**Worksheet 5.1: Synchronization, Hardware Solutions to the Critical-Section Problem**

Consider the following solution to the **Critical Section Problem** using the **test\_and\_set** hardware instruction.

for (iter = 1; iter<=2; iter++) {  
1 waiting[i] = true;  
2 key = true;

**printf(“\n Process %d is waiting”, i);**  
3 while (waiting[i] && key)

4 key = test\_and\_set(&lock);

5 waiting[i] = false;

**printf(“\n Process %d enters CS”, i);**

/\* critical section \*/

6 j = (i + 1) % n;

7 while ((j != i) && !waiting[j])

8 j = (j + 1) % n;

**printf(“\n j = %d”, j);**

9 if (j == i)

10 lock = false;

11 else

12 waiting[j] = false;

/\* remainder section \*/

}

1. Assume that there are six processes (P0, P1, …, P5). Considering the print statements added to the above code, show the output printed by the code if the following sequence of events takes place (the order is very important):

P5 executes Line 3 in its first iteration

P4 executes Line 3 in its first iteration

P0 executes Line 3 in its first iteration

Assume that the remainder section is so short that if Px exits its critical section and Py enters its critical section next, Px will complete its remainder section and execute Line 3 in its second iteration before Py exits its critical section. So, when Py exits its critical section, Px will be waiting to enter the critical section for the second time.

OUTPUT:

Process 5 is waiting

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Process 5 enters CS

Process 4 is waiting

Process 0 is waiting

j=0 (because the loop on Lines 7 and 8 searches in the order 0,1,2,3,4,5)

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Process 0 enters CS

Process 5 is waiting (for its second turn)

j=4 (because the loop on lines 7 and 8 searches in the order 1,2,3,4,5,0)

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Process 4 enters CS

Process 0 is waiting (for its second turn)

j=5 (because the loop on Lines 7 and 8 searches in the order 5,0,1,2,3,4)

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Process 5 enters CS

Process 4 is waiting (for its second turn)

j=0

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Process 0 enters CS (for the second time)

j=4

--------------------------

Process 4 enters CS (for the second time)

j=4 (no processes are waiting)

1. Can the above solution cause starvation? If yes, give a scenario (sequence of events) that causes starvation. If not, explain why. Of course, you must answer this question for the general case where each process may request access to the critical section an arbitrary number of times, not only two times. (**Limit: 3 lines**).

Answer: Yes, the above solution can cause starvation. If multiple processes continuously enter the critical section back-to-back, a particular process may keep getting bypassed. For instance, if P0 keeps getting selected after its remainder section before P1 or P2 can enter, P1 or P2 may starve.

1. If the total number of processes is **n**, what’s the maximum number of other processes that a waiting process may wait for before entering the critical section?

Answer: If the total number of processes is n, the maximum number of other processes that a waiting process may wait for before entering the critical section is n - 1. This is because, in the worst case, all other processes might be ahead in the waiting queue.