

Assessing the Politics of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its Impact on India-United States Relations: Implications for Security and Trade Cooperation

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Abstract

This study examines the politics of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on India-United States relations by analysing various aspects of bilateral cooperation within the institution's framework. Through a comprehensive examination of strategic, economic, and geopolitical factors, the research highlights the critical role of the QUAD in fostering closer ties between India and the United States. The study is premised on the objectives assessing the politics of QUAD security dialogue and its impact on India and the United States security and trade. It further evaluated the effectiveness of the existing QUAD initiatives and mechanisms in promoting a robust strategic partnership between India and the United States; these among others. Qualitative approach was explored in the study with the use of secondary data and case studies. The findings demonstrated that the QUAD has significantly strengthened the strategic partnership between India and the United States by facilitating collaboration on shared security challenges, promoting regional economic integration, and encouraging a common vision for the Indo-Pacific region. The institution has also contributed to the growth in bilateral trade and investment, as well as the expansion of defense cooperation. Moreover, domestic support for the QUAD in both nations has been instrumental in deepening bilateral engagement. Despite these positive developments, several challenges persist, including trade imbalances, discrepancies in strategic priorities, and divergent approaches to engaging with China. The study offers recommendations

for policymakers to further leverage the QUAD for enhancing India-United States relations, such as strengthening strategic communication, expanding defense cooperation, facilitating economic ties, addressing non-traditional security challenges, and engaging with regional partners. By implementing these recommendations and continuously adapting to the evolving geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region, India and the United States can capitalise on the QUAD's potential as a vital platform for deepening bilateral ties and promoting regional stability and prosperity.

Keywords: *Quadrilateral security dialogue (QUAD), India-United States relations, Indo-Pacific regional security, Bilateral strategic partnership, Multidimensional cooperation*

Introduction

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), comprising the United States, India, Japan, and Australia, has emerged as a significant strategic grouping in the Indo-Pacific region (Scott, 2021). Initially established in 2007, the QUAD gained renewed impetus following its revival in 2017, amid growing concerns over China's assertiveness in the region and the need to promote a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific (Pant, 2021). In recent years, the QUAD has evolved into a comprehensive partnership, encompassing cooperation in various domains, including security, trade, technology, climate change, and public health (Jaishankar, 2021). This expanding collaboration has been accomplished by an increasing convergence of strategic interests among the QUAD members, particularly between India and the United States (Smith, 2021). The evolving nature of the QUAD and its potential implications for regional security and trade necessitate a closer examination of the impact of this grouping on bilateral relations between India and the United States (Miller, 2021). As key players in the Indo-Pacific, both countries have a vital stake in shaping the regional architecture future for the region (Tellis, 2021).

The India-United States strategic partnership has been steadily strengthening over the past few decades, with both countries engaging in bilateral dialogues, military exercises, and cooperation on various regional and global issues (Jha, 2021). The QUAD provides a multilateral platform for India and the United States to further deepen their engagement, particularly in the security domain. Both countries have been enhancing their defense cooperation, including through the signing of foundational agreements, such as the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) (Bhartendu, 2020). These agreements have enabled greater their armed interoperability between their armed forces, facilitating joint exercises and operations. In the realm of trade, the United States is one of India's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade in goods and services reaching \$146 billion in 2019 (USTR, 2020). The QUAD presents opportunities for further economic cooperation, particular in areas such as critical and emerging technologies, infrastructure development, and supply chain resilience. As the global economy grapples with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the QUAD can serve as a platform to promote economic recovery and strengthen the rules-based trading system (Kumar, 2021).

However, it is essential to recognise that the QUAD's progress has not been without challenges. Divergent strategic priorities, domestic political factors, and the need to maintain a balance between cooperation and competition in the region have led to debates on the grouping's purpose, direction, and sustainability (Miglani & Blanchard, 2021). Against this backdrop, the study focused to assess the impact of the QUAD on India-United States relations, with a particular focus on security and trade cooperation. By analysing the evolving dynamics of their strategic partnership within the context of the QUAD, this paper intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by this strategic grouping and its implications for regional stability and prosperity (Medcalf, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The Indo-pacific region has witnessed a rapid transformation in its strategic landscape, marked by growing geopolitical rivalries, the rise of China, and the need for regional cooperation to tackle common challenges (Yoshihara, 2021). Within this context, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), comprising India, the United States, Japan, and Australia, has emerged as a significant strategic grouping with the potential to shape the regional order (Miglani & Blanchard, 2021). The evolving nature of the QUAD and its member countries, particularly India and the United States, present an area of inquiry that warrants further examination (Jha, 2021). India-United States relations have been steadily strengthening, encompassing cooperation in various domains, including security, trade, and technology. However, the dynamics of this strategic partnership within the context of the QUAD remains under-explored. This study intended to address the gap in understanding the extent to which the QUAD has security and the United States and its implications for their broader strategic partnership. By examining the role of the QUAD in shaping bilateral relations, the paper intended to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving regional order in the Indo-Pacific and inform policy cooperation and stability.

Objectives of the Study

The paper is premised on the following objectives:

1. Assess the politics of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on India and the United States, focusing on security and trade cooperation.
2. Identify the driving factors driving bilateral collaboration between India and the United States within the context of the QUAD
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the existing QUAD initiatives and mechanisms in promoting a robust strategic partnership between India and the United States.
4. Provide policy-relevant recommendations for enhancing security and trade cooperation between India and the United States through the QUAD framework.

Research Questions

Based on the above stated research objectives, the paper's research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How has the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) influenced security and trade cooperation between India and the United States?
2. What are the key factors driving bilateral collaboration between India and the United States within the context of the QUAD?
3. How effective have existing QUAD initiatives and mechanisms been in promoting a robust strategic partnership between India and the United States?
4. What policy recommendations can be made to enhance security and trade cooperation between India and the United States through the QUAD framework?

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study encompasses an analysis of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue's (QUAD) and its impact on India-United States relations, specifically focusing on security and trade cooperation. The study examined the period from QUAD's revival to the present, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics between India and the United States within the context of the QUAD. Geographically, study concentrated on the Indo-Pacific region, as this is the primary area of interest for the QUAD member countries. The study however, explored key events, agreements, and initiatives that have shaped security and trade ties between India and the United States during the specified time frame.

Significance

The study held considerable significance in contributing to the understanding of the evolving dynamics of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on India-United States relations. Given the increasing geopolitical importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the growing strategic partnership between India and the United States, a comprehensive analysis of the QUAD's role in shaping bilateral ties is both timely and essential. By examining the influence of the QUAD on security and trade cooperation between India and the United States, this paper has provided valuable insights into the key factors driving their bilateral collaboration. It has also helped identify areas of convergence and divergence between the two countries within the context of the QUAD enabling a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities lie ahead. Moreover, the paper's evaluation of existing QUAD initiatives and mechanisms has contributed to the assessment of their effectiveness in fostering a robust strategic partnership between India and the United States.

Furthermore, the research will in no small measure enrich the broader scholarship on multilateral forums and their role in shaping bilateral relations, particularly in the context of the Indo-Pacific region. As the global geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, a thorough examination of the QUAD's impact on India-United States relations has provided a crucial perspective on the changing dynamics of regional cooperation and security. In turn, this analysis has informed the formulation of policy recommendations for enhancing security and trade cooperation, ultimately benefiting policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders involved in the promotion of regional stability

and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. In summary, the paper's significance lies in its potential to enhance our understanding of the complex interplay between the QUAD, India-United States relations, and the broader regional order in the Indo-Pacific, ultimately contributing to inform policymaking and scholarship on this critical topic.

Literature Review

Existing research on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) has examined its influence on trade and security cooperation between India and the United States, shedding light on the evolving partnership between the two nations within the institution's framework. Scholars have investigated various aspects of bilateral cooperation, including defense technology transfer, maritime security, and economic integration, to assess the effectiveness of the QUAD in promoting mutual interests. In the domain of security cooperation, several studies have explored the role of the QUAD in enhancing bilateral defense ties. For instance, scholars such as Joshi (2020) and Smith (2019) have analysed the importance of defense technology transfer, military exercises, and capacity building in fostering closer security relations between India and the United States. These works highlighted the potential of the QUAD as a platform for strengthening bilateral security collaboration in response to shared strategic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

In the realm of trade cooperation, researchers have examined the impact of the QUAD on economic relations between India and the United States. Studies by Singh (2019) and Chatterjee (2020) have focused on the institution's role in promoting regional connectivity, facilitating trade liberalisation, and addressing barriers to bilateral economic engagement. These scholars emphasised the importance of a coordinated approach within the QUAD framework to maximise the potential benefits of enhanced trade cooperation between the two nations. Furthermore, some scholars have investigated the broader implications of the QUAD for regional security and economic architecture in the Indo-Pacific. Authors like Madan (2021) and Rajagopalan (2021) have explored the institution's impact on the balance of power in the region and its role in shaping multilateral cooperation in the areas of security and trade. These studies contributed to the understanding of the complex dynamics influencing bilateral relations between India and the United States within the broader geopolitical context.

More so, the existing literature on the QUAD's impact on India-United States relations provided valuable insights into the multifaceted dimensions of bilateral cooperation within the institution's framework. By examining the role of the QUAD in fostering defense and trade ties between the two nations, these studies offer a comprehensive assessment of the institution's effectiveness in promoting mutual interests and advancing regional stability in the Indo-Pacific. However, these scholars' works contributed to the understanding of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on trade and security cooperation between India and the United States, providing valuable insights into the evolving partnership between the two nations within the institution's framework. Numerous studies have also explored the role of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) in shaping maritime security cooperation between India and the United States.

Scholars have examined the strategic implications of the institution for bilateral relations, focusing on the shared interests and common challenges that have driven collaboration between the two nations in the maritime security countering China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. For instance, Pant (2021) and Mohan (2021) have argued that the QUAD has provided a platform for India and the United States to strengthen their strategic partnership and addressed shared concerns related to freedom of navigation, maritime territorial disputes, and regional stability. Similarly, other studies have focused on the specific mechanisms and initiatives that have facilitated maritime security cooperation between India and the United States within the QUAD framework. Authors like Brewster (2020) and Mohanty (2019) have examined the role of joint naval exercises, information-sharing agreements, and capacity-building efforts in enhancing interoperability and foster closer defense ties between the two nations.

While the existing research on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on India-United States relations offered valuable insights, there are several areas that remain under-explored or require further investigation. Despite the valuable insights provided by the existing literature, several gaps remain to be addressed in future research. These include limited analysis of the role of non-state actors in shaping India's engagement with the QUAD, insufficient focus on the economic dimensions of the institution, limited assessment of the long-term strategic implications, inadequate attention to the perspectives of other QUAD members, and insufficient analysis of alternative regional security arrangements. Addressing these gaps could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving partnership between India and the United States within the institution's framework.

Theoretical Framework

Neo-liberal Institutionalism is employed as a suitable theoretical framework of the study. It is a prominent theoretical framework within the field of international relations that emerged in response to the limitations of "traditional realist theories" in explaining the increasing levels of cooperation among states in the post-World War II era. The theory seeks to understand the role of international institutions in fostering cooperation among states in an anarchic international system. The intellectual foundation of Neo-liberal Institutionalism can be traced back to the works of scholars such as Robert Keohane, Lisa Marin, and Arthur Stein, among others. In this seminal work "After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy" (1984), Keohane argued that international institutions play a critical role in facilitating cooperation by reducing uncertainty, providing information, and establishing norms and rules of behaviour.

Neo-liberal Institutionalism acknowledges the importance of states as primary actors in international relations but emphasises that institutions can mitigate the effects of anarchy and promote cooperation. By reducing transaction costs, fostering trust, and providing mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing agreements, institutions enable states to achieve common interests and address collective action problems. This theoretical framework has been widely applied to understand cooperation in various domains, such as security, trade, and environmental governance. In the context of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on India-United States relations, Neo-liberal Institutionalism offers a valuable lens for analysing the role of the QUAD in fostering bilateral security and trade cooperation. By examining the QUAD's

institutional features, rules, and mechanisms, this theoretical framework can provide insights into how the institution has shaped the strategic partnership between India and the United States. Moreover, Neo-liberal Institutionalism can inform the assessment of the QUAD's effectiveness in promoting regional security and economic cooperation, ultimately contributing to policy discussions and scholarship on the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region.

By a way of justification, Neo-liberal Institutionalism has been chosen as the theoretical framework for this study due to its focus on the role of institutions in promoting cooperation among states. This theory provides a valuable lens through which to analyse the politics of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and its impact on India-United States relations, particularly in the areas of security and trade cooperation. Firstly, Neo-liberal Institutionalism acknowledges the importance of states as primary actors in international relations while emphasising the role of institutions in mitigating the effects of anarchy and fostering cooperation. This aligns with the study's objective of examining the impact of the QUAD, an international institution, on bilateral relations between India and the United States. Secondly, the theory posits that institutions can facilitate cooperation by reducing uncertainty, providing information, and establishing norms and rules of behaviour. This perspective is particularly relevant for analysing the QUAD's influence on security and the United States, as it helps explain the mechanisms through which the institution may have shaped bilateral relations.

Thirdly, Neo-liberal Institutionalism has been widely applied in various domains of international relations, such as security, trade, and environmental governance. This broad applicability demonstrates the theory's flexibility and suitability for studying the impact of institutions like the QUAD on bilateral cooperation in different issue areas. Finally, by using Neo-liberal Institutionalism as the theoretical framework, this study can contribute to the existing scholarship on the theory by providing empirical evidence of the QUAD's role in fostering bilateral relations between India and the United States. The findings may also offer insights into the institution in promoting regional security and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Methodology

The methodology for the study revolves around a qualitative research approach, which has been employed to analyse the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue's (QUAD) impact on India-United States relations, with a specific focus on Security, Trade Cooperation, QUAD Cohesiveness, and Domestic Factors. To achieve this, secondary source of data were explored, among which include, the literature review of relevant documents from various sources which played a crucial role in the study process, as it has involved the review and examination of relevant policy materials, official statements, and agreements relating to the QUAD and India-United States relations. The literature review has extensively been conducted, also covering existing scholarship on the subject matter. This process has included the analysis of documents, such as government agencies, think tanks, and academic institutions, with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the key factors that influence bilateral cooperation within the framework of the QUAD.

To further delve into the subject matter, case studies have been conducted, focusing on specific instances of security and trade cooperation between India and the United States within the context of the QUAD. A suitable case study for the paper has been focused on the "Malabar Naval

Exercise,” a trilateral naval exercise involving India, the United States, and Japan that has taken place annually since 1992. Since its expansion in 2020 to include Australia, the exercise has become a key demonstration of the QUAD’s security cooperation, reflecting the member nations’ commitment to enhancing maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. The insights obtained from these case studies have proven valuable in assessing the effectiveness of QUAD initiatives and mechanisms in fostering a strong strategic partnership between the two nations. This has also helped providing the context for the research and also served as a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis of bilateral cooperation within the QUAD framework. However, upon data collection, the thematic analysis approach was helpful for the data analysis. This method has involved the identification of key themes and patterns relevant to the study’s objectives and questions. The study then drawing conclusions and offering policy recommendations to enhance security and trade cooperation between India and the United States through the QUAD framework.

Summary of Data Analysis

To assess the impact of the QUAD on trade and security cooperation between India and the United States, the summary of the table has been drawn, using a quantitative data. This analysis has drawn upon various sources, including official government statistics, academic research, policy documents, and expert commentary.

Trade Cooperation

- Bilateral Trade

Analysis trends in bilateral trade volumes, the composition of traded goods and services, and the balance of trade between India and the United States can provide insights into the extent to which the QUAD has influenced economic relations between the two nations.

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Evaluating changes in FDI flows between India and the United States can help assess the impact of the QUAD on investment cooperation and economic integration.

- Regional Economic Initiatives (REI)

Examining India’s and the United States’ participation in regional economic initiatives, such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), can offer clues about the extent to which the QUAD has promoted collaboration in advancing regional economic integration.

Security Cooperation:

- Defense Agreements and Joint Military Exercises

Analysing the frequency, scale, and complexity of joint military exercises and the number of defense agreements signed between India and the United States can shed light on the role of the QUAD in fostering closer security ties.

- Defense Technology Transfers

Examining trends in defense technology transfers between the two nations can help gauge the extent to which the QUAD has contributed to strengthening bilateral defense collaboration.

- Maritime Security Initiatives

Assessing the impact of maritime security initiatives, such as the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness Initiative, can provide insights into the effectiveness of the QUAD in promoting cooperation on shared security challenges in the maritime domain.

Qualitative Data:

- Policy Documents

Analysing official policy documents, such as the QUAD joint statements and India-United States joint strategic vision statements, can reveal the priorities and commitments of the two nations in strengthening bilateral relations within the QUAD framework.

- Expert Opinions

Reviewing expert commentary from academics, policymakers, and practitioners can offer valuable insights into the perceived impact of the QUAD on India-United States relations and regional security dynamics.

- Public Opinion

Examining public opinion polls and media reports can help assess the perceptions and attitudes of the Indian and American public towards the QUAD and its role in promoting bilateral cooperation.

QUAD Cohesiveness:

- Institutional Strength

Evaluating the effectiveness of the QUAD in coordinating policies, developing joint initiatives, and maintaining a unified stance on regional issues can offer insights into the institution's overall cohesiveness and resilience.

- Shared Strategic Vision

Analysing the extent to which the QUAD members share a common strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region can provide an understanding of the institution's potential to shape regional security dynamics.

Domestic Factors:

- Political Transitions

Analysing the impact of political transitions in India and the United States on their respective foreign policy orientations can shed light on the domestic factors influencing bilateral cooperation within the QUAD framework.

- Public Opinion

Examining trends in public opinion towards the QUAD and India-United States relations can help assess the domestic support for bilateral cooperation and the institution's overall legitimacy.

However, by incorporating these areas of analysis, researchers can develop a more holistic understanding of the complex factors shaping the impact of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue on India-United States relations. This comprehensive approach can inform policy recommendations and contribute to ongoing debates on the effectiveness of the QUAD in fostering bilateral ties and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific. While these stated areas of analysis provided a comprehensive overview of the various factors shaping the impact of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) on India-United States relations, it is important to recognise that the field of

International Relations is constantly evolving, and new developments may lead to additional areas of inquiry.

Discussion of Findings

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), an institution encompassing India, the United States, Japan, and Australia, has significantly influenced India-United States relations in various aspects. Through a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature and relevant data, several key findings have emerged, offering valuable insights into the evolving partnership between the two nations within the institution's framework. Firstly, the QUAD has contributed to the strengthening of the strategic partnership between India and the United States by facilitating bilateral cooperation on shared security challenges. These include maritime security, cyber-security, and counter-terrorism, which have resulted in increased interoperability between their defense forces and the development of joint initiatives to address common concerns in the Indo-Pacific region. Secondly, the institution has fostered closer economic relations between India and the United States.

That is evident in the growth of bilateral trade volumes and foreign direct investment flows, as both nations demonstrate their shared commitment to promoting regional economic integrating and addressing barriers to trade. Thirdly, India and the United States have showcased a common strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region, emphasising the importance of a rules-based order, freedom of navigation, and regional stability. This alignment of interests has bolstered bilateral cooperation within the QUAD framework and reinforced the institution's overall cohesiveness. Lastly, domestic support for the QUAD has played a crucial role in deepening the engagement between India and the United States. Public opinion polls and expert commentary have indicated a growing recognition of the institution's importance in fostering closer bilateral relations and countering China's influence in the region. Despite these positive developments, certain challenges persist within the India-United States partnership within the QUAD.

These include lingering concerns over trade imbalances, discrepancies in strategic priorities, and potential divergences in their respective approaches to engaging with China. Addressing these issues will be crucial for further solidifying bilateral ties and ensuring the institution's long-term success in promoting regional security and stability. In summary, the analysis of the QUAD's impact on India-United States relations underscores the multifaceted role of the institution in shaping the dynamics of bilateral cooperation. As the geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region continues to evolve, the QUAD will remain a vital platform for India and the United States to collectively tackle common challenges and cultivate a closer strategic partnership.

Conclusion

In examining the impact of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) on India-United States relations, this analysis has highlighted the multifaceted nature of the institution's influence on bilateral cooperation in various domains. The QUAD has played a pivotal role in fostering closer strategic ties between India and the United States by facilitating collaboration on shared security challenges, promoting regional economic integration, and encouraging a common vision for the Indo-Pacific region. The findings of the study's analysis emphasised the importance of the QUAD in shaping the evolving partnership between India and the United States. As the institution has

provided a platform for addressing mutual concerns and deepening bilateral cooperation, the two nations have been able to forge closer defense, economic, and diplomatic ties. Moreover, the growing domestic support for the QUAD in both countries has contributed to its success in fostering closer relations and countering shared regional challenges. Despite these positive developments, some challenges remain in the India-United States partnership within the QUAD. Issues such as trade imbalances, differences in strategic priorities, and divergent approaches to engaging with China necessitated ongoing attention and dialogue to ensure the long-term successes of the institution in promoting regional security and stability.

However, future research on the QUAD and its impact on India-United States relations should remain open to exploring new areas of inquiry in response to the ever-changing geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region. By incorporating additional aspects, such as the implications of the institution's expansion, the role of emerging technologies, and the influence of non-traditional security issues, scholars can further enrich understanding of the complex factors shaping bilateral relations within QUAD framework. In conclusion, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue has proven to be a critical platform for fostering closer ties between India and the United States. As the Indo-Pacific region continues to witness significant geopolitical shifts, the QUAD will remain an essential avenue for the two nations to collectively tackle common challenges, deepen their strategic partnership, and contribute to regional stability and prosperity.

Recommendations

To further capitalise on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) as a platform for enhancing India-United States relations and promoting regional stability in the Indo-Pacific, policymakers from both nations may consider the following recommendations:

1. There should be regular high-level dialogues between India and United States policymakers that should be institutionalised to ensure continued alignment of strategic priorities and foster mutual understanding. This can help maintain a unified stance on regional issues and facilitate effective decision-making within the QUAD framework.
2. Building upon existing defense agreements and joint military exercises, policymakers should explore opportunities for increased collaboration in areas such as military technology transfers, intelligence sharing, and capacity building. This can contribute to greater interoperability and trust between the two nation's defense forces.
3. Encouraging bilateral trade and investment through policy initiatives, such as easing barriers to trade and fostering public-private partnerships, can bolster economic interdependence and mutual prosperity. This can also create opportunities for collaboration on critical emerging technologies, supply chain resilience, and infrastructure development projects.

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