

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL BACKGROUND

In order to give real meaning, weight and direction to succeeding chapters, it is felt imperative that a general background be laid out at the beginning by way of a comparative study. The backdrop against which the present study is written consists of two parts: the first devolves upon the political and cultural affinities and semblance of economy existing between the Philippines and Thailand and their geographical propinquity; the second includes a general definition of their respective foreign policies.

The adoption of a foreign policy depends to a large extent upon the support a government gives it. Its implementation is linked with material and cultural considerations and the conditions under which such is pursued. Hence, the state of affairs between two or a group of states operates within such considerations and conditions and the abstracts of their foreign policy.

#### A. SETTING

##### Geography

Southeast Asia consists of two major divisions-- island and mainland Southeast Asia.<sup>26</sup> Thailand belongs



to mainland Southeast Asia. A peninsula within a peninsula, it is bounded on the west by the Indian Ocean and Burma, on the north and northeast by Laos; on the southeast by Cambodia and on the south by Malaysia. It lies between 5° 21' north latitude and 97° 106' east longitude. It has a total land area of about 200,148 square miles.<sup>27</sup>

Topographically, Thailand may be divided into four distinct regions, namely: the northeast which represents the most depressed area of the country and hence materially weak to withstand Communist subversion, more so because it shares common boundaries with neutral Laos; the south which consists of about two-thirds of the Malayan Peninsula and has mountain ranges and coastal plains on either side; the north, a mountainous terrain with four relatively large valleys drained by four rivers which flow down south to join the Chao Phraya River; and the central part, a vast alluvial plain drained by the Chao Phraya River and which becomes inundated during the rainy season.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Harrison, Brian, Southeast Asia: A Short History (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Department of Commercial Intelligence, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Commercial Directory for Thailand 1961-62 (Bangkok: Daily Trade News Press, 1962), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup>Rajadhon, Phya Anuman, "Introducing Cultural Thailand in Outline", Foreign Affairs Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 4, February-March, 1963 (Bangkok, MFA), p. 344.

The Philippines comprises 7,100 islands which stretch a thousand miles from the north to the south in the south-east coast of Asia. It belongs to island Southeast Asia. Located between  $20^{\circ} 21'$  and  $4^{\circ} 20'$  north latitude and between  $116^{\circ} 55'$  and  $126^{\circ}$  east longitude, it has an area of 114,830 square miles and an irregular coastline twice as long as that of the United States.<sup>29</sup> Taiwan is only about 100 miles north of Y'ami isle. The China Sea lies at the west, the Pacific Ocean at the east and on the south, the Celebes Sea and the waters of North Borneo.<sup>30</sup>

The Philippines consists of three major island-groups. They are Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The whole archipelago has a relatively mountainous terrain. The central part of Luzon corresponds to the central part of Thailand. Both regions are suited for growing rice, the staple food of the Thais and the Filipinos.

From a cursory glance of Southeast Asian geography both the Philippines and Thailand command strategic positions, economically and politically. Thailand besides being the hubnub of air transportation as well as commerce,

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<sup>29</sup>Philippine Supplement, Bangkok Bank Monthly Review (Bangkok: Banfko! Bank Ltd., June 1963), p. 182.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

holds the key to the success and failure of Communist expansion in mainland Southeast Asia. Once it is over-run or gives in to Communist pressures, island Southeast Asia will follow. This will eventually weaken the position of India and neutralize that of Australia.<sup>31</sup>

In the same manner, although to a relatively lesser degree, the Philippines stands at the vanguard of progress and democracy. Its geographical heterogeneity suggests that it is also vulnerable to Communist infiltration.

The geographical proximity of both countries is more significant because propinquity tends to promote similarity of interests and outlook.

### Economy

The economy of the two countries is basically agricultural. This is due to the similarity of climatic and soil conditions which are conducive to growing of agricultural products. Abundant rainfall and humidity are suitable to the growth of forest vegetation which is common to both the Philippines and Thailand.

Thailand's major export and commodity products include rice, rubber, tin and teak. Whereas, the Philippines has rice, copra, sugar and hemp for export and consumption.

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<sup>31</sup>Butwell, R., Southeast Asia and World Politics (New York: Praeger, 1960), p. 8.

Although, the agricultural mainstay of the Philippines is also rice, it is unfortunately located along the typhoon belt. Thus, each year the Philippines is almost always not spared from being visited by natural calamities when acres of rice plantations are destroyed. It has to import rice either from Thailand or Burma.<sup>32</sup>

It is quite understandable why the Philippines and Thailand do not have commercial trade with each other, except for a nominal one. They are both producers of raw materials and practically have identical products. However, a certain degree of specialization or a joint venture in obtaining markets for produce might prove to be beneficial in the future.

### Government and Politics

The beginnings of modern Thailand were the accomplishment of King Mongkut, King Chulalongkorn and King Vajiravut. These three monarchs paved the way for the response of

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<sup>32</sup>From January to March, 1962, the total trade of the Philippines with Thailand amounted to 3,880 (F.O.B. value in thousand pesos.) Source: Journal of Philippine Statistics, Vol. XV, No. 2, 1962 (Manila: Philippines), p. 131.

From January to June, 1962, the breakdown of trade with Thailand is: exports - 187,432; imports - 6,909,171. Total trade is 7,096,603 (F.O.B. in pesos). Source: Foreign Trade Statistics of the Philippines, issued by the Department of Commerce and Industry: Bureau of Census and Statistics, Manila, Philippines, January-June, 1964.

Thailand to western influences and revolutionized the concept of the position of the state. Southeast Asia was then, economically, politically and technically dominated by France, Netherlands, Spain and Great Britain. The response was a policy of giving in when necessary and of consolidating and synthesizing what remained. The creation of modern Thailand is largely due to the adoption of this policy.

Ancient Thailand was characterized by the splendor and majesty of traditional kingship. Then, the King was the lawgiver, chief executive and final arbiter.

The coup d'etat of 1932 abolished absolute monarchy and instituted constitutional monarchy in its place. From then on the King is no longer absolute but limited by the constitution.

The present dynasty is the Chakri dynasty which ruled from the time of King Rama I and was established in 1782 in Bangkok.<sup>34</sup> The reigning monarch is King Bhumiphol Adulyadej, the ninth in line to occupy the throne.

Under the various constitutions since the establishment of constitutional monarchy, the King performs his executive powers through a Council of Ministers, his legislative functions through the National Assembly and his judicial power through a system of courts.

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<sup>34</sup>Kahin, George, ed., Government and Politics of Southeast Asia (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), p 4.

Politically, Thailand lacks the political consciousness all-pervading Philippine politics. There are three probable factors contributing to the political passivity of the Thais. First, historically, they never had to fight for their independence. Second, economically, Thailand is conspicuous in Southeast Asia, because it produces more than what is actually needed for consumption and thus, there is no population pressure on its natural resources.<sup>35</sup> Comparatively speaking, it has less economic problem. Third, the social structure of Thailand has been so constituted since time immemorial so that there is a clear demarcation between the rulers and ruled. The ruled group apparently has been taking their status as is and it has been taken for granted that an elite is always present to rule them.

Moreover, the constitution and the word "democracy" were superimposed upon a people who did not even know what democracy means.

The constitution does not usually get the veneration it receives in the Philippines because it has been introduced into a "prior and vital political system with a fully developed body of legislation, a powerful structure of government and a vigorous bureaucratic tradition."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Rosinger, L. K. and Associates, The State of Asia: A Contemporary Survey (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 243.

The government of the Philippines is a presidential republic, in principle, a duplicate of the American government. One of the nations in Southeast Asia which affects a change of government wholly through the ballot-box, it has the "fightingest" and "freeiest press". As such, it has often been referred to as the "show case of democracy in the Orient".

The Philippine constitution, the first to be drafted in Southeast Asia is based and founded on the following basic principles: (1) sovereignty of the people, (2) a strong government, (3) the separation of powers with its concomitant checks and balances, (4) the independence of the judiciary, (5) a strong executive power, (6) nationalization of natural resources and public utility, (7) a high sense of public service morality, (8) government of laws, (9) social justice and (10) majority rule.<sup>37</sup>

The executive power is exercised by a President who is elected for four years and can be re-elected. However, no president shall serve for a continuous period of more than eight years. The legislative function is performed by a bicameral body consisting of the House of Representatives

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<sup>36</sup>Kahin, op. cit., p.42.

<sup>37</sup>Aruego, Jose M., Philippine Government In Action, 2 Volumes, revised edition (Manila: University Publishing Co., 1960), I, p. 64.



and the Senate. The Representatives are elected for four years; the Senators serve for six years. The judiciary is composed of a Supreme Court and inferior courts.

The military plays a significant role in Thai politics in contradistinction with the supremacy of civilian rule in the Philippines.

However, despite marked differences in the political system which is the immediate by-product of the past and experience, both peoples are obsessed with the love for freedom--for Thailand because it has never been subjugated to a Western power; for the Philippines because of its hard won independence after a struggle for more than three hundred years.

#### Socio-Cultural Factors

There exist between the Thais and the Filipinos some cultural affinities. Both belong to the same racial stock and were exposed to the same intensive influences of the Chinese and the Hindus in the formative years of Southeast Asia, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Centuries before the coming of the Spanish colonizers to the Philippines, there lived further south of what is now central Thailand, archaeologically known by their Kingdom of Dvaravati.<sup>38</sup> This Kingdom in the eleventh century came

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<sup>38</sup>Foreign Affairs Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 4, op. cit.

under the sway of the vast Shri-Vijayan Empire. Its sphere of influence included Thailand and Indo-China, south to the Malayan Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Moluccas and the Philippines. It extended as far north as Formosa.<sup>39</sup> The Kingdom of Sukhothai under Rama Kamheng stretched far down south to the Malayan Peninsula, and this was the last vestige of the once powerful Shri-Vijayan Empire which ruled both the Philippines and Thailand.<sup>40</sup>

The hypothesis that mainland Southeast Asia was connected with island Southeast Asia may provide the clue for the presence of the same kind of tribe in Thailand and in the Philippines. This tribe belongs to an early stage of the revolution of man, anthropologically and ethnologically. They possess kinky hair, flat noses, thick lips and deep-set eyes. They are almost black and very short. This tribe is called Semang Negrito in Thailand<sup>41</sup> and Aetas, in the Philippines.

While the Thai way of life is closely connected with Buddhism and that of the Filipino with Christianity, both the southern portions of their territories are Islamic in culture and religion.

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<sup>39</sup>Philippine International, Vol. V, No. 4, op. cit., p. 21

<sup>40</sup>FA Bulletin, op. cit., Vol. II, No. 4.

<sup>41</sup>Thailand--Past and Present (Publicity Committee, 9th Pacific Science Congress: Bangkok, B.E. 2500), p. 21.

Both peoples are internationally known for their hospitality and warm friendship. The Oriental way of life is deeply rooted and withstood the impact of western influences.

The Thais are generally passive, cool-tempered, sober and tolerant, Reverence for elders and superiors is a beautiful tradition although, it hampers so much the search for truth.

The Thais hold the King as a symbol of solidarity as the Filipinos revere their national flag as sacred as the King's person in Thailand and similarly, as a symbol of unity.

The Filipino is a child of the East and the West. Typical Oriental influences come from the Chinese, the Hindus, the Malays and the Indonesians. Western culture was brought to the islands by the Spaniards and the Americans.

The Filipinos are gay and lively people, with a high sense of humor typically American. They are fond of music and dances as well as the search for knowledge. Education is the top item in the national budget.

The percentage of racial strains in the Filipinos blood are as follows: Negrito--10 percent; Indian--5 percent; Indonesian--30 percent; Malay--40 percent; Chinese--10 percent; European-American-- 3 percent; and Arab-- 2 percent.<sup>42</sup>

The ethnic groups in Thailand include the following: Thai--18 percent of the total population; Chinese-- 3 percent; Malay-- .67 percent; Cambodian-- .185 percent; Vietnamese--.25 percent; Indian and Pakistani--.6 percent; Mon--.6 percent and Westerners and others--.2 percent.<sup>43</sup>

## B. FOREIGN POLICY

The formulation and adoption of a foreign policy is the result of practical conceptions of national interests arising from immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective. Reconciliation of the humanitarian and self-motivated policy is not difficult but it should be admitted that the humanitarian aspect is subordinated to the motive of self-interest.

On the other hand, self-interest takes a revolutionized concept in the conviction that national interests can be best served through joint and co-operative action. The principle is to find as many common denominators as possible to show coincidence and overlapping of objectives. Moreover, the trend or orientation of policy towards promoting

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<sup>42</sup>Zaide, Gregorio F., Philippine Politican and Cultural History, 2 Volumes, revised edition (Manila: McCollough Printing Company, 1957), I, p. 19.

<sup>43</sup>Blanchard, Wendell, et. al., Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture (New Haven: HRAF, Inc., 1958), pp. 49-50.

closer ties with neighboring countries reveal a similarity of pattern and tendency in the case of the Philippines and Thailand. This particular half of the chapter is devoted to accomplish a two-fold task--that of being able to show similarity of objectives in foreign policy and its shift towards the Southeast Asian region.

It should be stated that the decisive factor with respect to the success or failure of foreign policy rests on the methods by which such objectives are executed. This is where diplomacy as the application of "tact and intelligence" in the management of foreign relations, comes in.

#### Postulates of Philippine Foreign Policy

The foreign relations of the Philippines is said to operate along ten constants in foreign policy. These are the following:

1. Continuing partnership with the United States within the framework of sovereign equality and mutuality of interests;
2. Effective defense against Communism, internally and externally, but without prejudice to peaceful co-existence with it under safe and justifiable reasons;
3. Strengthening of the authority of the United Nations;
4. Re-birth of identity with Asia within the context of friendly harmony with the international community;
5. Self-determination of peoples and non-interference in the affairs of other states;

6. A just and honorable peace through disarmament under effective international control;
7. Respect for the dignity of the human person and protection of minorities;
8. International co-operation for the utilization of the atoms, the outer space and the potentialities of science and technology for peaceful pursuits;
9. Equality of races under a regime of equality of opportunities and tolerance for differences of creeds; and
10. Promotion of a new world order in which men could live in peace and freedom under the law.<sup>44</sup>

These constants have evolved from the changing circumstances of time and place and are continually revived, modified and re-fashioned according to and within the context of a rapidly changing international scene. While these constants have remained substantially the same, the question has been a matter of emphasis and priority.

During the first eight years of the republic born in 1946, Communist expansion movement gained momentum and became widespread. The Chinese mainland finally succumbed and became communistic; North Korea gave in also and in the Philippines, the Hukbalahaps successfully set up a strong politiburo. During that precarious stage, the

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<sup>44</sup>DFA Review, Volume III, No. 4 (Manila: Philippines, December, 1960), p. 85.

overriding consideration was to strengthen internal security against threats from within and without. The rise to political prominence of Ramon Magsaysay marked the complete suppression of the Huk movement.

During the consecutive eight years of the return to power of the Nacionalistas under Magsaysay and then under Carlos P. Garcia, the emphasis of foreign relations was centered on two objectives--the adjustment of relations with the United States and the promotion of closer ties with Asian neighbors. Closer and deeper ties with the Americans is a result not only of the so-called "enlightened self-interest" but of sentimental reasons. The Americans trained the Filipinos in the "art of self-government" for half a century within a modern and democratic framework. Their relations flowered down the years, from the long trek death march in Bataan to the defense of Corregidor.

Along the first major objective, the government accomplished the conclusion of the Romulo-Snyder Agreement (adjustment of postwar obligations and interests amounting to 10 million U.S. dollars), the implementation of the bilateral consultation provision in the Laurel-Langley Agreement on a national basis and the revision of the Military Bases Agreement reducing the period of operation of American bases in the Philippines from ninety-nine years to

twenty-five years. Successful negotiations on these matters removed all irritants to Philippine-American relations.

Orientation of Philippine foreign policy towards closer ties with Asian neighbors was the second objective stressed. President Magsaysay in his inaugural address said that "as a good neighbor to the countries in Southeast Asia, we shall participate in regional activities that will promote economic and cultural relations among us."<sup>45</sup>

President Garcia's administration carried on the Magsaysay policy. In a speech at the Luneta on July 4, 1960. Garcia said:

In the awareness of our geographical and racial affinity with the Asian nations, a greater stress has been laid upon forging closer ties with them. We hold that if Asia is to have its rightful place in the community of nations, it must achieve unity of objectives and of action. In stressing friendship with our Asian neighbors, we seek to re-invigorate traditional ties and to solve common problems that inhere in profound political, economic and cultural changes.<sup>46</sup>

The contemporary cardinal principles of Philippine foreign policy are still based upon the constants enumerated

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<sup>45</sup>Official Gazette, Volume 50 (Manila: Philippine, January 1954), p. 86.

<sup>46</sup>DFA Review, op. cit., p. 20.





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notwithstanding a change of administration, although they had been re-arranged to suit the shifting exigency of the international scene, these are: the maintenance of closer ties with Asian neighbors, maintenance of friendly ties with the United States without sacrificing sovereignty, affiliation with the free and democratic world and rejection of communism and neutralism, subscription to the United Nations and its principles and objectives, subscription to the Pacific Charter and the principle of self-determination of peoples and subscription to the objectives of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.<sup>47</sup>

The emphasis now placed upon the relations with Asian neighbors finds justification in the words of Foreign Affairs Secretary Salvador P. Lopez. He said:

Our present policy does not involve a spiteful or indignant turning away from the mutually beneficial relations with the United States or the West nor a violent denial of an acceptance of our common interests with them. But it does mean acceptance of our destiny as Asians, a willingness to pursue that destiny and the determination never to sacrifice it for the sake of other ties with other countries or regions of the world. This policy is for and not against, it is pro-Asia and not anti-West.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Philippine Embassy File: Bangkok.

<sup>48</sup>Lopez, S. P., "Foreign Policy Transformations and Reconsiderations," (An address before the Manila Rotary Club, August 29, 1963), p. 5.

Guideposts of Thai Foreign Policy

The Thai national character is closely associated with the choice of policy objectives. It is analogized to a bamboo tree--pliant and graceful, it "bends where the winds blow but it does not break."

For instance, when the Communists emerged victorious in mainland China and in North Korea while Laos kept beset with problems of Communist infiltration in the guise of internecine struggles, Thailand had to tighten up its policy in safeguarding its security from internal and external threats. On the question of the Chinese minority which posed as an internal threat, the government reduced the quota of immigrants from two thousand to two hundred per annum and outlawed the Communist Party. When international tension eased, it loosened governmental regulation on Chinese membership in trade unions and on the whole adopted a policy of assimilating the Chinese.<sup>49</sup>

Not a few writers had alleged that the diplomatic success of Thailand is attributed to its ability to play one power against the other. This could be explained better by stating that it only followed realistic policies.

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<sup>49</sup>Buss, Claude A., Southeast Asia and the World Today (New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1958), pp. 57-58.

To be more specific, when the threats or the attacks were too strong and risks to destroy us were too great, we had to yield and to satisfy the appetite of Western imperialists. In this process this country lost many territories, but it managed to preserve our identity and a relative freedom and independence. By "relative" it is meant that in some economic and fiscal matters, Thailand or Siam, then had to follow the advice and take into account the interests of those western powers.<sup>50</sup>

The philosophical bases of the Thai policy have withstood the tests of time and events. These are the principles of self-reliance and mutual co-operation.<sup>51</sup>

Self-reliance, according to Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, is the possession of "a clear consciousness and full realization of national assets."<sup>52</sup> He pointed out that the national strength of Thailand rests on the following:

(1) racial homogeneity, (2) the values of compassion and tolerance which are deeply rooted in the society, (3) the monarchy--a symbol of solidarity, a "driving force" and a rallying point in time of peace and war, and (4) a valuable cultural heritage.<sup>53</sup> These are intangible assets. Equal

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<sup>50</sup>Quoted from an Interview of U. S. Editorial Mission to Thailand with the late Premier Sarit Thanarat, September 4, 1961, FA Bulletin, Volume 1, No. 1, February, March, 1963 (MFA: Bangkok), pp. 57-58.

<sup>51</sup>Khoman, Thanat, "The Policy of Self-Reliance and Mutual Co-operation", (An address before the American Association of Thailand, March 8, 1961.)

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

to these socio-cultural aspects, it may well be added that Thailand is economically rich and geographically situated in a political and economic strategic position. These are tangible aspects of strength and equally contribute to national greatness.

There is no straight-forward definition of foreign policy objectives, but they can be deduced from public announcements made and speeches delivered.

Thailand is committed, first, to the preservation of freedom and independence and is opposed to any form of foreign domination; in other words, it subscribes to the principle of self-determination of peoples; second, to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter; third, to the maintenance of its security and that of the region; and fourth, to the political advancement of its people as well as that of the region.

While relying on its national strength, Thailand sees the benefits derived in mutual co-operation. Khoman said:

Realizing that our country cannot in isolation enjoy the benefits of peace and order while those around us become the scenes of strife and disturbances, the Thai government and nation sought to co-operate actively with our neighbors without exception to enhance and promote the well being of our respective peoples through our joint, free and voluntary efforts to ensure for them a future of peace and progress.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

Our efforts are no doubt modest and regional in character; they are at the same time historic in our part of the world, for too long has been divided and kept apart from one another by alien rulers. But we firmly believe that the concept of Asian solidarity will gain momentum and will be beneficial to each and every components as well as to the world at large.<sup>54</sup>

He said further:

We must..... realize that it was perhaps a mistake to cast our glance too far away; the immediate neighbors should receive greater attention and be more closely cultivated. Even though they share our weakness and our want, there is a heartening feeling that their fate and ours are unmistakably linked together.<sup>55</sup>

#### Similarity of Objectives

An analysis of the above mentioned details reveals similarity in at least three major objectives--in substance and emphasis. First, both countries are committed and subscribe to the principles of the UN Charter; second, direction and emphasis in promoting closer ties with neighbors to the end of achieving the best possible security and the political and economic advancement of the peoples of the region; and third, alliance and partnership with the United States. In connection with the latter, the relations of Thailand with American had been cultivated recently,

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<sup>54</sup>Foreign Affairs Bulletin, Volume I, No. 2 (MFA: Bangkok, October-November, 1961), pp. 17-19.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

comparatively speaking. This was the consequence of the realization of the United States of the vital role Thailand plays in checking the downward movement of communism in mainland Southeast Asia.



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