

# Boko Haram Menace: Need for Collective Security for National Development

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## Abstract

Nigeria has been at war with the terrorist sect known as Boko Haram for quite some time. The insurgency which initially concentrated at the northeast region of the country has spread its activities to many parts of the north of the country, including Abuja. Many souls have been lost since the insurgency erupted. The more the Nigeria-state tries to either dwarf the activities of the sect or totally exterminate the sect in its entirety, the more the sect reaffirms insurgency in the country through more heinous crime. This paper therefore identifies the activities of Boko Haram and the cause of insecurity in the country. The paper also examines the role of collective security system in order to combat crime in the country. In carrying out this research, the historical and content analysis method was adopted. It has been discovered, that there are subversive elements and fifth columnists in the country's armed forces, especially the army and customs service who are thwarting the efforts of government and security agencies. It is stressed that security is the duty of every citizen hence collective security is desirable at this moment of the country. In addition, the country should de-emphasise religion in all it does because this is partly responsible for the subversion in the security services hence government efforts are fruitless in spite of the resources put into the war against the Boko Haram menace. The paper recommends, amongst others, that national security should be a collective efforts rather than leaving it for government alone.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Nigeria, Security, Collective security.

## Introduction

Man, from immemorial or history, needs and craves for protection. He does not want to be hurt or disturbed so as to enable him concentrate on life activities that can guarantee him progress and development. Same applies to human animals, hence at creation, God provides for animals the natural weapons to fight or resist whoever dares to disturb their security. The absence of security exposes man to danger and hardship thereby rendering him naked, helpless and without plan. At the end there would be no progress or development; life would become nasty and static. No wonder Abraham Maslow (1970), listed safety (security) as the second on his popular human hierarchy of needs theory.

Similarly, a nation-state that is enmeshed in insecurity is constantly exposed to danger. No meaningful progress and development can take place. All its resources at its disposal will be geared towards the protection of the citizens and territory. The impact of the government of such nation-state will not be felt by its citizens and other inhabitants. Consequently, nations, especially modern nations and its citizens always strive to ensure that they always keep at bay whatever that will create insecurity in their environment and territory so as to actualise the much-needed peace and tranquillity which can guarantee their development. This also influences the need for nation-states to be at peace with their neighbours at all times. The Boko Haram terrorist sect has been tormenting the psyche and security of Nigeria nation-state since 2009. Over three thousand of Nigerians and other foreign nationals have been sent to their untimely graves since the menace of the sect. Several thousands of Nigerians have been displaced and made to be 'foreigners' in different locations in the country, while several thousands, too, have been hospitalised. In addition, hundreds, if not thousands have joined the physically challenged persons in the country due to their insurgency.

There is tension in military barracks and anger in the streets, all over the country as casualties of war on both sides pile up. The officers and men of the armed forces are angry and becoming increasingly feeling uneasy at the implications of some realities in the protracted counter-insurgency operations in the three north eastern states of Nigeria, that is, Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states (Agbo, 2014).

Upon this ugly episode that stare every Nigerian in the face, there is no sign that the citizens, as a people 'bound in freedom', are prepared to unite to arrest the Boko Haram insurgency in the country. Many people in the country, in various divides and social strata, are singing different tunes regarding the security of lives and property in the country. They fail to realise that Nigeria is one country, one nation; therefore, there is dire need for collective security in the country. Some citizens, by their body languages and comments are not ready to come together to fight a common enemy. An enemy that knows no brother, knows no sister, knows no tribe, knows no religion, and knows no region or territory. But what the common and known enemy knows is

destruction, annihilation, and extermination of fellow human beings in a territory called Nigeria.

In this paper, the need for collective security is aptly stressed because lack of collective security is partly responsible for the unabated insecurity occasioned by Boko Haram insurgency in the country. Security is the duty of all; not for specific segments of the country, or specific segments or arms of government. The agencies of government set up for the purpose need the collaboration of all, even the collaboration of members within the security agencies.

### **Conceptual and theoretical clarifications**

In conceptualising security, there is need to start from the basics. Security is variously defined as “the absence of fear”, “freedom from fear”, protection of lives and property”. From the foregoing, security can be termed to be the protection of human and animal lives, of environments from fear and destruction for peaceful existence.

The absence of security means insecurity. At this stage lives and property are no longer safe and cannot be guaranteed. Extreme insecurity breeds terrorism and insurgency. At this level, the security of a people in a specified territory is not guaranteed. Therefore, due to the wider dimension of insecurity, it becomes a national problem. The lives and property of the people, their culture, tradition, heritage, collective effort are therefore threatened hence terrorism is variously referred to as “the use of violent action in order to achieve political aim; or to force a government to act” (Hornby, 1990). Terrorism is also defined by the United States Department as a “premeditated, politically motivated violence against non-combatant targets by sub-national or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”

When insecurity becomes a regional, sub-national or national problem or phenomenon there should be a need for collective action and effort to bring under control or total taming of the perpetrators of insecurity so as to cause the much-needed national cohesion of a nation-state. This is because security would become the duty of all persons in a defined territory.

### **Need for Security**

The relevance and need for security cannot be over emphasised and quantified. Security is required for numerous reasons among which are:

- (i) for peace and tranquillity
- (ii) for progress
- (iii) for growth and development
- (iv) for co-existence or co-habitation
- (v) for longevity

### **Causes of insecurity**

Insecurity does not arise without reasons. Whether immediate or remote. Scholars and non-scholars have the possible causes of insecurity in the country, particularly as it relates to the Boko Haram phenomenon since inception in 2009 when the nefarious activities of the sect became pronounced locally and internationally. Some of the cause or reasons for the insecurity in the country which are also closely associated with the Boko Haram insurgent group, are:

- (i) Unemployment: most of the youths in the country are not employed so as to earn a living for themselves. Where they are employed, they are underemployed, as their wages or incomes are nothing to write home about to guarantee them meaningful livelihood.
- (ii) Poverty: lack of unemployment creates room for poverty, especially in the northern part of the country. Many people in the country can hardly eke out two meals a day. Many cannot afford cloth to cover themselves neither can they afford shelter. All these basic necessities of life seem to them luxury.
- (iii) Government insensitivity and insincerity: the governments at all levels, that is, federal, state and local, are not sincere with the people neither are they sensitive to their plight. In spite of the glaring poverty and other problems confronting the people in the face the governments do not respond to answer their cries from the grassroots to the national level. Where they promise to provide necessary basic amenities to them they never, as campaign promises are never fulfilled.
- (iv) Oppression: the masses are oppressed as they are never recognised in the scheme of things. When they cry out they get punished for it by way of denial of what are due to them. They are dumped after use for political campaigns and elections.
- (v) Rise of indigenous neo elites: for quite sometimes, particularly since the late seventies till the present civilian administration, different classes of elites have risen in the country. These elites are part of those who oppress the masses, especially the middle class which is being exterminated from the political and economic landscape of the country. The population of the country is now more in the lower class, a situation which can breed anarchy and social upheaval. In attempts to join the new elites, many people use all sorts of means to climb to that level hence insecurity.

- (vi) Corruption among government officials: the commonwealth of the people are cornered on daily basis by government officials, especially the political appointees and top civil servants. In doing this, many people in the country find themselves in poverty and squalor. They cannot contribute to the well-being of the collective people. The money that would be enough to provide for the good of all are stolen by very few people.
- (vii) Lack of rule of law: Often times the law is subverted and set aside as it is never obeyed or applied to right the wrong. This happens especially when the affected personality belongs to the ruling class or the elites in the country. When and where the rule of law is applied is when it affects the common person who cannot afford to subvert it because he/she has not wherewithal to bend the law.
- (viii) Social and economic injustices: the people, among whom are those in the lower class and the youths are on daily basis denied social and economic rights in the country. What are due to the people are denied them. Instead government officials divert them to their cronies whom they want to superintend over others. Social amenities are not provided for well-being of the people, even when they pay tax. Basic amenities like water, electricity, good roads, housing and health care are denied them. On the economic aspect, the people whose resources are tapped or exploited for the development of the country are denied the basic necessities of life hence the constant cry in some regions of the country for resource control, among other demands. All these and many others bring about insecurity in the country.

### Collective security

Collective security means that an action against one is an action against all by the aggressor. Therefore, effort must be made to check or defeat the aggressor in the ensuing war or conflict. According to Wikipedia: “collective security is a security arrangement, political, regional, or global, in which each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and therefore commits to a collective response to threats, and breaches to peace.” Collective security is one the new approaches for peace in a modern world. It is a good device for internal peace within modern nation-states, particularly where a country is heterogeneous in nature. In applying collective security for the purpose of peace within a nation-state, the people or citizens of the state under security threat must see themselves as one indivisible entity that cannot be separated by a common enemy either within or without their territory.

In the current persistent insecurity caused by the Boko Haram menace, the country highly needs collective security to thwart the efforts of the sect so as to guarantee national development in which the promotion of the economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nigerians in a safe and secured environment is required. A secured environment guarantees collective wellbeing of the people within the country.

### Heinous Activities of the Boko Haram Sect

The Boko Haram sect has committed a lot of heinous crime against the Nigerian state since 2009; and lot more are being committed by the sect. These activities are outlined on the tables below.

Table I: **Boko Haram Activities since 2009 to April 2012**

S/N	Date	State	Activities/Incident	Casualties
1.	July 26, 2009	Bauchi	Boko Haram launches mass uprising with attack on a police station in Bauchi, starting a five-day uprising that spread to Maiduguri and elsewhere	39 civilians dead 2 policemen dead 1 soldier dead
2.	27 <sup>th</sup> July, 2009	Yobe	First attack in Yobe leading to invasion of Potiskum Divisional Police Headquarters	5 civilians dead 3 policemen dead
2.	29 <sup>th</sup> July, 2009	Yobe	Confrontation with security men at Mamudo village in Yobe state	33 Boko Haram members dead
	29 <sup>th</sup> July, 2009	Borno	All night confrontation between Boko Haram and combined security operatives	Scores killed and operational base destroyed
2.	September 7, 2010	Bauchi	Boko Haram attacked a prison in Bauchi.	killed about five guards; freed over 700 inmates, including former sect members
	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2010	Borno	Boko Haram gunmen on motorcycle fired at a tea shop in Gazangi-Tashan Gandu	3 civilians killed
	2 <sup>nd</sup> April, 2010	Bauchi	Attacked on prison at Maiduguri	1 prison warder killed
3.	October 11, 2010	Borno	Bombing and gun attack on a police station in Maiduguri and destroyed the station.	3 injured
4.	December 24, 2010	Plateau	The group carried out a bomb attack in Jos.	8 people killed

S/N	Date	State	Activities/Incident	Casualties
5.	December 28, 2010	Plateau	Boko Haram claims responsibility for the Christmas Eve bombing in Jos.	38 people killed
6.	December 31, 2010	Abuja	The group attacked a Mammy market at Army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja.	11 people died
	28 <sup>th</sup> January, 2011	Bauchi	Attacked Governorship candidate of ANPP, Alhaji Modu Fannami Gubio.	Killed the ANPP member; 5 injured
	2 <sup>nd</sup> March, 2011	Kaduna	Attacked residence of Divisional Police Officer	2 policemen killed
	1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2011	Bauchi	The group attacked a police station in Bauchi	-
	7 <sup>th</sup> April, 2011	Borno	Bomb explosion	Many injured
7.	8 <sup>th</sup> April, 2011	Kaduna	Bomb explosion at Independent Electoral Commission office, Suleija.	11 civilians killed
8.	April 9, 2011	Borno	The sect attacked a polling centre in Maiduguri and bombed it	-
9.	April 20, 2011	Borno	A bomb in Maiduguri.	1 policeman killed
	21 <sup>st</sup> April, 2011	Borno	Two suspected bomb makers	2 Boko Haram dead
10.	April 22, 2011	Adamawa	The group attacked a prison in Yola and freed 14 prisoners	
11.	April 24, 2011		Four bombs exploded in Maiduguri, killing at least three persons.	
	25 <sup>th</sup> April, 2011	Borno	Three bomb blasts at Tudu Palace Hotel and Kano motor park in Maiduguri	
	5 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Yobe	Bomb explosion in Damaturu	1 policeman injured
	5 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	FCT, Abuja	Attack of Bauchi State government house at Abuja.	1 civilian dead, 1 policeman dead, Others injured
	5 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Bauchi	Attack on two Islamic clerics, Sheikh Goni Tijiam and Mallam Abur at their residence.	2 Islamic clerics dead
	9 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Bauchi	Attack on Ibrahim Dudu Gobe	1 civilian dead and his son injured
	13 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Borno	Bombo explosion at Londo Chinki, Maiduguri.	2 civilians killed
	15 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Bauchi	Bomb explosion at military barracks	3 policemen dead; 2 soldiers dead
	28 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Bauchi	Bomb blast at the mammy market of Shandawanka Barracks in Bauchi	13 civilians killed; 40 injured
12.	29 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	Bauchi & Borno	Bombings of an army barracks in Bauchi city and Maiduguri.	15 people killed
	29 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011	FCT, Abuja	An explosion at Zuba of Kubwa in Abuja	8 civilians lost their legs
13.	May 31, 2011	Borno	Attack on police station	1 civilian dead
14.	June 1, 2011	Borno	The sect killed Shehu of Borno's brother, Abba Anas Garba El-Kanemi	1 person killed
15.	June 7, 2011	Borno	A team of gunmen launched parallel attacks with guns and bombs on a church and police stations in Maiduguri.	5 people killed
	12 <sup>th</sup> June, 2011	Bauchi	Attack on drinking joint at Bamboa	4 civilians killed
16.	16 <sup>th</sup> June, 2011	Abuja	Bombing of police headquarters in Abuja, claimed by Boko Haram.	Casualty reports (figures) varied.
	16 <sup>th</sup> June, 2011	Bauchi	Bomb explosion at Damboa town	4 civilians dead
17.	26 <sup>th</sup> June, 2011	Borno	Gunmen shot and bombed a bar in Maiduguri.	about 25 people killed
	4 <sup>th</sup> July, 2011	Borno	Bomb blast	4 civilians killed; 10 injured
	13 <sup>th</sup> July, 2011	Borno	Bomb blast	5 civilians dead 2 soldiers injured
18.	16 <sup>th</sup> August, 2011	Abuja	The bombing of United Nations Office in Abuja.	over 34 people killed by the group; 11 UN personnel and several people injured
	17 <sup>th</sup> October, 2011	Borno	Boko Haram attacked police barracks	14 vehicles burnt
	8 <sup>th</sup> December, 2011	Kaduna	Bomb blast	15 civilians dead; several others injured
	20 <sup>th</sup> December, 2011	Yobe	Bomb blast	3 suspected Boko Haram sect injured
19.	25 <sup>th</sup> December, 2011	Niger	Bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla.	over 46 people killed
20.	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2012	Adamawa	The sect attacked some southerners in Mubi.	about 13 Igbos killed

S/N	Date	State	Activities/Incident	Casualties
	15 <sup>th</sup> January, 2012	Gombe	Attacked Deeper Life Bible Church	8 worshippers dead; 18 injured
	16 <sup>th</sup> January, 2012	Adamawa	Worshippers sprayed with bullets by Boko Haram sect at Jimeta	16 worshippers killed
21.	21 <sup>st</sup> January, 2012	Kano	Multiple bomb blasts rocked Kano city.	over 185 people killed including policemen.
	27 <sup>th</sup> January, 2012	Kano	Bomb blast	2 civilians injured
22.	29 <sup>th</sup> January, 2012	Kano	Bombing of Kano Police station at Naibawa area of Yakatabo.	
23.	8 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Kaduna	Bomb blast rocked army headquarters in Kaduna.	
24.	15 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Kogi	Koton Karife Prison, Kogi State was attacked by the sect.	about 119 prisoners were released; one warder was killed
25.	19 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Niger	Bomb blast rocked Suleija, Niger State, near Christ Embassy Church.	5 people seriously injured
26.	26 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Plateau	Bombing of Church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos.	about 2 dead worshippers and about 38 people sustained serious injuries
27.	March 8, 2012		An Italian, Franco Lamolinara and a Briton, Christopher McManus, who were expatriate staff of Stabilim Visioni Construction Firm were abducted in 2011 by a splinter group of Boko Haram and were later killed.	2 expatriates killed
28.	March 11, 2012	Plateau	Bombing of St. Finbarr's Catholic Church, Rayfied, Jos.	11 people killed, and several others wounded.
29.	April 26, 2012	Kaduna and FCT, Abuja	Bombing of three media houses (Thisday newspaper in Abuja killing 3 and 2 security officers and injured 13 people; Thisday, The Sun, and the Moments newspapers in Kaduna killing 3 persons and injured many others.	8 persons killed; over 13 people injured
30.	April 29, 2012	Kano	Attack on Bayero University, Kano.	13 Christian worshippers killed, a senior non-academic staff and two professors.
31.	April 30, 2012	Taraba	Bomb explosion in Jalingo.	11 person killed; several others injured.
	20 <sup>th</sup> September, 2012	Plateau	Attack on the capital, Jos	9 civilians dead
	17 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012	Plateau	Attack on security personnel	1 soldier matcheted; 3 Boko Haram members killed

Sources: Abimbola, J.O. & Adesote, S.A. (2012): Domestic Terrorism & Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, Issues and Trends: A Historical Discourse; and Francis C. Chikwem (2013): Boko Harm and Security Threat in Nigeria: A New Twist of Political Game in Town.

Table II: **Boko Haram Activities from 14<sup>th</sup> April to May 2014**

S/N	Date	Activities/Casualties
1.	April 14, 2014	100 people killed, 243 seriously injured 16 luxury buses 24 other vehicles burnt in Nyanya motor park in Abuja.
2.	April 15, 2014	Over 267 pupils of Girls' Secondary School, Chibok abducted.
3.	April 21, 2014	2 APC leaders, Alhaji Modu Janga and Alhaji Abba ambushed and killed on Maiduguri-Dikwa Road, Borno State.
4.	May 1, 2014	30 people killed scores injured in bomb explosion in Karshi Tax Park in Nyanya, Abuja.
5.	May 5, 2014	About 300 people killed in the night, 11 more girls abducted in Gamboru Ngala, border town with Cameroon.
6.	May 8, 2014	Bombed Nigeria-Cameroon bridge, 30 people killed.
7.	May 16, 2014	16 people killed; 5 policemen abducted 10 Chinese workers abducted in Kuseri village between Nigeria/ Cameroon border
8.	May 17, 2014	29 people including traders killed in a market in Bama, Borno State
9.	May 20, 2014	150 killed twin bomb blasts in Jos
10.	May 21, 2014	19 killed in Alagbaro village in Damboa Local Govt. Area of Borno State
11.	May 21, 2014	29 persons killed on Wednesday morning in Borno village

Source: Author's compilations



### **Why Nigeria is not winning the war against Boko Haram sect**

It is astonishing to observe that a nation-state is not making a very appreciable impact against a group that has been terrorising it for over five years, this is in spite of the resources that have been put into the efforts. Although modern terrorism, anywhere in the world, needs the collaboration of other nation-states to handle, but the case of Nigeria is a bit different hence the country is not winning the war against the insurgents that have wrecked havoc on the country.

Many reasons are responsible for Nigeria's strenuous efforts at winning the war against the Boko Haram sect. Many people of various divides and strata in the country have adduced reasons for the failure of the country's leadership, that is, the government, from winning the war. Among the reasons are religious, ethnic, and political. To a little extent, poverty is one of the reasons. But recent trends have demonstrated that the views and factors put forward by people are far from what are on ground. The major reasons why the government is not winning the war against the terrorist gang is subversion: this has to do with a predetermined and planned move which is most often clandestine and deliberately designed to undermine a national government set-up. According to Imobighe (2003), "subversion includes all those subtle actions meant or aimed at to undermining not only the military, but also the economic, political, psychological and moral strength of the nation". Some Nigerians have been supportive of the Boko Haram group in the country. Otherwise the Nigerian military, since over the past one year, would have been able to bring to an end the sect's horrendous activities.

Within the military, particularly the army, there are fifth columnists that have been thwarting their efforts. Instead of inspiring hope and hastening a return to normalcy, the outcome of the one year of intensive and all-out military campaign in the terror-stricken north eastern part of the country has left many Nigerians utterly depressed and disappointed, the one year of emergency rule in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states has failed to stem the alarming rate of bombings, lootings, killings, destruction of settlements and kidnapping of innocent secondary school girls. What many people, within and outside the country, had thought would have a fleeting moment of start lessons in the military efficient aimed at putting the shadowy and nihilistic Boko Haram Islamist extremists to rout or at bay has turned into an embarrassing and endless nightmare.

It is surprising to know that the security agencies are being bogged down by the presence of an enemy within, which has been thwarting their bid to root out the terrorists. There are moles, sympathisers and leaks in the country's security system who are collaborating with the terrorists. There was a report which quoted soldier who told the Hausa Service of the Voice of America that a military unit of the Nigerian army was ambushed while trying to give support to a sister unit in Bama, in Borno State. The soldier said his unit which was tricked into a combat which turned out to be one-sided and patently suicidal (*The Punch Editorial*, 2014). According to the soldier, by the time the operation was over the unit that sought for assistance has withdrawn, abandoning the reinforcing unit to its fate.

It is very surprising and embarrassing that some members of the Nigerian army are fighting for Boko Haram sect. It has also revealed that some members of the armed forces are leaking information that would have led to the rescue of the abducted secondary school girls. According to one of the soldiers, "we are trying our best but our efforts are being countered in a way that is very clear they are being tipped off about our movements. Any time we plan to rescue (the girls), we have been ambushed. Definitely, somebody high up in the chain of command is leaking information to these people." (*The Punch Editorial*, 2014). This portrays the country's military as a house divided against itself.

In very similar, disheartening and embarrassing vein, the customs, a paramilitary arm of security service of the country, is aiding and abetting terrorism in the country. A former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Azubuike Ihenjirika (Rtd.) once reported that some customs officers were arrested for assisting the terrorists in smuggling arms into the country (*The Punch Editorial*, 2014).

These citizens in the armed forces and paramilitary units are not only subversive elements, they are saboteurs in the fight against insurgency and terrorism in the country. The ease and regularity with which Boko Haram strikes successfully at military targets is attributed to inside knowledge which are provided by very competent officers (*The Punch Editorial*, 2014). The Boko Haram sympathisers are suspected to be deferring to extraneous interests. Unfortunately, the frustration is that there is no concrete and enough evidence which can be brought to the fore that can stand legal battle in court. Also the sponsors have been too smart not to leave enough trails and traces that can stand prosecution.

On the other hand, it is strongly suspected that there are civilian Trojan horses in the presidency who are providing security updates, psychological dispositions of the president and his principal officers. It is also being suspected that there are other subversive elements and saboteurs within the presidency who are possibly moderating policy decisions to help the Boko Haram sect in their bloody campaigns (Agbo, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Security is an essential ingredient in man's life, same for an entity call country or nation-state. Hence Nigeria is not an exception. There is no doubt that the country is at war with the Boko Haram sect which is perpetrating

terrorism occasioned by wanton destructions and killings. It is very difficult, from time immemorial, to fight an enemy within a house. Hence the country is finding it extremely hard to win the war against the dreaded sect. Collective security is very necessary at this period of the country's trying moment; otherwise, the government will not find it easy to win the war. Security is the duty of every citizen, though, there are arms of government statutorily assigned the duty to protect the citizens, their efforts, if not collectively assisted, will come to naught.

### Recommendations

It is hereby stressed once again that there is need for collective security. And for it to work for the much needed peace and national development, the following recommendations will suffice:

- (i) There should be no need to blame only the government
- (ii) The duty of security should not be left for government alone
- (iii) The need for patriotism among the citizens should be stressed at all times
- (iv) The citizens and government should as a matter of national cohesion, de-emphasise religion in all that is done as this is partly responsible for black legs or fifth columnist in the security services, including paramilitary services.

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