STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A SHAPER OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

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The International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) has long been recognized as a highly successful means of providing assistance to other militaries around the world while serving as a low key but very effective foreign policy tool. This program provides a forum for military personnel to experience the U.S. lifestyle and the civil military relationship in a large democratic society. Officers establish lasting professional relationships with their contemporaries from other nations. IMET, a subtle but significant shaper of the national security environment of the nineties, will continue to be an important tool in shaping the security environment into the next millenium. As we look back on the changes in our environment just over the past decade and prepare for the future, we must ask the question, "How should the United States of America use the IMET program to help shape our security environment of the future."

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IMET: A SHAPER OF STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

> In addition, if we can build trust and understanding between the militaries of two neighboring nations, we build trust and understanding between the two nations themselves. Some have said that war is too important to be left to the generals. Preventive defense says peace is too important to be left solely to the politicians.[1]
>
> —Dr.William Perry

The International Military Education and Training program (IMET) has long been regarded as a valuable tool of foreign policy and it is a vital part of what former Secretary of Defense Dr. William Perry called preventive defense. Dr. Perry's statement about the importance of security assistance and the IMET program has been echoed many times by leaders inside the military and from the civilian leadership concerned with national and global defense. Whether training comes from deployed teams of American military officers and civilians or from within training institutions such as the War Colleges, the result is sound training in professional military operations, in a democratic society, under civilian control and leadership. In IMET we have a relatively inexpensive program which is achieving measurable success in many ways. It has been proven since

inception, over 50 years ago, and it becomes more relevant with the rapid and sweeping changes we have seen in this decade.

However, for all its success and popularity with recipient nations, the program has been, and remains, static in funding, and a clear back-bencher in terms of interest and emphasis. The annual funding for each year this decade has fluctuated very little, at less than 50 million dollars.[2]

The goals and objectives of the program remain, stated very generally, to develop self-sufficiency, teaching U.S. values, and military professionalism to members from other nations. The program is centrally managed by the State Department, and administered and executed by the Department of Defense. The objectives of the program have been modified over the years; but, the overall program has not changed significantly. A dramatic change has occurred in the past few years since the collapse of the Soviet Union. A number of former Soviet states now take advantage of the IMET program.

There are many categories of assistance and a variety of educational institutions, and training elements involved in providing training to foreign military forces and civil servants. Over 150 schools play a role in IMET education. I will examine the various categories of training that fall under the IMET program.

The questions of student selection, country eligibility, and overall program policy are the responsibility of the State Department. DoD administers the program. I intend to focus on the DoD aspects of the program as it relates to curriculum, administration, and relevance to the supported regional commanders in chief. Specifically, how does this program support CINCSOUTH? How do we measure success of the program? Where should it be focused for the future in order to best shape the security environment? I will examine these questions focusing on the SOUTHCOM region and how IMET can help shape the future environment there.

BACKGROUND

The origins of the IMET program go back to the 1950s when it was designed as a program to provide military training at low cost to military personnel from allied and friendly nations. Later, in 1961, it was authorized in the Foreign Assistance Act and funded in the International Affairs budget. Since that time, hundreds of thousands of officers and enlisted personnel from scores of countries have been trained using the IMET program.

IMET takes various forms and methods. Some training is formal in an institutional setting such as the Command and

General Staff Colleges, the War Colleges, the Inter American Defense College, the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA), and the Small Craft Inspection and Training School (SCIATTS).

In most cases, the instruction is entirely in English with international students sitting side by side with U.S. students. In these cases, formal instruction will also include English language training at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC), Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. In a few cases, (USARSA, DLIELC, and SCIATTS), the instruction is conducted in Spanish. Most institutional training falls into the category of professional military education. There is technical training in the program, as well, including operator and maintenance training of weapon systems and equipment.

In the past fifty years, the IMET program and its predecessor program has accounted for hundreds of thousands of trainees from every continent. In this decade alone, over 45,000 students have been trained representing over 100 countries annually.[3] Many of these personnel have gone on to become leaders at the highest levels in their countries. They serve as cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and chiefs of military services. Because of the train-the-trainer concept of IMET, this training extends well beyond the resident student. Leaders take back not only the lessons in the classroom and field environment, but also, a greater understanding of all facets of

life and service in a democratic society. This knowledge is imparted to all of those whom they lead throughout their careers.

SCOPE

In addition to formal instruction, IMET encompasses several other categories of training: On the Job Training where students learn specific skills as well as U.S. training techniques. Observer Training is offered when there is no formal course offered or it is impractical for the student to perform hands-on (medical procedures for example). Orientation Tours provide senior personnel the opportunity to gain a quick understanding of U.S. doctrine, techniques, procedures, facilities, equipment, and organizational management procedures. Overseas Training normally consists of Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) with a specific training mission in the host country. And, finally, Professional Military Education Exchange Training is a one-for-one reciprocal exchange of officers between each country.

Regardless of the site of training or the specific block of training provided, the instruction is professional and non-political, reflecting both the U.S. tradition of civilian

supremacy and the instrumental rather than policy role of the military.

Over time, this program has evolved a great deal. Initially conceived to support Foreign Military Sales with enabling technical training, it provided foreign militaries with an alternative to training by the Soviet Union. The training objectives have expanded to include:

- To encourage effective, mutually beneficial relations and increased understanding between the United States and foreign countries in furtherance of the goals of international peace and security;
- To improve the ability of participating countries to utilize their resources, including defense articles and services obtained from the United States, with maximum effectiveness, thereby contributing to greater self-reliance; and
- To increase the awareness of foreign nationals participating in such activities of basic issues involving internationally recognized human rights.[4]

Within the areas of instruction mentioned, the DoD also provides an Informational Program (IP) as a part of the overall training program. In this program, students are provided an understanding of U.S. society, institutions, ideals, and an increased awareness of basic issues involving internationally recognized human rights. This IP is realized through visits to

private homes, local industries, cultural exhibits, civic activities, and various leisure activities. Students are acquainted with the education system, the judicial system, the role of a free press, the media, labor unions, and political systems. In a short time, the student is entirely cloaked in the fabric of our diverse society.

The success of the IP is to a large extent dependent upon the energy and enthusiasm of the program directors at the schools and the International Military Student Officers (IMSO). The Program Directors receive guidance and funding to administer the IP, but they manage their own programs.

In 1990, congress directed that the DoD establish a program within IMET focused on training foreign civilian and military official in selected key areas. These key areas include: managing and administering military establishments and budgets; creating and maintaining effective military judicial systems and codes of conduct, including observance of internationally recognized human rights, and fostering greater respect for the principle of civilian control of the military. This expansion of IMET is referred to as E-IMET. A part of the IMET program, E-IMET now takes up approximately 30 percent of the annual IMET budget.[5]

A significant evolution has occurred with the establishment of regionally tailored DoD institutions of professional defense

education. The Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) is the newest of these. Located at the National Defense University it was established in September 1997. Its mission is to develop civilian specialists in defense and military matters by providing graduate level programs in defense planning and management, executive leadership, civilian-military relations and interagency operations.[6] Participants in the program include government personnel, civilians with a defense interest from the media, the private sector, or the academia, as well as military officers. The center offers a variety of seminars throughout the year lasting from one to three weeks.

The CHDS is the most recent of the regionally focused senior level institutions of professional defense education following the Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany.

So, with little fanfare, and no appreciable increase in budget, the IMET program, a very significant shaper of the future environment, has evolved remarkably. The objectives have expanded. The countries served have increased. And, the student body served has diversified considerably. From providing primarily soldier training in functions and tactics in the early years, it has evolved to cover a broad range of subjects, programs, and experiences provided to all grades of military and civilians.

PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, AND IMPLEMENTING

IMET is a part of the overall Security Assistance Program, which is planned and scheduled by country and region annually. The process occurs over an eighteen month period with the involvement of the U.S. Department of State, the in-country U.S. Embassy, the appropriate Embassy office responsible for security assistance (U.S. military Security Assistance organization, the Defense Attache' Office, or an Embassy official).[7] The countries' training requirements are forecast by State, assisted by DoD, and recommended in the Annual Integrated Assessment of Security Assistance (AIASA). These requirements are evaluated in light of foreign policy and political considerations, then submitted for approval and funding in the Congressional Presentation Document.

The Security Assistance Office, in concert with the host nation training staff, determine the individual country training requirements that can be met through available U.S. training programs. These requirements are translated into specific schools and courses desired and are presented during annual training and planning workshops. All regional CINCs conduct these training workshops, in which the U.S. Military department Security Assistance training agencies together with the SAO training officers put together the training program and quotas.

IMET IN LATIN AMERICA

The nations in South America, Central America, and Mexico are all unique. While it can be an oversimplification to look at the states as a whole, as Latin America, we can see common positive developments and trends which are common to the entire region. Our policy has been one of a general regional focus over the years. During the time since the beginning of the IMET program that policy has transitioned significantly. Since then, until the present, our policy can be characterized by three distinct phases.

In the post war years, the U.S. concern was one of hemispheric defense. This policy manifested itself in the signing of the Rio Pact in 1947, a joint security agreement declaring that an attack on one member state was an attack on all. The Organization of American states formed in 1948, reaffirmed the Rio Pact and further provided for economic cooperation, human rights, and the promotion of representative democracy. These measures were focused on countering the communist threat to the hemisphere.[8] U.S. security assistance was aimed at commonality of materiel, logistics and training. This created allies who were dependent upon U.S. support.

A shift in policy came in the 60's from the focus on external threats to the hemisphere to one of combating internal

security threats. Castro's success in Cuba followed by the emergence of Che Guevara prompted the concern over growing communist insurgencies. During the Kennedy administration, the U.S. security assistance effort took a more hands-on approach. Special Forces soldiers and trainers at the School of the Americas began training programs designed to address the skills needed to defeat insurgencies. MTTs, the USARSA (then stationed in Panama), and military advisors were actively involved in conducting focused training in these areas.

This focus continued through the 70's and into the 80's. The major change occurring in this period was a renewed emphasis on human rights. Sanctions were placed on nations not in compliance with requirements for human rights, through the Arms Export Control Act of 1976. These policies enforced by President Carter, resulted in instructors being withdrawn from countries not in compliance, and military assistance denied to selected nations. This was a very low point for U.S. Latin American relations. Aid was cut drastically. Military to military contacts and influence was lost in key areas. During this period the Sandanistas found success in Nicaragua, and later we saw Nicaraguan support to the guerillas in El Salvador.

El Salvador became the primary concern of Latin American policy during the Reagan administration. We saw a great increase in aid and involvement by the U.S. during the 80's.

Salvadoran soldiers were trained in large numbers in Panama, Honduras, and the United States by U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers. U.S. security assistance helped establish the environment in El Salvador which permitted democratic elections and an end the insurgency. Reagan's support to Latin America provided for the emergence and survival of democratic institutions in Latin American nations. Also during this period Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Argentina instituted democratic governments.

Currently, we see a Latin America of all democratic states, with the exception of Cuba. Turbulence exists in the 90's, such as the border war between Ecuador and Peru, and the coups attempted in Venezuela and Paraguay. Nevertheless, we have seen a remarkable transformation in the past decade. Our policies have changed with our political leadership and with the changing security environment, from hemispheric defense, to combating insurgencies, incorporating human rights, and support for emerging democracies. In general these policies were successful. External threats are non existent; democracies have been adopted; and, human rights has clearly improved. The imposition of sanctions, based on human rights, retarded the process of combating insurgencies, but did not halt the process. In retrospect, we can see that regard for human rights have improved overall. But, it is impossible to assess whether the

imposition of sanctions, (a carrot-and-stick approach to diplomacy), helped or hindered the process. Certainly, withholding aid sent a clear message of President Carter's concern over human rights. On the other hand, it can be argued that increased aid in the 80's helped combat threats and increased military to military contacts thereby creating the atmosphere and environment of stability needed for democracies to emerge and for human rights to improve.

One obvious truth throughout this period is that U.S. military involvement in the region has been key to shaping the environment that exists today. The challenge of the future will continue to be support for these emerging democracies as they deal with the various political, economic, social, and civil-military relations issues and tensions as they emerge. As we look to the future millenium, we should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the IMET program.

IMET SUCCESSES

The vast majority of research to determine the effectiveness of IMET indicates positive results. Commentary, both from students and others, reveals that the IMET experience was a very valuable part of shaping future career paths and future events.

The Commander in Chief Southern Command gave The USARSA a ringing endorsement when he spoke to graduates of the Command and General Staff College course in December 1998.

> I have stated to a great many audiences that if the School were closed today, tomorrow I would assemble my staff and simply recreate it. By my count, the School of the Americas has graduated 10 heads of state in our hemisphere, 38 cabinet officials and over 100 chiefs of services or commanders of armed forces. I can't think of a single college that has compiled a record like that.[9]

It can be argued that the school did not produce these leaders, but that they were already influential leaders destined for positions of power. In either case, clearly USARSA is one of those pathways to success for Latin American military officers. These officers are selected to attend U.S. military schools because they demonstrate potential beyond that of their contemporaries. The opportunity to study and interact with colleagues from other countries provides lifelong contacts and therefore influence in future security situations.

One of those leaders General Wilhelm was referring to is Major General Jaime Guzman, Minister of Defense, Republic of El Salvador. From his experience and comments about USARSA, it appears that his country is accomplishing those objectives of the IMET program.

> We consider, therefore, that the training conducted at the School of the Americas has far-reaching effects in the processes of institutional modernization that the Armed Forces of the hemisphere are undergoing in the face of current world trends, including the modernization of the state, peacekeeping, the strengthening of democracy, sustainable human development, economic globalization, human security, the elimination of poverty, and drug trafficking.[10]

Also, regarding fostering the development of indigenous training capability and the development of country self-sufficiency, El Salvador has realized that goal.

> …among our military achievements, those that stand out are curricular integration and administration of the military educational system at the levels of training, advancement, specialization, and post-graduate; the modernization of organizational structures and the legal framework; the accomplishment of the First Central American Military Conference for the Advancement of Peace; and the continuous strengthening of civil-military ties.[11]

Does the IMET program promote military to military rapport and understanding leading to increased rationalization, standardization, and interoperability? In surveys conducted by the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), students, attaches, and security assistance officers noted that this education and training, "gives you access that you wouldn't or

couldn't have without difficulty," that is, "access at the senior ranks of host country military establishments."[12]

These contacts are important because they create a chemistry, which is very helpful in problem solving that would not be possible otherwise. Unofficial channels of communication are established which make it possible to share information about events. The experience of studying and solving problems in the classroom together also makes possible a common perspective from which to view these events.

Speaking of the Peru Ecuador conflict of 1995, Gabriel Marcella points to the need for expanding our professional military communications with Peru. "…we need to reassess our lines of professional communication. They have been excellent with Ecuador, which has access to the U.S. military for education and training and for building political support. Ties with Peru have been weak."[13] Establishing these ties with Peru obviously would not eliminate the threat of conflict between neighbors, just as there is no guarantee that democracies will not fight each other. Yet, it seems clear that the benefits of having these neighbors' leaders working together in a neutral setting far outweigh the risks.

In addition to the strong ties that form in the classroom, those in resident training programs take a great deal from the shared foreign student experience. The Information Program

serves as the catalyst for spurring discussion and understanding of the military's role in American society and support for democracy and a free market society. Graduates of U.S. service schools commanded units, which put down two attempted coups in Venezuela in 1992 and opposed the Presidents attempted self-coup in Guatemala in 1993.[14]

The Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations sites the effectiveness of IMET in cases such as Brazil where it has improved the military's inter-operability in such missions as the Brazilian-led Military Observer Mission in Ecuador and Peru (MOMEP). Furthermore, returning IMET graduates developed new training courses for their colleagues. After training with U.S. equipment, the Presentation notes, Brazilian officers will also be helpful in securing contracts for U.S. suppliers of the armed forces. It also points to Guatemala as benefiting from E-IMET, utilizing training opportunities to strengthen and promote civil-military relations. "It is exactly this type training which will help the Guatemalan military improve its human rights record and fully accept the role of civil authority in military matters."[15]

There are a great many success stories for the IMET program as evidenced in the surveys and comments from students and senior leaders of all nations involved. There are also weaknesses in the program which should be examined.

CHALLENGES FOR IMET

A Rand Corporation study employed to determine the effectiveness of U.S. efforts to train foreign militaries in the skills of Internal Defense and Development (IDAD), found that results were mixed. Another source of concern has been the controversy surrounding some of the graduates from IMET schools, such as The School of the Americas. Finally, there are some weaknesses in the administration of the program itself, which will be discussed in more detail lastly.

The Rand personnel found that the attempts to train foreign militaries in the IDAD skills were only partially successful. They studied the cases of Honduras and El Salvador to access IDAD training, a part of the counterinsurgency effort of the 80's. They determined that students did become more capable at technical and tactical skills. They also benefited in general to the exposure to U.S. values and interests. However, in the cases of both countries, problems arose in getting the armed forces to apply those skills learned. Problems existed in coordinating the internal development activities with counterinsurgency operations. Though it appeared that human rights violations decreased during and after training, violence and corruption continued and kept the training issue controversial and politically problematic. In

short, the internal conditions socially, politically, and economically determined the course of IDAD to a far greater extent than the skills learned by the armed forces. Criticism of the training program itself indicates that there was a lack of a broader vision, "...most training in IDAD skills was not undertaken in deliberate support of a host nation's strategy and was really only loosely related to internal defense and development."[16] Furthermore, the very limited amount of training in IDAD skills cannot compete with more fundamental influences such as national traditions, politics, and economics on development and civil military relations. Rand concluded that the approach in the future should be a theoretical handling of IDAD strategies at a higher level as a part of E-IMET. The emphasis should be placed on democratization, civil authority, and human rights with continued exposure of students to the Information Program. It should be noted that this IDAD training was conducted primarily in host countries by MTTs. Students were not exposed to the IP.

The controversies surrounding the IMET program are rooted in the concern over strengthening the military at the expense of civil authority. The IDAD training drew much of that same criticism. Because internal defense and development is generally the business of civil authorities and the police, this type of training continues to be controversial. The

controversy becomes distracting for the program, especially when graduates abuse their positions of authority. The USARSA became the target of hostility when former graduates were implicated in the murder of Jesuit nuns in El Salvador in 1980.[17] While the USARSA teaches basic U.S. Army doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures, these allegations of torture and murder have been difficult to counter because of the atrocities committed by a few. The School's critics include political leaders, religious groups, and organized watch groups.

Another weakness in the IMET program results from the way the program has been used as a political tool. In the past, funding has been withheld as a sanction against countries whose human rights records were in question. It has been used more recently as a sanction against countries which grow or produce illegal drugs and which are subject to congressional certification. This practice of exclusion or denial obviously has a negative effect on our engagement strategy with foreign militaries. The effectiveness of IMET as a sanction is very difficult to assess. But, this technique obviously interrupts the military to military relationship that we hope to encourage. As pointed out in the Rand Study:

> The irony of such sanctions on IMET, is that they often cut off communication with precisely those countries and those categories of individuals we wish most to influence…It seems arguable that instead of cutting IMET in such instances, Congress might

> usefully increase it, since most U.S. Ambassadors and CINCs agree that they would prefer to deal on such issues with officials who have been advantaged by education in the United States. The sanctions against IMET isolate the officer corps of countries who clearly need enlightened leadership, and thus achieve the opposite of what Congress intends.[18]

This policy of sanctions obviously will be of great impact on the IMET program in the future. There are alternatives to sanctions which we should consider as we move forward into the next century.

DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

While we can applaud the transformation of the Latin American governments over the last decade with 34 of 35 nations enjoying democracies, the path for the future remains uncertain. future paths for each country may vary a great deal. Some nations could easily revert to familiar centralized authoritarian forms of government. Others run the risk of disintegration of democracy from within due to the power of organized crime funded by illegal drug traffic. This also brings tensions along the borders with neighboring countries. Still other nations may experience strengthening of the socioeconomic base allowing the footing necessary for sustainment and growth of democratic institutions.

Whatever course these nations take, we can be assured that the military institutions will be key role players in the critical years ahead. Our interaction with these militaries and the senior civilian leadership is crucial to our ability to help shape their future and the future of the hemisphere. The IMET program is the proven tool for effecting this process. How do we best use this program in the 21st century?

First and foremost, IMET must be retained and protected, at least, at current levels. That is to say that the IMET and

E-IMET programs cannot compete against each other for funding within the program. With the emphasis increasing on E-IMET, the temptation may be to reduce IMET proportionally. As E-IMET expands, its funding should also increase.

Furthermore, IMET should be recognized as the premier aspect of the security assistance program. The benefits gained through direct contact with these students will far outweigh the other elements of assistance in light of our future focus on democratization, human rights and military support to civilian authorities.

Referring to survey results, John Cope of NDU, concludes that the IMET program can use some streamlining of management and responsibilities as it involves multiple departments.[19] The formation of an interdepartmental Review Committee on Foreign Military Education may be effective in addressing the defense and diplomatic attention currently missing from the program. There are many interdepartmental issues that must be addressed regarding foreign military education. However, while the potential benefits of this program reach across the spectrum, the burden and responsibilities are largely borne by the Department of Defense. Perhaps the DoD should have a stronger hand in management, planning and administration of the program. Responsibility for the program would be fixed on DoD. Streamlining should naturally follow. An Interdepartmental

Review Committee would bring forth concerns and interests from other departments and agencies.

One of the most damaging tendencies, as mentioned previously, is the practice of withholding IMET funding as a sanction tool. This is not a normal occurrence with similar programs run by other agencies such as the United States Information Agencies exchange and information programs. There are alternatives to this practice of sanctions.

It should be obvious that excluding military officers and government civilians from participation results in an inconsistent application of the program. We suffer a loss of professional relationships for, at least, one year-group of officers from penalized countries.

Also, the practice of withholding military assistance in order to make political or law enforcement criticisms, (as is the case with counter-drug certification or de-certification), may imply a link that does not or should not exist. IMET instruction is professional and nonpolitical, reflecting both the U.S. tradition of civilian supremacy and the instrumental rather than policy role of the military. The perception could be that the military is being sanctioned for policies or practices which are not under its control. The result could be military dissatisfaction with the political or law enforcement

system. Ultimately this could erode confidence in the government and weaken civilian control of the military.

There are some alternatives to country sanctions. First, we have the option to selectively withhold funding from individuals or groups of individuals. The State Department in conjunction with the country teams can determine these groups that would be a negative influence on U.S. policy in the region. But, the country as a whole would not need to be sanctioned. A second option would be the opposite of sanctions. The country falling into disfavor would be engaged with specifically tailored IMET programs aimed at the particular problem area, such as unsatisfactory counter-drug efforts. This would increase the exposure of the target audience to U.S. concern for the particular area while maintaining contact and potential influence within the subject area.

A final point that should be emphasized is the Information Program within IMET. It should be expanded and required for all students. Where we can, we should increase the students' interaction in U.S. society and his exposure to as many activities and functions as possible. A part of this expansion would be an increased focus on the International Military Student Office chief and staff. The professionalism, capabilities, and motivation of these personnel are fundamental to a positive experience for the student. Special training is

in order for those dealing with the needs and interests of the foreign student. These IMSO posts should be as stable as possible. And, IMSOs at all institutions should be operating from a common understanding and vision of the future of the program. Stability of officers in these positions will provide consistency between institutions and specifically a more beneficial information program for the student.

Clearly, International Military Education and Training is one of the most cost effective and most rewarding programs we have for shaping our security environment for the future. With adequate funding, careful management, and proper recognition of those responsible for the program, it can continue to be one of the most valuable elements of what former Secretary of Defense Perry called preventive defense.

WORD COUNT = 5084.

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[17]Cope 21.

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[19]Cope, 54.

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