

Post-Conflict Peace Management in Angola

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Abstract: Peace-building and peace sustenance pose major challenges in societies emerging from endemic conflicts. Can the demise of Jonathan Savimbi be a permanent road to peace in Angola? Post-conflict peace management is as difficult as conflict management. Management of deep conflicts in divided societies has gone beyond negative peace, which embodies cessation of hostilities by belligerents/insurgents. The challenges in post-conflict Angola are, therefore, the consolidation and sustenance of the seeming peace and the engendering of durable security and political stability. The major concern of the study is to examine the possibility interventions for realizing sustainable peace in post-conflict Angola.

Key words: Belligerents, conflict, hostilities, insurgency, negative peace, sustainable peace, war zones

INTRODUCTION

The Angolan civil war manifested a major character of post-colonial, multinational and multicultural states in relation to their vulnerability to engage in hostilities rather than dialogue in managing inter-ethnic contestations over political power, resource control and other national questions.

The challenge of unity and national integration has always been a major problematique in post-colonial divided and plural societies. As Kolawole^[1] observes, post-colonial states are politically fragile. Political fragility implies the weakness of the states to withstand disequilibrium, tension, strains and stresses. Consequently, in Kolawole's submission, incidences of military rule, religious and ethnic conflicts, emergence of ethnic militias and other divisive and disruptive phenomena attest to the fragile character of the states. Angola falls within the picturesque of a fragile post-colonial state with polarized ethnic components and religio-cultural diversities.

In essence, post-colonial states are often war zones. War zones, according to Solingen^[2], exhibit high levels of violence and protracted conflict. War zones are in contradistinction to zones of stable peace, which entails the highest cooperative levels, both in intensity and extension across varied interests. Lack of cooperative order and nationalism are essentially absent in the new states with colonial backgrounds, thereby constituting serious obstacles to national unity and political stability.

The major concern of the study is three-fold. One is to periscope the peculiar nature of conflicts and disorders in Africa generally with a view to have a better understanding of the protracted Angolan civil war. Two, is to evaluate the costs of the civil war and peace in the

Angolan elite's contestations over power acquisition and resource control. Three, is to examine the possibilities, capabilities and conditionalities for peace-building, peace-consolidation and peace sustenance in the post-Savimbi Angola.

NATURE OF DISORDERS IN AFRICA

A major character of the African region is endemic conflicts. This is in relation to the epistemology of violent crises across the continent. As Aristotle Zolberg observes:

The most salient characteristic of political life in Africa is that it constitutes an almost institutionless arena with conflict and disorder as its most prominent features^[3].

In validating Zolberg's observation, Olufemi^[4] also notes that everywhere in Africa, ethnic, religious and other divisive forces constantly pose serious challenges to state integrity and in the process, foster a general atmosphere of insecurity and anarchy.

In its diagnostic analysis of conflicts in Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) reports that between 1963 and 1998, twenty-six conflicts took place in the continent, out of which nineteen were civil wars^[5]. The report cited the inability to respect social reciprocities, political inequality, inter-group intolerance and the lack of inclusiveness in associational membership as some of the main causes of the conflicts. Ethnicity, power-sharing, destabilization by mercenaries, human rights violations and geo-politics are other root causes of conflicts identified by the report.

Some major distinctions are observable in the region's conflicts. These include the protractedness, intractability and enormous costs of the conflicts and escalation of the conflicts by extra-regional forces. In

terms of protractibility and intractability, African conflicts are unduly prolonged as they often last decades. For instances, the Sudanese and Angolan civil wars lasted about three decades of hostilities. The crises were lasting because they were often very difficult equations to resolve. The feature of intractability is perceived as a failure of African states to evolve a potent mechanism for conflict resolution. The states are impotent in engineering a trouble-shooting mechanism because they are not neutral as they are often a principal actor in the conflicts. The state assumes a factional status in the conflicts.

Extra-regional and extra-territorial actors/interventionists play principal roles in escalating and prolonging the conflicts. External powers take sides with the different warring parties and give them supports including providing financial and logistic assistance and arming the various groups with weapons and ammunitions. Foreign troops and mercenaries also pitch their tents with different factions in the conflict. For instance, the Cuban, Libyan and Soviet troops fought on the side of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), while the United States and South African troops aligned with the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and Congo (Zaire) backed the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) in the Angolan civil war^[6].

A horrifying attribute of the conflicts is the casualty data. Relying on the OAU Report^[5], more than 474 million Africans were affected by the 26 conflicts recorded between 1963 and 1998 in the region, representing 61% of the population. In terms of displaced people and refugees, as at 2001, twenty million people were internally displaced, while 5 million were refugees^[7], thereby presenting serious humanitarian emergencies in the continent. In addition to this, are the human costs in terms of casualties and disabilities. For instance, the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970, resulted in the loss of 2 million people^[8], while about 10,000 casualties were recorded between 1999 and 2002, arising from about 50 inter-ethnic and inter-religious violent conflicts under the Obasanjo presidency^[9]. The Liberian crisis, besides uprooting half of the country's 3,000,000 people, about 200,000 killed^[10].

The political economy of the numerous conflicts and troubles in the region also deserves attention as it is worrisome. Scarce national resources are often committed to war campaigns, thereby limiting the states capacity to embark on achievable sustainable developmental and social welfare programmes for the citizenry. Between 1981 and 1992, the civil war in Somalia cost the government side, \$153.98 million in purchase of arms from the United States alone^[11]. In the same manner, the civil war in Uganda involving the state and the Lord's Resistance Army, between 1993 and 1994, consumed \$300,000 per day

on the government side alone^[12]. Nigeria's participation in the Economic Community of West Africa Peace-Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) interventionist roles in the Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire's civil conflicts, had cost the nation, as at 1999, \$8 billion^[13]. This colossal expenditure by Nigeria was met with stiff domestic opposition as it took place when the nation's infrastructural facilities were collapsing and begging for maintenance. The summary of all these attributes is that the perennial violent conflicts in Africa have cost the continent both material and human losses and consequently, the ensued political instability and losses contribute to the continued underdevelopment of the continent and the impoverishment of its people.

The unusual independence and road to war: Angola falls within the picturesque of an artificial nation-state having been a colonial architecture imposed on the varied ethnic groups without consent. Angola is a concoction of about 90 sub-nationalities, thereby depicting a polarized polity in terms of its multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic diversity without any concrete efforts by the colonial Portuguese regime to engineer a sense of unity and peaceful co-existence among the varied peoples. In a way, the seeds of institutional fragility in terms of capacity of the state to mobilize the polarized ethnic principalities to embrace a sense of nationalism were sown by the colonial administrators and consequently, the colonial state ensured a condition of dissonance among the sub-nationalities.

The Angolan independence attained in 1975 was an unusual one as it sharply contradicted the observable character of independence in other African states whereby there was a handover of power to newly elected local power elites with pomp and pageantry accompanied with the hoisting of flags and singing of national anthems.

Though Somerekun^[14] contends that no decolonization process in one African State was exactly the same as in another African country. This implies that the process of attaining formal independence had taken variegated forms. But whichever form the transition process took, it was never easy in any African country whether or not it was achieved with or without armed struggle (ibid).

The struggle for independence in Angola was violent involving prolonged anti-colonial insurgency and guerrilla warfare. Thus validating the observation that no colonizer ever wished to relinquish its hold on the colonized without resistance by the latter.

Portugal was the last European colonial power to relax its hold on its overseas colonies. It colonized Angola for about 500 years and foot dragged on granting the

country independence despite the violent resistance. It had to take a *coup d'état* against the dictatorial and repressive regime in Portugal before the dreams of independence could be realized by the Angolan nationalists.

The new Portuguese colonial administration granted independence informally to Angola on November 11, 1975 without handing over the instrument of office of an independent Angola to any of the anti-colonial nationalist groups and political elites. There was no election to elect any post-colonial political successors. The colonial regime, therefore, parted in a disorderly manner. The disorderly departure of colonial Portugal and subsequent abandonment of Angola was a reflection of some major factors. One, the prevailing internal political disequilibrium being witnessed in Portugal at that time led to the *coup d'état* against the Marcello Ceatano regime by the Portuguese Armed Forces, which could be evaluated as the worst repressive regime in contemporary history. Two, was economic imperative. The new regime, out of economic expediency, had to let go its colonies as a way of achieving economic relief as Portugal was going through a harrowing economic hardship arising from enormous commitment of scarce domestic resources to confront the protracted guerrilla wars against it in Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde Islands and Guinea Bissau. It, therefore, implied that the eventual granting of independence to the people of Angola was not dictated by humanitarian concerns.

Three basic interpretations could be deduced from the abandonment of Angola by the colonial regime. First is that, it put the international legal status of Angola to doubt. Second is that, Angola was left to be taken by whomever was strong enough to control it among the armed anti-colonial groups. Three is that, a direct and open invitation had been made to disaster (ibid: 171). State power was not handed over to anyone thereby creating a vacuum. The ensued chaos caused by the anti-colonial factions affirms the fact that the period of transition to independence was usually a period of crisis as much as for the departing colonizers and as for the Africans who wanted to rule themselves. As noted by Somerekun (ibid, 2), the African nationalists usually struggled against one another to safeguard each other side's considered self interest.

The non-recognition of any of the three main anti-colonial guerrilla groups-MPLA, FLNA and UNITA, as successor to the colonial regime at departure certainly provided a veritable ground for armed struggle for national power in the post-colonial era. The armed groups celebrated the colonial departure at their respective

strongholds. MPLA and UNITA respectively claimed to represent the authority of the new state by forming parallel governments at their separate headquarters. MPLA led by Angostinho Neto had its government in Luanda, while UNITA led by Jonas Savimbi had its in Huambo.

The two principal contesting groups had to engage themselves in a protracted civil war in a struggle for supremacy and national power. As characteristic of African conflicts, the super-power and their allies were drawn into the war by taking sides with either side. As pointed out earlier, the MPLA was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba, while the United States, other Western powers and South Africa gave support to UNITA. Nigeria gave MPLA diplomatic, material and moral support. However, in 1976, the MPLA succeeded in gaining upper hand in the armed struggle and subsequently, it was gradually recognized by the international system as the ruling party and its leader Neto as the nation's president. Jose Eduardo dos Santos succeeded Neto in 1979 when the latter died, while the guerrilla war continued.

The United Nations (UN) and OAU made several efforts to resolve the crisis which culminated in the signing of many peace accords between the two warring groups, but on each occasion, the accords were treated with bad faith particularly by the UNITA leadership-Savimbi. The UN brokered ceasefire agreements were often violated by Savimbi. To enforce compliance with the agreements, the UN in 1997 had to impose some sanctions on the UNITA, which included: restricting its access to foreign bank accounts, banning diamond exports from UNITA controlled areas; and transportation restrictions^[6].

The civil war persisted until February 2002 when Savimbi died in an ambush by the government army. Savimbi's death dramatically led to the termination of the 27 years civil hostilities, which was marked by signing a ceasefire agreement in April, 2002 by government and UNITA forces. The sudden end to the civil insurgency after the demise of Savimbi implies that it was him alone that was the moving and sustaining force of the war. The peace outcome contradicted with the aftermath of the death of Samuel Doe of Liberia who was killed by rebels in a similar circumstance as Savimbi. His death, rather than heralding peace, accelerated and escalated the civil war in Liberia.

The costs of the war: The civil war, like other wars, had its costs in terms of casualties, disabilities, destruction of property and political economy.

Fatality records show that on the average, 1,000 deaths were recorded daily at the peak of the civil war, ^[15] the war accounted for 100,000 tolls and 600,000 displaced

people^[16]. At the end of the war, the total death toll stood at 1,000,000 casualties and many more displaced or maimed^[17]. Angola has the largest number of amputees in the world, arising from exploding landmines^[6]. In terms of destruction to social and economic infrastructure; the entire educational system has collapsed. This has resulted in gross shortage of skilled labour across the country. While industries have also collapsed, the agricultural production in many areas had been hampered by landmines. Angola is heavily mined. According to the UN estimates; over 7,000,000 landmines remain in the country (ibid). The collapse of the agricultural sector has serious implications for the economy because as much as 72% of the 10.7 million population (2003 estimates) depends on agriculture as their means of livelihood. The devastation caused by the war to the sector has induced large scale famine across the country. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) hunger survey, more than 5,000,000 people are under-nourished^[18]. Consequent upon the devastation, much of the country's food needs are being imported.

In real costs, it was estimated that government spent 60% of her \$2.75 billion oil earnings per year on the war^[19]. For instance, between 1993 and 1994 alone, it purchased more than \$3.5 billion worth of arms and ammunitions, thus making Angola the largest buyers of weapons in Africa, excluding North Africa (ibid). Besides actual purchases, reconstruction of socio-industrial infrastructure destroyed in the war would, as at 1995, require an estimated \$700 million^[20].

Roadmap to building sustainable peace: The above analysis on the costs of the protracted war is deemed desirable so as to enable the appreciation of peace. The costs, in human, material and psychological terms, instructively imply that peace is cheaper than war because of the opportunity costs of the latter. The opportunity costs of war are therefore, the losses and expenditures incurred on the war, which would become unnecessary if the belligerents had been able to embrace, maintain and sustain the peace.

The death of Savimbi became a turning point in the war as it heralded a much sort after peace, which eluded the nation for 27 years. Both the government side and UNITA quickly agreed to the terms of the Lusaka Protocol to end the civil war. The problematiqués, however, are that: how can the prevailing peace be sustained? How can Angola be prevented from relapsing from peace to war again? How can a durable peace regime be attained? How can the obstacles and "landmines" threatening the peace process be managed and controlled? How can the age-long warlords be transformed to effective peace lords?

The roadmap to sustainable peace requires adequate ability to manage and consolidate the emerging fragile peace. This is opined considering the fact that peace is more difficult to manage than conflicts. In essence, prosecuting a war may seem difficult and expensive but managing peace is more difficult and costlier. It is based on these observations that the relative peace in Angola should be motivated, advanced and sustained by both the internal players in the civil war and the international community at large. Consequently, the question is what can be done to consolidate and sustain the prevailing peace? The following are therefore advanced as interventionist possibilities and stimulants for achieving sustainable peace and stability in the country:

Justiceable power sharing and power rotation formula: Polarized politics in divided societies is often caused by conflict over power-sharing. Perquisites of power and other accruing opportunities such as access to national wealth and influence make dissonance inevitable, particularly when there is perceived disequilibrium in power sharing among the varied ethno-religious components in multi-ethnic, multi cultural and linguistic polities, which can as well be regarded as imperfect unions because of the colonial imposition of such state on the amalgamated peoples.

The need for equitable power-sharing among the varied actors in the power-gaming in post-conflict Angola becomes imperative because in the first instance, it was inter-factional contestations over national power that resulted in the protracted civil war. The death of Savimbi might have facilitated an unconditional "surrender" and embracing of peace options by the remaining UNITA leadership, but it had not meant that the conflict had been resolved. At best, the crisis had subsided or suppressed but not provided with a permanent solution. The prevailing situation in Angola can be described as negative peace, which is merely a cessation of hostilities without the fundamental problems being resolved.

An acceptable power-sharing formula should be designed to provide both the principal and minor groups some positions in government. Such power-sharing device would make possible the formation of a genuine government of national unity that would make all factions feel a sense of belonging in the new polity and thereby arouse some levels of allegiance and loyalty to the state and government. In addition, power rotation among the erstwhile warring principal warlords would go a long way in avoiding complaints of ethnic or sectional marginality that could resuscitate inter-group hostilities. Consequently, the victorious ruling MPLA party should be magnanimous in victory by adopting a win-win rather

than a win-lose posturing with regards to other belligerent and non-belligerent groups. In essence, the MPLA regime should play the politics of inclusion rather than exclusion of other contending groups. Justiceable power-sharing and even access to and distribution of, state resources and wealth would avert deep grievances, political tension, cut-throat competition and the relapse to war. Conflict-generating potentials and capacity among the divided groups would be at low ebb if equal access to power and national resources is the order of the emerging polity. The warlords would embrace lasting peace if tangible benefits accrue to them from the post-conflict new dispensation.

General elections to elect leaders and impose legitimacy:

A peace-time popular election is desirable to elect genuinely post-conflict national leaders who would truly represent the authority of the emerging state. Such election would also confer legality and legitimacy on the post-war state-actors in order to present them as truly national leaders and thereby make them acceptable to the general civil society. The acceptability of the election outcomes would be conditioned by the degree of freedom and fairness that the election enjoyed. When the election is genuinely perceived as free, fair and without bias, both winners and losers would accept the results as credible. An acceptable general election would also facilitate the transformation of the warlords to peace lords and democratic national leaders.

Post-conflict economic transformation for sustainable human development: Post-conflict societies are usually faced by socio-economic hardship, falling standard of living and despair and lost of hope and confidence in the emerging political system. A major post-conflict reconstruction agenda should urgently include resuscitating the collapsed economy and empowering the people economically/financially. Social and industrial infrastructural facilities were devastated by the war in addition to reducing agricultural production. The resultant effects include mass un-employment and loss of income-earning capacity by the majority of Angolans. The population, which mostly (75%) dependent on agricultural production, has become poorer as a result of the war. The nation's human development index has worsened. For instance, infant mortality rate and life expectancy are assuming more negative dimensions. Infant mortality rate which stood at 184 per 1000 live births in 1990 had surged to 194 per 1000 in 2003. Similarly, life expectancy correspondingly fell from the 1980 level of 44 years and 49 years respectively for men and women to 36.1 years (men) and 37.8 years (women) in 2003^[6].

It should be noted that when many people are impoverished in a polity, it implies that there are no hope and suitable conditions for them to have a stake in the peaceful maintenance of the system. Any attempts to consolidate and sustain the existing fragile peace, therefore, should adequately address the challenge of empowering the people economically and combat mass poverty. Peace and poverty are antithetical to each other. Poverty undermines peace and socio-political stability.

Enhancing the economic capacity of the private sector would significantly confront the challenge of resuscitating the collapsed industries and the agricultural sector. To aid speedy economic recovery, essential industrial performance-enhancement catalysts such as adequate energy and water supplies, telecommunication and transportation systems must be quickly restored. Resuscitating industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy would create more jobs, enhance poverty reduction and at the same time reduce the citizens and ex-combatants vulnerability to take to crime such as armed robbery. It would also prevent or check the culture of youth violence. Certainly, the youth's propensity to become violent is much higher because of their exposure to armed violence for decades. Occupying the youths with jobs could reduce tendencies to engage in violent crimes and youth militancy. Youth militancy is gradually becoming a regional culture in Africa.

Peace education: The five decades of anti-colonial and post-independent insurgency imply that peace is an alien concept to very many average Angolans. It therefore becomes imperative that government should embark on a peace education drive in all schools, official establishments and the civil society at large. Peace education campaign will aim at enabling citizens to value peace and to appreciate harmonious co-existence among the varied ethnic groups and to tolerate and accommodate each other. It will also has as its essential component, programmes on nation-building and state-building with the goal-value of achieving the much desired national integration and unity devoid of sectionalism, parochialism and primordial hatred. To achieve this post-conflict transformation society, official institutions, civil society organizations, religious institutions and schools at all levels could be used as the operational strategies for converting the Angolan society from protagonism to embracing pragmatism, cooperation and peace.

The mass media deserve a special acknowledgement of their capacity and competence in conflict and peace generation and management in any society. The mass media, including the radio, television, newspapers and

magazines, can engender peace as much as they can be used as tools to foment and fuel violent conflicts. The Angolan mass media have a decisive role to play in consolidating the peace process by providing the intellectual, psychological, informative and as well as the educative bases of converting the Angolan divided society into a peaceful and united society because of their spread spatially in terms of viewership and readership and particularly for the quality of the readership too, which are basically the elite who often foment trouble because of their privatized interests in the system. The mass media should strive not to succumb to being used by the political elite to fester their narrow interests so as not to reverse the peace process. Generally, the peace education agenda would enable the citizens to appreciate the values and costs of peace and the consequences of conflicts.

Transforming the military: A major challenge of transformation from conflict to peace is the problematique of ex-combatants. Most of the insurgents in the UNITA force have been absorbed into the government armed forces. Government, therefore, is faced with the arduous task of transforming the military from guerilla fighters to professional and democratic forces. The entire armed forces, including the police and para-military institutions, need to undergo a comprehensive re-orientation and re-training programmes for new roles in the emerging polity. The re-orientation programmes should advertently include seminar courses on nationalism, professionalism and democracy. Appreciation of the values of democracy would enable them appreciate loyalty to civilian leadership and thereby dissuade them from coup plotting against civil authority in future.

In addition, government should endeavour to carry out a thorough post-conflict demilitarization, disarmament, demobilization rehabilitation and re-orientation of ex-rebels not absorbed into the regular armed forces. This category of ex-combatants has the potentials to derail and destabilize the emerging peace. Have all arms and ammunitions been retrieved from ex-combatants? What is to be done? Combating any future restlessness by the government army and the demobilized ex-combatants requires a two-prong approach. One, is providing peace-time responsibilities for the regular army. The regular soldiers need to be permanently kept busy by engaging them in non-military, civil assignments such as commercial farming, civil engineering works such as constructing roads and bridges, environmental sanitation, emergency humanitarian rescue operations and international peace-keeping. Keeping them so busy would not create room for idle talks and coup planning. Two,

is how to checkmate demobilized combatants from engaging in dastardly acts that can undermine state and regional security and stability. Disgruntled politicians could easily manipulate them to destabilize the emerging state. They can also be hired as mercenaries to undermine the peace and security of neighbouring countries and elsewhere. They can also be negatively used as political assassins, spies, saboteurs and coup executors. It should be noted that serving as mercenaries is an attractive and lucrative endeavour. As at 1997, the salaries for mercenaries ranged from \$15,000 to \$18,000 per month and each mercenary was entitled to a life insurance^[21]. This category of war veterans, therefore, requires effective rehabilitation by giving them employments. This can be actualized by giving them vocational training, which will enable them to learn trades. Those not willing to learn trades, may be, due to old age, should be engaged in commercial farming including crops, fish and horticultural farming. This group and those who learned trades must be given the enabling condition to stand on their own. This can be facilitated by government lending finance support for them through a micro-credit scheme to enable them purchase the necessary tools and ingredients for their trades. The ex-combatants remain potentially dangerous and will continue to pose security threats to the system if after choosing a trade, they remain unemployed.

Adequate development aid: Reconstruction survey, as earlier pointed out, indicates that the country requires, as at 1995, about \$700 million to rebuild devastated infrastructure across the country. The ruined economy is not capable of shouldering this responsibility. The appeal, therefore, goes to the international community, particularly the West and the private Transnational Corporations (TNCs), non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and philanthropists to come to the aid of the country by injecting sufficient development aid to the economy. The Group of 8 (G8) countries should play very active financial roles in revamping the economy by designing a micro Marshall Plan involving generous and unconditional development credit and grant facilities to the new government. TNCs in Angola such as oil companies, including Texaco and Chevron should contribute significantly to the funding of the economy by way of expanding their investment so as to create more employments for the thousands of jobless youths and ex-warriors. The entire international community should note that there can be no permanent peace in Angola until the economic down-turn inspired by the protracted war is transformed to economic viability that can adequately engender poverty reduction, social hardships alleviation and sustainable human development.

CONCLUSION

The protracted-ness of the Angolan conflict merely manifests the fragile nature of post-colonial states and the weakness of the inherited colonial institutional structures to adequately manage crisis without resulting to enormous costs. The prolonged civil war equally reflected the lack of capacity of post-colonial African states to achieve the goals of integration and national unity among the polarized groups that made up the states. Nation-building and state-building, therefore, remain major challenges to post-colonial Africa.

The post-Savimbi negative peace involving cessation of hostilities by the warring parties needs to be transformed to positive, stable and democratic peace involving building sustainable peace through genuine re-conciliation of all warring groups, re-building the social fabrics of the ethno-religious cleavages, ensuring socio-political justice and equity and economic rejuvenation. Designing an acceptable and justiceable power-balance in the post conflict domestic politics would go a long way in addressing inter-elite groups' violent contestations over national political power and wealth. Converting from protagonism to pragmatism and from warlordism to peace-lordism in a divided society emerging from war could only be made realizable, effective and permanent when all groups and sections are given perceived equal social, economic and political opportunities in the system. It is then also that sustainable peace could be an attainable goal-value and a synergy for national unity.

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