



CALMUN'24
HISTORICAL UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL
STUDY GUIDE



Agenda Item: The Sand War

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1. Glossary

Border and Territorial Dispute: Border and territorial dispute refers to disputes over the division of land or water bodies among two or more independent countries.

Tindouf: Tinouf is an area in Southwestern Algeria near the border with Morocco, which was one of the main points of the border dispute.

Hassan II: Hassan II is the King of Morocco at the time of the Sand War, who had a significant impact on the dispute with his actions and decisions.

Ahmed Ben Bella: Ahmed Ben Bella was the President of Algeria at the time of the Sand War, who influenced Algeria's stance and actions with his leadership.

Ceasefire: Ceasefire refers to an agreement usually between two armies to stop fighting in order to allow discussions about peace.

Mediation: Mediation is the intervention of a neutral third party in a conflict between two parties in order to help resolve the problem.

Organization of African Unity (OAU): The OAU is an intergovernmental organization established in order to promote and provide unity and cooperation within African nations.

Colonization: The act or process of sending people to live in and govern another country often with the intent of exploiting its resources, establishing settlements, and exerting political, economic, and cultural dominance.

Sovereignty: Sovereignty is the power or the authority to rule

Culture: Culture refers to the accumulation of information that a group of people has attained over generations through both individual and group effort, including knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relationships, and concepts of the universe.

Greater Morocco: Greater Morocco is a label historically used by some Moroccan nationalist political leaders, who protested against Spanish, Portuguese, Algerian, and French rule. It refers to wider territories historically associated with the Moroccan Sultan.

2. Introduction

In the aftermath of World War II, the international community entered a phase dedicated to safeguarding human rights, abolishing slavery and colonialism, and fostering global peace. The Sand War emerged as a direct repercussion of the anti-colonial movement. Participating in this conflict were Morocco and Algeria, nations formerly under the colonial rule of European powers such as France and Spain. However, by the year 1963, when the Sand War occurred, both countries had achieved their independence.

Nevertheless, their success in independence presented a challenge: the borders remained unresolved since they were never specified. Given both countries' shared cultural and historical heritage, certain cities, such as Tindouf, found themselves potentially belonging to both nations culturally. Consequently, Morocco proposed diplomatic discussions with the Algerian government, a proposal which was declined. After the decline, Morocco initiated military actions against the cities of Hassi Beida and Tindjoub, persisting until Algerian forces intervened. Following the confrontation, a peace treaty was negotiated and signed, bringing an end to hostilities.

This HUNSC committee will simulate the negotiations that have been made between the countries and will take place in January 1964 after the ceasefire. Instead of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Security Council will deal with the conflict and come up with a solution. Since the committee takes place in 1964 any documents that are discovered after will not be taken into consideration.

3. History

Before understanding the dispute, we must understand the reasons and history behind this conflict. The factors that contributed to the outbreak were the absence of a specified border between Morocco and Algeria, the valuable minerals that were discovered in the disputed territory, and the expansionist ideas of Morocco fueled by the Greater Morocco ideology of the Istiqlal Party and Allal al-Fassi.

a. Pre-Colonial Era

Previous to the French colonization of the region in the nineteenth century, the south and west parts of Algeria were mostly under the influence of Morocco, and there were no defined borders. On March 18, 1845, the Treaty of Lalla Maghnia was signed, and the treaty set the border between French Algeria and Morocco. It is specified in the treaty that “a territory without water is uninhabitable and its boundaries are unnecessary” and the border is described as only over 165 kilometers. Beyond that, there is only one border area, without limit, punctuated by tribal territories attached to Morocco or Algeria.

In the 1890s, the French military annexed the Tuat region. Although Tuat was separated from both Algeria and Morocco by a largely uninhabited desert, it owed religious and tributary allegiance to the Sultans of Morocco. The French continued their annexation by fighting the local tribes and capturing cities. Morocco did not have an interference with the annexation.

b. Colonial Era

In 1903, France began expanding into the west, towards Bechar and Tindouf. Although they didn't directly annex the region and turn it into French Algeria, they defeated the local tribes at the Battle of Taghit and the Battle of El-Moungar. The borders around the attacked region were loosely defined.

In 1912, after Morocco became a French protectorate, the French Government defined borders between the territories, but these lines were often misidentified, for example Varnier line in 1912 and the Trinquet line in 1938, and changed from one map to another. Because the French Government did not recognize these as international borders and the area was virtually uninhabitable. The discovery of valuable minerals and oil in the region led the French Government to include the cities of Tindouf and Colomb-Bechar in the French departments of Algeria and specify the borders more accurately.

In 1956, the French Government handed over Morocco's independence by relinquishing the protectorate, which meant that the disputed departments such as Tindouf were supposed to be returned to Morocco, but France refused.



Tindouf

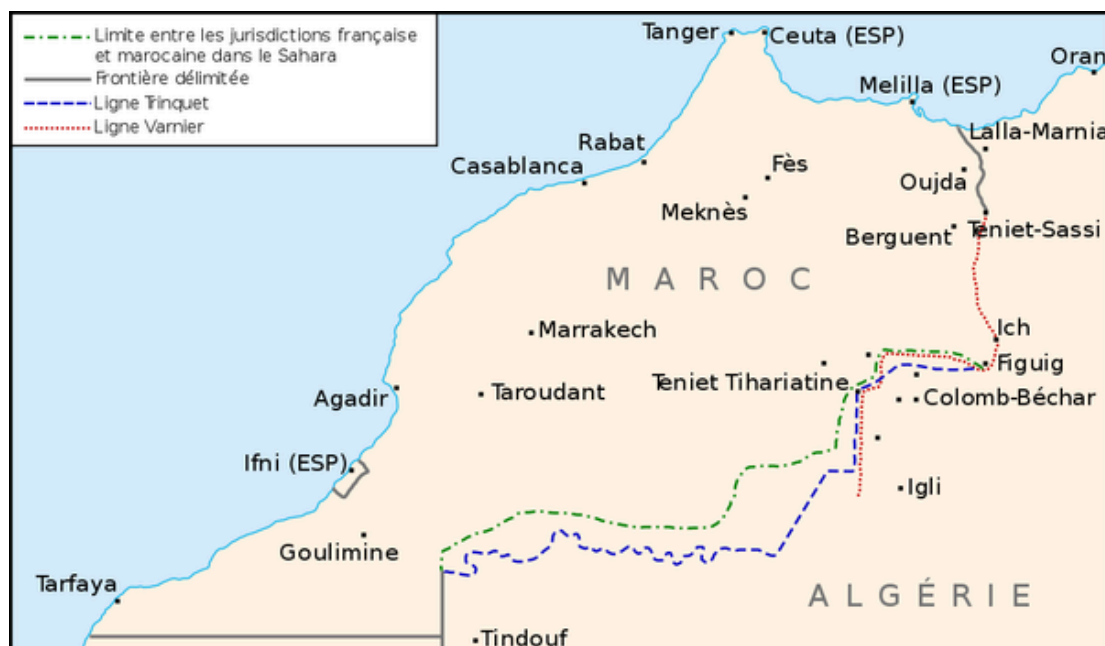
c. The Algerian War for Independence

The Algerian War was fought between the French Government and the Algerian National Liberation Front (French: *Front de Libération Nationale* – FLN) from 1954 to 1962, which ended with Algeria winning its independence from France.

During the war, Morocco was on the supporting side of the FLN, which had the primary objective of preventing France from splitting the strategic Sahara regions from a future Algerian state. Therefore, FLN was reluctant to support Morocco's historical claims to Tindouf and Bechar or the concept of a Greater Morocco.

After Algeria gained its independence, the FLN announced that the pre-existing colonial borders were being used as international law. King Hassan II of Morocco visited Algiers in March 1963 to discuss the undefined borders, but Algeria's President Ahmed Ben Bella believed the matter should be resolved at a later date. Algeria was out of a long-lasting war; therefore, President Ahmed Ben Bella and his administration were still working towards rebuilding the country, which made him unavailable to reach out to Morocco to have a discussion. This caused King Hassan to get anxious, which escalated the already existing tension between the nations.

4. The Course of the War





a. Battles of Hassi Beida and Tindjoub

On September 25, 1963, the skirmishes along the border turned into a complete war, with the fight going on in the towns of Tindouf and Figuig. The Hassi Bedia and Tindjoub were the first steps of the operation. The Royal Moroccan Army arrived at the target soon after they crossed the border and successfully took over the area. On October 5, representatives from each side gathered at Oujda to negotiate, but there were no solutions delivered. The Algerians were against the border adjustment while the Moroccans were determined, resulting in a deadlock. Morocco activated an army ranging from 30,000 to 40,000 men, with Algeria also mobilizing a similar amount.



The Algerian forces began to avenge the Moroccan enhancements, taking back the posts of Hassi Beida and Tindjoub on October 8 and killing 10 Moroccan soldiers. Morocco claimed that this Algerian attack caused 20 injuries and 80 vanished. While this urged further attempts at negotiations, it demonstrated ineffectiveness as well.

The capture of Hassi Beide had a thousand soldiers involved under the command of Colonel Habibi. Moroccan infantry advanced along camel roads until 4:00 A.M. The artillery used in the attack was mostly mortars and heavy machine guns.

Tinjoub held out for about 2 hours until 7.30 A.M., while Hassi Beida held out for another hour. The larger Moroccan army regained the two posts during the week of October 14, killing at least 10 Algerians in the operation. The Algerians retreated to Tinfouchy. During the battle, there were 1,000 Moroccan troops armed with bazookas, recoilless cannons, heavy machine ordnance, and tanks. It's been declared that 3,000 Algerian troops took part in the battle. Little use of airpower has been reported, except for an Algerian aeroplane that bombarded Oued Zeknou. This battle cut off the passage from Bechar to Tindouf and the route of caravans through the area.

Algeria was strongly disadvantaged as the front was within the range of the Saharan military quarter of Morocco and accessible to logistical support, while the fighting took place 750 miles away from the capital Algiers, and the Algerian military was committed to suppressing the Socialist Forces Front revolt in the region of Kabylia, which Algeria ultimately succeeded in suppressing. On October 15, Ben Bella called for a remobilization of the National Liberation Army to repel the Moroccan invaders. Negotiations for a ceasefire failed again in Marrakesh between October 15- 17.

On October 20, Moroccan spokesmen reported the capture of an Algerian Army helicopter with five Egyptian officers on board. Later, on October 23, Moroccan troops tried to attack the city of Hassi-Taghucht post, 90 kilometers south of Tazouza, while Algerian units tried to circle and attack the city of Usada, 10 kilometers from Zedgu, yet both of these attacks were fended off. The Algerian army commenced another counterattack against Hassi Beida with heavy material; however, it retreated after being repulsed, leaving nearly a hundred dead on the ground.

b. Reaction to the Outbreak of the War

Even though there was internal discontent with the Algerian government, most of the citizens supported the war against perceived Moroccan aggression. People were eager to fight the Moroccan invaders even in regions where Ben Bella's regime was mostly unsupported, like Kabylia. However, on the diplomatic scene, Morocco's invasion completely backfired, as other Arab and African nations did not agree with Morocco's border claims. Egypt came to Algeria's aid by sending troops and equipment, while Morocco's Western allies were having doubts about providing military support to avoid escalating the conflict. The United States opposed Hassan's view of inter-Arab rivalry in North Africa in order to find a peaceful resolution and prevent Soviet intervention.

Ben Bella declared that the conflict had been intentionally provoked by "feudal" Morocco with the encouragement of the United States in order to crush Algeria's socialist revolution.

c. Northern Front

On October 18, the Algerians opened a new front along the border in the north, close to the more largely advanced Mediterranean region of northern Algeria and in a portion of the border not contested by Morocco. This represented the first escalation of the conflict and enlarged the war to the north. The Algerians attacked the city of Ich on October 18, a border oasis 80 miles northeast of Figuig, forcing the Moroccans to withdraw. The Moroccan casualties were a couple dozen. On the next day, the Algerians bombed the Tindrara region in Oujda province.

d. Tindouf Defence

On October 13, 1963, the Moroccan military launched an attack on Tindouf; however, it was unsuccessful because of the stubborn defense provided to the towns by Algerian and Egyptian forces. On October 28, 1963, Moroccan forces were ready for a second attack on Tindouf and positioned themselves roughly four kilometers away from the area. Yet Hassan hesitated to approve the attack due to concerns that another battle could cause additional military intervention from Algeria's allies.

e. Cuban Aid

On October 22, hundreds of Cuban troops landed in Oran at the request of Ben Bella. The troops were transferred to support the Algerians' battle for independence and to help with any possible interference or destruction of Ben Bella's government by external forces, especially from the United States. The Cubans related to the Algerians' struggle due to their recent victory in their own revolution and were eager to help.

The Cuban government established the Grupo Especial de Instrucción, a special unit of 686 men under the rule of Efigenio Ameijeiras, to be transferred to Algeria. This unit was equipped with tanks, mortars, ordnance, and other artillery to prop up the Algerian forces. Originally intended as a premonitory body to train the Algerian army, Fidel Castro also authorized the team to participate in combat actions to safeguard Algeria's territorial integrity.

Despite efforts to keep the intervention secret, the presence of Cuban troops was observed by the French service and political labor force in Oran. This information was ultimately disclosed to the Western press, leading to a wider recognition of Cuban involvement in Algeria.

f. Operation Dignidad

Algerian and Cuban forces collaboratively planned a major counter-offensive attack called Operation Dignidad, which aimed at making the Moroccan forces retreat back across the border and capture Berguent. The Cuban military, with armored vehicles on a train of 12 wagons and 43 open platforms, traveled from Sidi Bel



Abbes to the place where they settled, 10 km along the road to the border town of Ras El Ma, Bedo. While the Cuban military was preparing for the battles, the Algerian military had prepared a plan to confront the Moroccans. At a command meeting held in Colomb-Bechar, the Defense Minister of Algeria, Houari Boumediene, had set the duty of the operation to

capture as many border areas of Morocco as possible, which would make Algeria the side that holds the power to have the position of strength in negotiations. As a response to the minister's claims, Ameijeiras declared that they would not stop until they got to Casablanca. On the evening of October 28, 1963, Captain Mequiades reported that the T-34s were ready. The scheduled time for the attack was the early hours of October 29th, but Ben Bella suspended the attack in order to advance with negotiations to end the war peacefully.

g. Ceasefire

Multiple actors, including the Arab League, Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba, Libya's King Idris, and Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie, searched for moderate negotiations. The President of Egypt, Gamal Abed Nasser, sent a letter to Hassan II of Morocco encouraging him to stop the battle. In the message he sent, he condemned the Moroccan attack and expressed his support for Algeria while suggesting a ceasefire and the retreatment of armies to their positions before the October 8 attack. The United Nations did not interfere to issue a ceasefire appeal because Secretary-General U Thant wanted to allow the region's initiative to pursue a solution. The Arab League demanded peace and the evacuation of soldiers on October 10. On October 29, Hassan and Ben Bella gathered in Bamako, Mali, to conduct negotiations. The Emperor Selassie and the President of Mali, Modibo Keita, also participated. On October 30, the ceasefire was announced following a private meeting of the four leaders. The agreement established a truce for November 2 and said that a panel made up of officers from Morocco, Algeria, Ethiopia, and Mali would determine the demilitarized zone's limits. It was also decided that a Malian and Ethiopian team would monitor the demilitarized zone's neutrality. The agreement also recommended that the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) foreign ministers meet right away. The gathering would be held to establish a commission that would look into the frontier issue, assess who started the war, and make recommendations for how to end it permanently.

h. Battle of Figuig

The ceasefire was almost broken on November 1, when Algerian troops attacked a village near Figuig and deployed themselves against the town's airport. After the assault, the Moroccans claimed to have fended them off. The town has been under heavy fire, and the casualties were declared to be at least 60. Two days after a cease-fire was supposed to go into effect, fighting continued, and Morocco reportedly called for the UN Security Council to consider the Algeria-Morocco border issue. The artillery barrage at the border town appeared to have erased the cease-fire agreement, according to The New York Times and was denounced and dramatized by the Moroccan Government.

i. Peace Treaty

The formal peace treaty was signed in Mali on February 20, 1964, following many initial discussions between Hassan II and Ben Bella mediated by the OAU. The terms of this agreement recognized the previously established borders as the reaffirmed borders in Algeria's favor and restored the status quo. The demilitarized zone was maintained in the meantime, monitored by the first multinational peacekeeping force, or the OAU.

5. Aftermath and Casualties of the War

During the Sand War, colliding reports surfaced about casualties. French sources noted Algerian casualties at 60 dead and 250 wounded, afterward estimating 300 Algerian deaths. Morocco reported 39 dead, and although Moroccan losses were likely smaller than the Algerians', they remain unconfirmed. About 57 Moroccans and 379 Algerians were imprisoned.

The Sand War scattered the seeds of a long-standing rivalry between Morocco and Algeria, fueled by their differing political attitudes – Morocco's conservative monarchy and Algeria's revolutionary, Arab socialist military government. In 1969, Algerian President Houari Boumediene and Moroccan leader Hassan inked a fellowship convention, and a common commission was formed in 1970 to define the border and explore common iron ore mining.

Morocco eventually renounced claims to Algerian land in 1972 through the Accord of Ifrane, though ratification was delayed until 1989. Both governments used the conflict to degrade opposition movements, affecting parties like Morocco's UNFP and Algeria's FFS. UNFP's leader, Mehdi Ben Barka, advocated for Algeria and was sentenced to death in absentia. In Algeria, FFS's Kabylie revolution waned as commanders joined the public forces against Morocco. The rivalry between Morocco and Algeria extended to their Western Sahara policy, with Algeria backing the independence-seeking Polisario Front. This move was incompletely aimed at checking Moroccan expansionism after the Tindouf annexation attempt.

6. Timeline of the Sand War

1963

September 25, 1963: The start of the full-blown confrontation in the Battle of Hassi Beida and Tindjoub.

October 5, 1963: There was a meeting held at Oujda that had representatives from both Morocco and Algeria, however, no solutions were delivered.

October 8, 1963: Algerian forces took back the posts of Hassi Beida and Tindjoub killing 10 Moroccan soldiers. Morocco claimed that there were 20 dead and 80 missing.

October 13, 1963: The Moroccan army started the assault on Tindouf but the Algerian and Egyptian military resisted them making the operation stalled.

October 14, 1963: The Moroccan army retook control of posts in Hassi Beida and Tindjoub from Algeria killing at least 10 Algerian soldiers. The Algerian military retreated to Tinfouchy.

October 15, 1963: The Algerian National Liberation Army was occupied by the Socialist Forces Front rebellion going on inside the country was called for remobilization by Ben Bella to fend off the Moroccan invasion.

October 15-17, 1963: Ceasefire negotiations were going on which failed again in Marrakesh

October 18, 1963: The Algerians opened a new front along the border in the north which was closer to the more developed region of Algeria attacking the town of Ich, a border oasis 80 miles northeast of Figuig, to force Moroccans to withdraw.

October 20, 1963: Moroccan spokesmen reported the capture of an Algerian Army helicopter with 5 Egyptian officers on board.

October 22, 1963: At the request of Ben Bella hundreds of soldiers and artillery were sent to the region by the Cuban Government.

October 23, 1963: Moroccan soldiers tried to attack the town of Hassi-Taghucht post, 90 km south of Tauz, while Algerian units tried to assault the town of Usada, 10 km from Zedgu, however, both of these attacks were repelled.

October 28, 1963: Moroccan forces had a second offensive plan on Tindouf which Hassan II was reluctant to authorize fearing that another battle may cause further intervention from Algeria's allies.

October 29, 1963: Operation Dignidad was ready for offense scheduled in the early hours of October 29 however Ben Bella suspended the attack.

October 30, 1963: After the meeting held on the 29th of October in Bamako, Mali between Ben Bella and Hassan II joined by Emperor Selassie of Ethiopia and Mali's President Modibo Keita on the 30th a ceasefire was declared.

November 1, 1963: The Battle of Figuig happened in a nearby village of Figuig when Algerian troops attacked the village however the Moroccans claimed to have beaten them off. This battle nearly broke the ceasefire. Caused by the heavy shell fire on the city for two days there were 60 dead civilians reported.

1964

February 20, 1964: After the ceasefire the negotiations of a formal peace treaty have gone on for approximately 4 months. The formal peace treaty mediated by the Organization of African Unity was signed.

7. Stakeholders and Major Parties Involved



Morocco: Under the rule of Hassan II, Morocco started the conflict by attacking the cities of Hassi Beida and Tindjoub and continued the annexation attempt by assaulting Tindouf and Bechar. The reasoning served by the country was that the previously considered border was not negotiated between both countries because of the colonization that has occurred in the region. However, after the war had ended and the treaty was signed, information came out that the 2 main reasons for the attack were to achieve a goal called “Greater Morocco” which is a plan made by the nationalist Moroccans, and to reach the valuable minerals and oil placed in the region.



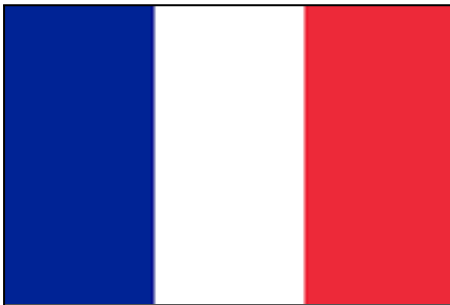
Algeria: After the attack on Hassi Beida and Tindjoub, Algeria was the defending side in this war. During the ongoing assault on Tindouf, Algeria managed to fend and with Cuban aid, made a counter-attack by opening up a northern front to the war, thus putting pressure on Morocco to consider a more peaceful way such as a ceasefire, which ended up in a complete peace treaty in Algeria's favor.



Cuba: After the attacks on Algeria, the revolutionized Cuba wanted to help another country that recently rebelled against their government, and they helped Algeria defend themselves against Morocco by sending troops, artillery, and heavy machinery.



Spain: Spain was the biggest colonial power in the Western Sahara region way before the war happened, but the presence of another country standing between the conflicting countries caused the tensions to rise and turn into a full-blown war. However, during the war, Spain kept a neutral stance and took part in mediation and negotiations.



France: Like the other European countries, France did not have a military intervention in the conflict, but France was one of the most powerful colonial forces in the region, having ties with both countries. Because of the connection, France was worried about the conflict escalating and destabilizing the broader North African region; therefore, even though France supported Morocco, they wanted the conflict to end peacefully immediately, which made them one of the communication and negotiation points by conveying messages, proposals, and concerns between Algeria and Morocco.



United Arab Republic: Egypt, under the leadership of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, took part both militarily and diplomatically in this conflict since the country was placed in the same region and had ideological and political affinities with Algeria. After the outbreak of war, Egypt sent approximately 1000 troops to the region, which was on Algeria's side, and helped Algeria defend Tindouf against the Moroccan offense. Even though Egypt took Algeria's side in the war, the country advocated for peace between the countries. Therefore, after Operation Dignidad, Egypt helped in the making of the ceasefire by sending messages to the King of Morocco, Hassan II, urging him to stop fighting.



OAU: The OAU was founded in May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by 32 African states with the main aim of bringing the African nations together and resolving the issues within the continent. The main job of the union was to bring the countries together and find a middle ground and they were successful without the intervention of the UN. After the ceasefire and the

demilitarized zone, the negotiations started going on, and with the integration of the OAU, the conflict came to an end.

8. Points to Cover

1. How should the war be ended? There has been a ceasefire however still the tension is high between the countries and there should be a formal peace treaty that should be written.
2. How should the border be changed or should it be changed? In the peace treaty that will be written, the border should be specified.
3. What will be done to the towns and cities that were damaged in the war? This matter can also be touched on in the peace treaty.
4. Will there be any punishment given to any country? This matter can be touched on in the peace treaty.
5. Was Morocco right in starting an attack? The reason for the attack was the unspecified borders caused by the colonization.

9. Resources and Links for Further Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1k6fuPTGZY>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/15/timeline-algeria-and-moroccos-diplomatic-disputes>

<http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/alpha/algmor1963.htm>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263522606_US_diplomacy_and_the_North_African_War_of_the_Sands_1963

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sand_War.ogg

<https://archive.org/details/algeria18302000s00stor>

<https://www.themilitant.com/2003/6743/674359.html>

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