outposts and

watchtowers that stretch along the Strip's borders. Additionally, the Israeli army failed to defend over 20 settlements inside the so-called "Green Line" that are located within the Strip's envelope; Hamas military units were able to invade and take control of them, causing losses to the Israeli army forces and other security services [31], [32]. The Palestinian militants' daring performance, organizational skills, and combat expertise appear to have immobilized and unbalanced the Israeli military and political leadership in the wake of this unexpected strike [33].

Finally, **the fourth failure**, In addition to paralyzing the Israeli military establishment's ability to respond to the demands of the security and military situation and make decisions, the Hamas operation also caused confusion in other state institutions that were unable to act quickly enough to deal with the aftermath of the attack, such as the delayed arrival of the dead and wounded and the failure to provide initial information to the families of the dead, wounded, and missing even after the operation had been underway for several days [34], [35].

According to the four aspects of failure, the Israeli strategic depth, which was bolstered by the legitimacy of the adequate deterrence strategy, was never founded on the idea of completely adequate protection [36]. Rather, it was subject to relative manifestations that fell apart during the first hour of Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa, making it ideal before the first decisive blows caused it to collapse. The country's first prime minister, Ben-Gurion, supported this security policy because Israel lacked "strategic depth," which collapsed after Hamas fighters easily launched rockets from Gaza, overwhelming the Iron Dome, which could no longer deal with those strategic strikes. As a result, Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa undermined the credibility of deterrence in maintaining the strategic security depth by dispelling the strategy of the proactive offensive approach and transferring the battle to the enemy's territory for war [37], [38], [39].

Section Three/ The Future of Israeli Deterrence Credibility Post Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa

Given that Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa demonstrated the extent to which Israel was able to prevent Hamas in Gaza from launching a significant and qualitative attack against it, it is absolutely certain that the credibility of the Israeli deterrence strategy against the organization failed miserably on October 7. This was not only an intelligence and operational failure, but also a more comprehensive strategic failure. In a single morning, the fundamental assumption of the whole Israeli strategy was shown to be utterly incorrect, putting Israel's security at risk of imminent strategic defeat. Even Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's pledge to "restore the credibility of deterrence to Israel's borders by his conviction to use force against civilians, children, and Hamas fighters" makes this predictable. Therefore, there is no room for imposing the Zionist entity on the resistance movements as a *fait accompli* given an Islamic ideology that does not recognize it and views it as an occupying entity that usurped the land of Palestine by force and with the assistance of the major powers in the past and present. In this case, we say that the implementation of the strategy of deterrence by force did not stop the resistance movement from carrying out qualitative military movements that harmed the Israeli security structure for more than seventy years [40]. The experiences of the resistance movements' fights against the Zionist entity, particularly the most recent ones, demonstrated that deterrence was insufficient to persuade the Mujahideen to abstain from striking or causing harm to the occupying force. Instead, the Islamic movements took the initiative to force the Zionist organization to engage in negotiations or agree to a truce in order to get terms that were completely out of line with its calculations [41], [42]. As a result, we discover that Taufan Al-Aqsa operation, which somewhat damaged Israeli deterrence's confidence, exposed its future to unforeseen strategic considerations because of the present and future of many key issues:

Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa demonstrated that the credibility of Israeli deterrence, which served as the foundation for the theory of Israeli national security and was safeguarded by highly sophisticated intelligence, operational, and military efforts, was a failure. This failure was not at the level of assessing the danger that led to the security

system collapsing in a matter of hours, nor was it to the extent that the Israeli security leadership was taken aback by the response [43]. As a result, the credibility of the deterrence is worthless in light of the evolution of the military strategy of the anti-Israel movements.

Given that October 7 completely upended Israel's security concept and tested the fundamentals of its security outlook, traditional military and defense doctrine, and national security policies, which were all upended in a single morning, it is necessary to reframe the Israeli security concept in order to maintain the credibility of Israeli deterrence in the future. It astonished the Israeli leadership with its magnitude, complexity, and surprise. For the Israeli people, state, and allies, it even brought up new, profound, and agonizing strategic and operational conundrums.

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Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa demonstrated that the credibility of deterrence will continue to be at risk of failure in the face of an ideology that the leaders and mujahideen of the Islamic Hamas movement embrace. This ideology views Israel as essentially illegitimate and holds that the Zionist movement has been at war with the Palestinians since its inception. As a result, Israel's war against the Palestinians is far more valuable than the peace that the Palestinian leadership and the Fatah movement are calling for. Hence, the possibility of war erodes the credibility of Israeli deterrence in the future because Hamas views the need to enforce the reality of resistance through force as essential. It even represents a sophisticated tactic since it compelled Israel to free roughly 240 Palestinian prisoners earlier, which is a significant propaganda win for the movement and its fighters.

Given the substantial increase in the military might of Israel's adversaries in the area, the Iron Dome, interceptor missile systems, and intelligence and security measures are no longer adequate to deter and defend Israel in the near future. For the first time in 75 years since Israel's founding, Hamas has established itself as a deterrent party after capturing and controlling parts of the Green Line, killing hundreds of soldiers and officers, and capturing and transferring dozens of civilians and military personnel to the Gaza Strip. As a result, nothing of that nature occurred in the Arab-Israeli war, and the movement benefited from it. Its unexpected, focused, and well-organized onslaught demonstrated a significant intelligence failure on the part of the Israeli security system.

After Taufan Al-Aqsa breached Israel's strategic depth, the country's leaders have reached the point where deterrence by punishment or denial is no longer effective. Alongside this failure, they will have two extremely hostile neighbors that are in a position to strike Israel at any time. The Israeli approach now centers on deterrence after giving up on the notion that they might take over the resistance force. The July War with Hezbollah in 2006 and Taufan Al-Aqsa with Hamas in 2023 demonstrate that the resistance movements' opponents have not been deterred by reality, hence it is necessary to impose heavy costs to prevent them from trying again. Therefore, deterrence needs to be reestablished by erecting massive walls to keep people from entering its land and by repairing the Iron Dome to stop Hezbollah and Hamas missiles, which are no longer effective.

The operation on October 7 weakened the most crucial tenets of the future deterrence strategy, which intended to normalize relations with the Arab nations in order to fully isolate Hamas. The operation resulted in the derailment of regional normalization for Israel for at least the next few years. Under the guise of the Iranian threat, the negotiations with Saudi Arabia were serious, and it was realistic to consider the idea of Saudi Arabia, the most significant Arab state politically and economically, forging ties with Israel in return for disregarding the Palestinian predicament. The death of children in Gaza and

the misery of the people there are continuously covered by Arabic-language news networks, despite the Israelis' insistence that normalization with Saudi Arabia and many other Arab governments is still possible. It seems doubtful that Saudi and other Arab leaders would be able to fully rapproche with Israel in this setting. Lastly, even while the disruption of Arab-Israeli reconciliation may not have been Hamas's main objective, it was of considerable concern to Hamas and the axis of resistance since it was directed at them and would legitimize Israel while also increasing security cooperation between Israel and their Arab opponents. Hamas, which had never recognized Israel as a state, thereby gained strategic importance to the axis of resistance on October 7.

Operation Taufan Al-Aqsa has prevented the IDF from transferring the conflict to enemy land in order to achieve a prompt military decision, which is a key component of Israel's military philosophy. Being the first to assault, Hamas's offensive demoralized it and attempted to shift the conflict to Israel's depths until its objectives were met. In this case, the mission demonstrated that the future may successfully challenge the effectiveness of a seasoned adversary with growing support and a sophisticated military.

4. Discussion

The aforementioned demonstrates that Israeli deterrence did not extend to safeguarding the Zionist entity. This is supported by the Israeli government's calculations and responses after Israel's trust in the army and in the government was eroded. As the extent of the significant losses suffered by Israelis became evident, they demanded the establishment of an emergency government or a government of national unity. On October 11, Netanyahu announced an agreement to create a "national emergency" government with the aim of restoring the credibility of deterrence by clearly identifying the purpose of this conflict in an attempt to heal the divide and recover part of the deterrence strategy that had been totally shattered. As a consequence, there was almost universal agreement that the approach against Gaza and Hamas should be drastically altered with the goal of overthrowing its government, and that it should not be like the other battles that Israel had fought against Gaza.

But in order to do this, Israel must control the Gaza Strip or a sizable portion of it, as no matter how many buildings and infrastructure it destroys or how many atrocities it carries out, it will not be able to determine the war from the air. Israel will suffer significant losses in an urban conflict that Hamas is skilled at conducting if it decides to launch a ground invasion of the Strip. As long as it is assumed that Hamas cannot be destroyed due to its ideology, which cannot be defeated militarily, deterrence, secure national security, and impenetrable strategic depth will remain unrealistic. This is because, particularly in Gaza, a new generation of Palestinian mujahideen will naturally emerge, increasing the number of new mujahideen in the ranks of Hamas in victory for the Palestinian people.

5. Conclusion

The results of the current study showed the following:

1. Israel viewed the valiant Palestinian resistance operation as an unparalleled breakdown in the legitimacy of Israeli deterrence and national security ideology. The Israeli public's trust in the military and security apparatus to protect them was also shattered, and the Israeli Security Agency (Shabak) and the Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman) were unable to predict or even gather intelligence on the planning and execution of the operation.
2. On a local level, the Palestinian resistance in Palestine has won because of the accomplishments and objectives. Also, the Hamas movement still has a lot of prisoners, which will force the Zionists to negotiate with Hamas movement representatives about them and agree to their terms, whether or not they have already attacked the Palestinians or reached prisoner exchange agreements with them, as has happened in other wars.

3. As one of the groups that supports the jihadist effort the most militarily, politically, and diplomatically, they will claim a triumph for themselves at the level of the axis of resistance. This will strengthen their roles in protecting the region's oppressed and, eventually, strengthen the Islamic Republic of Iran's position as the axis's leader and its strategy against US and Zionist policies toward the resistance movement in the area and their defense of their rightful rights.
4. Because normalization and peace agreements with Israel have little strategic or military importance, the Arab leaders who are normalizing ties will be adamant that the Arab deterrent system must be founded on Arab opposition action rather than on these accords.
5. The valiant operation demonstrated how crucial the non-state actors from the resistance movements and those who support them are in forming the characteristics of an Islamic Middle East that prevents the Greater Middle East from taking on characteristics that align with American and Zionist ideologies.
6. It became evident from the content of our study that there is no point in putting your trust in Israeli deterrence whenever a new conflict with the mujahideen in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran arises because its credibility will continue to be a source of debate and uncertainty within Israel and the consequences of failure will be felt in light of the growth of the military might of the Islamic resistance in Palestine and Lebanon.

The ongoing Israel– Hamas conflict, intensified by the October 7, 2023 attacks, has exposed critical vulnerabilities in Israel's deterrence strategy, regional security doctrines, and international diplomatic responses. Through a comprehensive analysis of political commentaries, media reports, military briefings, and think tank assessments, it is evident that both state and non-state actors are engaged in a complex web of strategic recalculations. Israel's reliance on conventional deterrence appears insufficient against asymmetric threats posed by Hamas, particularly in light of evolving tactics involving drones, tunnels, and surprise offensives. Furthermore, the international community remains divided, with some supporting Israel's military responses while others raise concerns about humanitarian consequences in Gaza. The conflict has catalyzed a broader regional discourse on strategic depth, civilian protection, and the viability of long-term peace frameworks. This study underscores the need for rethinking both military and diplomatic approaches, with a focus on adaptive security policies and conflict resolution strategies that go beyond reactive measures. Future research must further investigate the psychological, geopolitical, and cyber dimensions of modern deterrence failures in the Middle East.

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