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OPTEMPO TO OPRED
BUILDING AN ACCURATE MEASUREMENT TOOL TO DETERMINE READINESS

BY

COLONEL JAMES HAIRSTON
United States Army

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

OPTEMPO to OPRED

Building an Accurate Measurement Tool to Determine Readiness

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Total preparedness for war is the ultimate objective for all U.S. military forces. OPTEMPO resourcing is not well understood by most soldiers or congressmen and typically not at all by members of the public. The Army determines its requirement for OPTEMPO funding based on the Training Resource Model and other related resource models. Congress appropriates funds for readiness based on direct costs related to OPTEMPO. The issue of overall readiness and its definition is the basis for dialogue in this paper. OPTEMPO, while covering costs related to training, does not fully resource readiness. The Army definition of OPTEMPO has evolved over time, however, its evolution has not included all readiness requirements. The Army must expand the definition of readiness and link it to the Training Resource Model, Operating Tempo and Unit Status Reporting to better represent and justify the need for appropriate resources.
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OPTEMPO TO OPRED

The overarching priority of the U.S. Army is to maintain a trained and ready force. Key to this priority is obtaining and protecting sufficient resources. The traditional Army articulation of needs for readiness resources has been in terms of funding required for the minimal necessary training events. We call this Operating Tempo or OPTEMPO. OPTEMPO is expressed in terms of the number of miles that a single tank (in a tank battalion) must drive in a year to maintain one battalion's training readiness. Congress has almost always fully supported the Army's stated readiness requirements. In recent years, fiscal constraints have caused funding levels in other areas, not explicitly linked by the Army to readiness, to decrease. This has caused commanders to divert (migrate) OPTEMPO dollars to other high priority needs. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the factors that contribute to overall readiness and show that readiness is the result of adequately resourcing training and operational readiness requirements.

Background

Operating Tempo Evolution and The Training Resource Model

Historically, the concept of Operating Tempo (OPTEMPO) based funding began as an estimate based on the annual mileage used by a Main Battle Tank during training. During the mid-1980s, the Army developed the Battalion Level Training Models
(BLTM) as inputs to the Training Resource Model to project direct OPTEMPO funding requirements. "Each BLTM identifies the key items of equipment for each type battalion and specifies the number of miles each item of equipment must be operated annually to sustain training readiness. Most Army divisions and corps worldwide currently use BLTM models as the baseline for building the annual operating budget. The Army prepares and defends O&M funding using these estimates."¹ Army training readiness ratings are categorized from T1-T4. Each rating corresponds to an OPTEMPO mileage range in the BLTM that establishes the requirement for maintaining that level of readiness (see Figure 1).

In the early 1980’s, 970 miles/tank/year was considered a suitable funding baseline to maintain a fully trained unit at peak (7 days to be combat ready) preparedness. By the mid 1980’s, the 970 mile baseline was considered too expensive. During a meeting of training experts both from HQDA and MACOMs, the annual mileage requirement for funding was adjusted down to 850 miles, still within the T-1 band. Again in the late 1980’s, the mileage metric was reduced from 850 to 800 miles/tank/year. This 50 mile decrease represented simulation training using the Unit Conduct of Fire Trainer (UCOFT) for live mileage. While providing much needed gunner proficiency training, the UCOFT saved money and decreased wear on the actual armored vehicles by
reducing the requirement to drive to and from ranges. In FY 98 a similar 60 miles/tank/year offset was taken for the Close Combat Tactical Trainer (CCTT), to accommodate use of SYMNET related trainers. Figure 1 displays the HQDA program and FY 93-95 execution levels. There appears to be a shift from the philosophy of the mid 1980's. Simulations were used to supplement training as opposed to current thought, which considers simulations as a substitute (CCTT) that reduces actual mileage requirements. It is plain to see in Figure 1 that the current configuration of live and simulated miles is at 800 miles per year and falls at the bottom of the C1 band.

## Readiness versus Resourcing

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**Figure 1: HQDA Slide (DAMO-TR)**

OPTEMPO is a HQDA programming tool, not a unit level execution and training tool. It accounts for approximately 16
percent of the Operations and Maintenance Army (OMA) appropriation each year. OPTEMPO estimates the annual cost of spare and repair parts, fuel and other recurring operations, training and maintenance costs to operate annual miles for vehicles and hours for aircraft in the field Army.

Decline in the overall force structure, realignment of priorities, and ever changing political interests, has led to an interesting resource dilemma in Congress. The belief is that costs should decrease relative to force structure however, analysis has proven otherwise. Increased production costs, lower demand for products, and improved technology all tend to drive-up the cost per vehicle mile. DAMO-TR states as fact that "Savings are not proportional. Modern systems are more expensive and cost more to operate."\(^2\) One example of force structure changes and policy decisions that reflect on the OPTEMPO model is an issue involving the current Main Battle Tank. The M1/M1A1/M1A2 Fleet mix will drive up the cost by being required to maintain 3 separate versions of the system. Several internal system components for the three versions are not interchangeable.

The Training Resource Model (TRM) is an extremely effective tool for determining the resource requirements of OPTEMPO. Developed in the mid 1980's, the TRM is a computer model designed to generate resource requirements in support of POM and
budget development. It figures the costs of training over an eight-year period. Initial development of the model was to meet Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) needs, but is now available to all Major Commands (MACOMs). This agreement allows a common resource requirements baseline. The TRM has three official update times during the year, POM, OSD Budget Estimate, and the President’s Budget. “Each update is the result of integrating data from various official HQDA databases. On some occasions, the data has been adjusted to make it agree with the assumptions used to support a specific PPBES event, for example, approved but undocumented force structure decisions. One of the strengths of the TRM is its ability to change rapidly in order to meet the evolving needs of HQDA”.

![Training Resource Model Outputs](image-url)

Figure 2: HQDA Slide (CACI)
The TRM contains several inputs and two outputs. Figure 2 displays the TRM. A brief description of major inputs of the model includes:

- Battalion Level Training Model (BLTM). The model is a basic building block of the training resource requirements' determination process. It delineates HQDA approved policy that stipulates events a training unit should complete to attain any one of five training levels. Events comprise the combination of unit equipment and OPTEMPO required to complete all associated mission essential tasks related to the event. "There are currently over 1500 BLTMs representing almost every MTOE unit in the Army that consumes Class III and IX. The genesis of the BLTMs originally was the TRADOC proponent schools and centers. Effort is underway to update the BLTMs with the Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS)."

- MTOE Force Structure. Current Modified Table of Equipment (MTOE) force structure comes from the Army's official Structure and Manpower Allocation System (SAMAS). Force data loaded into the TRM contains only those MTOE and DA funded units from Activity Group 1 plus TRADOC Direct Support and General Support maintenance (Budget Activity 3). This equates to 95% of
the MTOE force, however this figure accounts for only 70\% of force structure allowance. Special Operations, the National Foreign Intelligence Program and most Table of Distribution and Allowance organizations are excluded from the count.

- **Civilian Cost Factors.** Civilian cost factors in the TRM come from Civilian Personnel Obligation Resources (CMORE) and reflect the supported PPBES event. These factors are determined using historical execution and outyear policy data.

- **Equipment Cost Factors.** The U.S. Army Cost and Economic Analysis Center develops cost factors for calculating Class III, IX and Depot Level Repairable use. They are based on Provisioning Master Record (PMR) data or three-year average historical data obtained through analysis of the Operating Support Management Information System (OSMIS). OSMIS data is updated annually during POM development. The data represents Army or MACOM averages and provides a reasonable representation of resource requirements per mile, hour or system. "These cost factors have embedded in them the Army Working Capital Fund (AWCF) policies on projected credit rates, surcharges and other logistics decisions approved by DALO-RMI and ASA (FM&C). Cost factors are adjusted for
policy as the policy changes. However, once the OPTEMPO dollar requirements are locked, that policy is also supposed to lock."

The major outputs of the TRM are related to items associated with direct and indirect costs. There are:

- **Direct OPTEMPO.** Direct OPTEMPO is best described as the MTOE unit recurring resource requirements associated with Classes III and IX and the associated mileage and hour costs. Components of Direct OPTEMPO include approximately 1500 BLTM for MTOE units, resourcing unit-training strategies at a readiness level from T-1 to T-4, and use all major equipment assigned to the battalion to calculate the BLTM.

- **Indirect OPTEMPO.** Indirect OPTEMPO is best described as the MTOE unit recurring resource requirements other than Classes III and IX such as Organizational Clothing and Individual Equipment, medical, NBC, contracts, civilian pay and travel, field training, rail training, Class II and IV supplies, DS/GS maintenance, TADSS and unit force structure changes. These are fixed, structure based requirements. Costs are determined on a military per capita or annual basis. Again these cost factors may come from a myriad of HQDA sources. "For example,
USACEAC produces cost factors for Class II and IV based on three years of historical experience, as extracted from the Logistics Intelligence File (LIF). A HQDA functional proponent may, from a policy perspective, disagree with that cost factor and support one based on requirements versus execution. Other cost factors may represent program and budget decisions that have not yet been reflected in equipment cost factors, or are one-time adjustments, reductions, or decisions ("Z lines" or efficiencies)."^6

As a point of information, OPTEMPO requirements for U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard units was historically based on percentages of the active component OPTEMPO. Traditionally, the Army National Guard has been resourced at 36% (288 miles) and the Reserve at 25% (200 miles) of the Army budget. Currently, both components have a TRM and BLTMs. Army National Guard and Army Reserve OPTEMPO funding compete for O&M funding, however, congress appropriates for each one separately. Each component has its own Operations and Maintenance account.

**Training Resource Model Evolution Since 1989**

Since 1989, the TRM has continuously evolved due to changes in policy as depicted in Figure 3. Prior to FY 89, TRM only
included direct ground OPTEMPO (cost per mile). In FY 89, indirect costs (recurring requirements) were added to the model. FY 92 saw a change in policy and the addition of Depot Level Repairable Items and National Training Center costs. In FY 93-94, a structure based flying hour program was added. Accounting for force modernization sustainment became a requirement in FY 95. During FY’s 97-01 a new inclusion to TRM will consist of Contractor Logistical Support (CLS) for Training Aids, Devices, Simulators, and Simulations (TADSS). The constant changes reflected in this evolution have better captured readiness requirements, however they have not evolved enough to fully capture all readiness requirements.
Discussion and Analysis

Migration of Funds

As can be concluded from information discussed to this point, readiness is tied to a host of variables that were not included in the original definition of OPTEMPO. Although this definition of OPTEMPO has evolved over the years, it still does not include all costs associated with readiness. Non-OPTEMPO funded costs associated with training have a definite impact on readiness. The use of OPTEMPO funds to resource other
requirements has received serious criticism by some members of Congress and was the subject of a General Accounting Office (GAO) Report.

On 7 April 1995, GAO released a final report to Congress covering the period from 1993 to 1994. Released to the Honorable Herbert H. Bateman, the report stated that the Army spent part of its OPTEMPO funds for purposes other than training. The report alleged that these funds were used to cover indirect expenses as well as other unfunded requirements. The actual dates of the investigation were November 1993 to November 1994. “Of the $3.6 billion in Operating Tempo funds that the Army designated for the U.S. Forces Command and U.S. Army Europe in fiscal years 1993 and 1994, (these two commands account for about 80 percent of the operating tempo funding requirements for the Army) about $1.2 billion, or 33 percent, was used for other purposes.”

GAO cited examples where these funds were used such as base operations, real property maintenance and to support contingency operations (Somalia and Haiti). In late 1994, Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon Sullivan addressed the use (migration) of training funds. GEN Sullivan responded to Senator McCain’s and Representative Hunter’s questions in the following manner: “The migration of operating tempo training dollars has fluctuated over time and is closely related to
programs that commanders view as essential to providing a combat ready unit. *Commanders realize that readiness is more than OPTEMPO.*

Time and again during recent years, there have been instances where commanders have used OPTEMPO funding to pay for other critical needs. These activities included many high priority needs such as paying for operations in Somalia and Haiti, training infrastructure maintenance, JCS exercises and force projection costs. These represent a few of the readiness-associated costs that have been sustained by migrating funds.

**Subjective Training Ratings**

The issue of subjectivity in upgrading unit status reports is another contributing factor to this dilemma because it fosters a weak link between resourcing and reported readiness. The current regulation, AR220-1 is vague and allows room for loose interpretation. The commander, based on judgement and unit training status, determines the training readiness level. The competitive culture of commanders, particularly at Battalion level, is one that tends to emphasize an optimistic view of readiness. There is a perception that promising careers have ended abruptly over issues related to readiness ratings. Perhaps a more objective approach to readiness reporting will
provide a better focus for more adequate funding of all components associated with unit readiness. If readiness is directly related to the training activity of a force, is it safe to believe that reduced training activity and funding will decrease the readiness of the force? There is no simple answer to this question. Acceptance of a broader definition of readiness may help to better define the related issues and pose solutions.

Expanding the Definition of Readiness

Figure 4 is an example of how elements traditionally not associated with readiness in the past, factor into linking resources and readiness. Each program category is a bonafide contributor that has not traditionally been included in the Army's definition of readiness. Underfunding these functions could cause commanders to use OPTEMPO funds pay the costs and leads to compromising established standards of training. Commanders have used OPTEMPO monies to fund other critical programs. We must understand why and accept the fact that the monies are used to fund priorities related to readiness. Over the past few years, it has been proven time and again that military requirements far exceed congressional appropriations. Military leaders have used OPTEMPO dollars to cope with the
monetary shortfall. This is not a misuse of funds. In recent years, supplemental appropriations have been approved to cope with problems proven to cause fund migration, specifically to pay for unprogrammed events mandated by the President, however the definition of readiness has not been broadened. The broadening of the definition of readiness is the next step in providing a solution to this issue.

Operational Readiness (OPRED)

The Army’s attempt to expand the definition of readiness is called Operational Readiness (OPRED). The intent of OPRED is to expand a definition for readiness in terms expressed by Commanders at MACOM level and other activities to acknowledge Commander’s needs. These needs include currently unfunded or
under-funded programs and events. The events in this category appear in the budget as non-OPTEMPO indirect costs. Many programs, which may have an adverse effect on readiness, are not funded at requested levels. They reflect those needs that are vital to maintaining an Army prepared and trained for war.

Identification, update and detailed development of the components considered essential to defining OPRED is key to success. Total preparedness for war is the appropriate objective.

HQDA currently has Management Teams for OPTEMPO and OPRED. These teams are chartered by the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) to oversee the formalizing of initiatives related to OPTEMPO and address current and future issues related to OPRED.

The OPTEMPO Working Group (Council of Colonels) is chaired by Chief, Training Operations Division, ODCSOPS. Other members include representatives from OASA(FM&C), ODCSLOG and PAED. Their charter includes achievement of a consolidated staff position on issues impacting requirements generation and funding, formalizing decision making and minimizing "stove piping", and formalizing TRM runs and related budget submissions.

The OPRED Working Group consists of the same members of the OPTEMPO working Group plus members from OACSIM, NGB and OCAR. The charter of this group is to review MDEP structure to ensure
inclusion of OPRED programs, review BASOPS methodology for inclusion of Force Projection Platforms, Training Infrastructure and OPTEMPO into OPRED, and make recommendations to the PBC on OPRED issues.

Due to the drawdown of forces, the U.S. is now home base for the majority of our land forces. As such, we must rely on a well-developed force projection capability to rapidly respond to crises abroad. Currently, we have a limited capability. This is clearly a factor related to readiness and one that will count easily when factored into the methodology for including BASOPS and Infrastructure into budget programs used to determine OPRED. A version of the plan envisioned is located in Figure 4.

In order to formalize OPRED, the following additional areas of emphasis are required: updating Combined Arms Training Strategies (CATS), updating Standard Army Training System (SATS), qualifying financial requirements by restructuring Program Elements to identify OPRED programs, and updating AR220-1 to increase objectivity of the reporting system.

The Army CATS is the initial data point for determining resources to support training. It serves as a baseline and is the primary source used to identify tasks to build training events for the BLTM. The inclusion of personnel training requirements and TADSS covers the training associated issues. Accurate resourcing requirements' data for CATS is inputted
directly from each MACOM. From MACOM input, CATS strategy is to relate activities to readiness in dollars. The theory suggests that this input will cause the appropriate adjustment to the TRM, which in turn will affect the PPBES budget and provide better resourcing. "To date, 11 'high OPTEMPO Battalion' CATS (e.g. Mechanized, Aviation, Armor, Air Defense Artillery, Cavalry, Field Artillery, Engineer, Multiple Launch Rocket System) have been produced at a cost of approximately $5M (BDM). Those CATS are have been validated by TRADOC, and implemented during POM 99-03...CATS differs, in part, from existing strategies by incorporating TADSS use/tradeoffs, NTC rotations, Platoon training and leader time. After approval by TRADOC, the plan is to release the CATS to the MACOMs for review and input; the end result being MACOM specific CATS. The remaining BLTM requiring conversion to CATS is a long term TRADOC responsibility." 

As a complement to the updated CATS, the Army is also fielding a new SATS to improve the commanders' ability to manage training. With this system, units can automate training calendar development, standardize training plans, STRAC and cost factor data, support METL development and provide training feedback. "The next version of SATS (Version 4.1) will provide input to the Unit Status Report, link TADSS usage to tasks, and link SATS with Automated Systems Approach to Training (ASAT) and other external applications for the exchange of: Mission
Training Plan (MTP) data, MTOE and TDA force data, TSPs, CATS data, and resource requirements."

OSD directed the Army to restructure OMA accounting structure for the FY 98 President's Budget to provide increased visibility of OPTEMPO and OPRED programs. The restructure also identifies selected OPRED programs, for example, JCS exercises, training facilities and ranges, AC/RC support, TADSS CLS, and Depot Maintenance. OACSIM is currently working a restructuring of BASOPS to include appropriate portions of BASOPS in OPRED.

"The current plan is to break out the BASOPS RPM requirements in a new Program Element (PE) structure. These Program Elements should be constructed so that they contain all or none of the OPRED programs. Once the PE's are defined, associated PE's will be considered as OPRED. A new Sub Activity Group (SAG) will be created under the OPRED Activity Group and the requirements and funding for OPRED programs within Budget Activity Group One (BA1) will be transferred in their entirety to the new SAG PEs. This will split out OPRED programs from non-OPRED programs, e.g. Family Housing, Child Development Centers. The intent was to implement this phase of the OPRED program in the 99-03 Budget. ACSIM must submit a request to create the PEs and Army Budget Office must coordinate the changes to applicable regulations, e.g. AR37-100-XX."
Unit Status Reporting

Probably the most critical area for assessing readiness is the monthly unit status report. Although OPTEMPO is normally fully resourced, mileage has been under executed without a corresponding decrease in reported readiness. How can Congress consider a plea for more OMA seriously in view of this fact? The Army answer is simple and valid to a point. The Army leadership's view is that use of those funds for other bonafide readiness needs is legitimate and within the intent of appropriations bills. Migrated funds were used to compensate for underfunding in other OMA programs, late or partial reimbursement for contingency operations, and other readiness related programs.

"AR 220-1 is in the process of validating factors newly designed to allow for including OPRED data in monthly Unit Status reporting. Units evaluated the proposed changes off-line during fourth quarter FY97 and a decision will be made regarding those factors which will be included in the coordinating draft of the Army Regulation." The areas under consideration for change to more objective reporting include:

- Training constraints - DA proposes to provide metrics for use by commanders to make the METL trained assessment. This change does two things, provides the T1 metric
requirement from the STRAC manual and contends that commanders who cannot meet STRAC standards, also cannot report T1. Crew and individual qualification data are used to verify this information.

- Percent METL Trained - Assesses the status of METL task training using currently accepted and widely used training criteria. Computation of this area will be based on a weighted average. This is another measure that will allow commanders to assess the overall training readiness in their unit. The requirement is that a commander may have to report a rating other than T1, but a subjective upgrade or downgrade to the C rating is still usable in this area.

- Training Readiness Reporting - The ability to subjectively upgrade is still acceptable but this change may provide commanders the ability to highlight problems that are normally not recognized at higher levels.

- Resource Constraints - This change will provide a link between reported resource constraints and readiness. Nine categories are currently used to provide a baseline. Areas assessed include: operating strength; special duty personnel; funds/OPTEMPO/flying hours; equipment available; leaders qualification; LTA/ranges including availability,
power projection facilities, maintenance support facilities, TADSS and simulation centers; percent event executed; training ammunition; and time.

- **Funds Available** - Input is normally prepared at Separate Brigade or Division level. The change to this chart requires a 6-month projection for training fund requirements based on SATS information. This is another way to follow-up on training dollars used but can be very effective in forcing units to lock in training events early.

- **Availability of Equipment or Material** - This is one of the most objective areas on the entire report. There is no significant change from the current reporting procedure. This requirement will reflect input from DA Forms 2406 or 1352.

- **Leader Qualification** - This is a hard to quantify area. The proposal is to look at the authorized versus on-hand numbers by grade and MOS.

- **Training Areas** - Requires commanders to use the annual Installation Status Report as a baseline. The assessment will provide all facets associated with this area and their ability to support the commanders training requirements.
- Percent Events Executed - This category will replace the fuel available category. This is linked to CATS and is an attempt to associate training activity to doctrinal training requirements.

- Ammunition Available/Required - This category is self-explanatory and is similar to the funding resource constraint area. Only ammo needed is listed and requirements cannot exceed STRAC authorizations.

- Time - This area reports the percentage of training distracters that prevent conduct of scheduled training or reduce training effectiveness.

- Days to Train - Requires a commander to rate days at some level other than T1 if other resource indicators are something less than T1.

- Overall Rating - The intent of this change is to make all resource constraint boxes have an impact on readiness. The requirement for this category is that the commander reports the lowest training level indicated using assessment of days to train, percent METL trained and resource constraints as the categories.
If these criteria are accepted, the potential for subjectivity will decrease substantially as the ability to link resources to training and readiness becomes clearer.

Summary

There has been significant effort, during the past three years to identify and define linkages between readiness and resourcing. The GAO investigation in 1993-1994 provided the catalyst for change. According to the GAO study produced in April 1995, the Operational Readiness (OPRED) Initiative was scheduled for completion by December 1995. That deadline has not been met for many reasons. The primary reason is due to the time it takes to devise, test and implement changes. As slow as progress appears, that change refers to a need to be more specific in restructuring the entire budgeting process from MDEP to POM to PEs. The continuing adjustments to the Defense budget and use of Army funds to pay for costs associated with Bosnia-type deployments (unfunded), cause severe resourcing problems for the Army.

The definition and refinement of the term OPRED gives firm meaning and proposes viable solutions to defining readiness. DA is currently devising, testing and methodically implementing a plan. First, the proper execution of CATS and SATS is essential
to developing detailed plans and complete data for use in the
BLTM. Place priority on completion of the remaining Battalion
CATS. Completion of the 11 most expensive Battalion CATS gives
good information for a baseline, however if the model is to be
effective, it must be complete. Second, restructure appropriate
programs in the budgeting process to include the components
necessary to fully constitute readiness, thus preparedness for
war. Third, by limiting the subjectivity associated with unit
status reporting, we will have a more accurate determination of
readiness.

In my opinion, the issue of most concern to Army Leadership
is articulating the link between training and readiness, and
determining the proper amount of resources to sustain training
and readiness at the appropriate level. This equates to total
preparedness for war. OPTEMPO funding is but one component in
that equation. At present, there is no formal connection
between OPTEMPO funding and reported readiness. Implementation
of the OPRED program will bridge the gap. Once the gap is
bridged, improved standards for readiness reporting will provide
a clear picture of the readiness implications of resource
programs and decisions that is currently lacking. Clearly this
will help the US Army reach its overarching objective of
maintaining a trained and ready force.

(Word Count 5,012)
ENDNOTES


2 The ideas in this paragraph are based on a slide presentation "Resourcing Army Training" produced by DAMO-TR in October 1995.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 2.

6 Ibid.


8 Chief of Staff Papers Congressional Correspondence and Testimony, Box 6B: CSA's Response to Senator McCain's and Representative Hunter's Concerns about FY 95 Budget and Readiness, Washington, D.C., 18 June 1994.


10 Ibid., 2.


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