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Clearance Attribute and Authority Clearance Constraints Certificate Extension

Abstract

This document defines the syntax and semantics for the Clearance attribute and the Authority Clearance Constraints extension in X.509 certificates. The Clearance attribute is used to indicate the clearance held by the subject. The Clearance attribute may appear in the subject directory attributes extension of a public key certificate or in the attributes field of an attribute certificate. The Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension values in a Trust Anchor (TA), in Certification Authority (CA) public key certificates, and in an Attribute Authority (AA) public key certificate in a certification path for a given subject constrain the effective Clearance of the subject.

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1. Introduction

Organizations that have implemented a security policy can issue certificates that include an indication of the clearance values held by the subject. The Clearance attribute indicates the security policy, the clearance levels held by the subject, and additional authorization information held by the subject. This specification makes use of the ASN.1 syntax for clearance from [RFC5912].

The Clearance attribute may be placed in the subject directory attributes extension of a Public Key Certificate (PKC) or may be placed in a separate attribute certificate (AC).

The placement of the Clearance attribute in PKCs is suitable 1) when the clearance information is relatively static and can be verified as part of the PKC issuance process (e.g., using local databases) or 2) when the credentials such as PKCs need to be revoked when the clearance information changes. The Clearance attribute may also be included to simplify the infrastructure, to reduce the infrastructure design cost, or to reduce the infrastructure operations cost. An example of placement of the Clearance attribute in PKCs in operational Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) is the Defense Messaging Service. An example of placement of attributes in PKCs is Qualified Certificates [RFC3739].

The placement of Clearance attributes in ACs is desirable when the clearance information is relatively dynamic and changes in the clearance information do not require revocation of credentials such as PKCs, or the clearance information cannot be verified as part of the PKC issuance process.

Since [RFC5755] does not permit a chain of ACs, the Authority Clearance Constraints extension may only appear in the PKCs of a Certification Authority (CA) or Attribute Authority (AA). The Authority Clearance Constraints extension may also appear in a trust anchor (TA) or may be associated with a TA.

Some organizations have multiple TAs, CAs, and/or AAs, and these organizations may wish to indicate to relying parties which clearance values from a particular TA, CA, or AA should be accepted. For example, consider the security policies described in [RFC3114], where a security policy has been defined for Amoco with three security classification values (HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL, CONFIDENTIAL, and GENERAL). To constrain a CA for just one security classification, the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension would be included in the CA's PKC.

Cross-certified domains can also make use of the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension to indicate which clearance values should be acceptable to relying parties.

This document augments the certification path validation rules for PKCs (in [RFC5280]) and ACs (in [RFC5755]).

1.1. Terminology

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

1.2. ASN.1 Syntax Notation

All X.509 PKC [RFC5280] extensions are defined using ASN.1 [X.680]. All X.509 AC [RFC5755] extensions are defined using ASN.1 [X.680]. Note that [X.680] is the 2002 version of ASN.1, which is the most recent version with freeware compiler support.

2. Clearance Attribute

The Clearance attribute in a certificate indicates the clearances held by the subject. It uses the clearance attribute syntax, whose semantics are defined in [RFC5755], in the Attributes field. A certificate MUST include either zero or one instance of the Clearance attribute. If the Clearance attribute is present, it MUST contain a single value.

The following object identifier identifies the Clearance attribute (either in the subject directory attributes extension of a PKC or in the Attributes field of an AC):

```
id-at-clearance OBJECT IDENTIFIER ::= { joint-iso-ccitt(2)
  ds(5) attributeTypes(4) clearance(55) }
```

The ASN.1 syntax for the Clearance attribute is defined in [RFC5912] and that RFC provides the normative definition. The ASN.1 syntax for Clearance attribute is as follows:

```
ClassList ::= BIT STRING {
 unmarked
               (0),
 unclassified (1),
 restricted
               (2),
 confidential (3),
 secret
                (4),
 topSecret
               (5)
SECURITY-CATEGORY ::= TYPE-IDENTIFIER
SecurityCategory { SECURITY-CATEGORY:Supported }::= SEQUENCE {
 type [0] IMPLICIT SECURITY-CATEGORY.&id({Supported}),
 value [1] EXPLICIT SECURITY-CATEGORY.&Type
                                  ({Supported}{@type})
}
```

NOTE: SecurityCategory is shown exactly as it is in [RFC5912]. That module is an EXPLICIT tagged module, whereas the module contained in this document is an IMPLICIT tagged module.

The Clearance attribute takes its meaning from Section 4.4.6 of [RFC5755], which is repeated here for convenience:

- policyId identifies the security policy to which the clearance relates. The policyId indicates the semantics of the classList and securityCategories fields.
- classList identifies the security classifications. Six basic values are defined in bit positions 0 through 5, and more may be defined by an organizational security policy.
- securityCategories provides additional authorization information.

If a trust anchor's public key is used directly, then the Clearance associated with the trust anchor, if any, should be used as the effective clearance (also defined as effective-clearance for a certification path).

3. Authority Clearance Constraints Certificate Extension

The Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension indicates to the relying party what clearances should be acceptable for the subject of the AC or the subject of the last certificate in a PKC certification path. It is only meaningful in a trust anchor, a CA PKC, or an AA PKC. A trust anchor, CA PKC, or AA PKC MUST include

either zero or one instance of the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension. The Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension MAY be critical or non-critical.

Absence of this certificate extension in a TA, a CA PKC, or an AA PKC indicates that clearance of the subject of the AC or the subject of the last certificate in a PKC certification path containing the TA, the CA, or the AA is not constrained by the respective TA, CA, or AA.

The following object identifier identifies the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension:

```
id-pe-authorityClearanceConstraints OBJECT IDENTIFIER ::= {
  iso(1) identified-organization(3) dod(6) internet(1) security(5)
  mechanisms(5) pkix(7) pe(1) 21 }
```

The ASN.1 syntax for the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension is as follows:

```
AuthorityClearanceConstraints ::= SEQUENCE SIZE (1..MAX) OF
```

The syntax for the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension contains Clearances that the CA or the AA asserts. The sequence MUST NOT include more than one entry with the same policyId. This constraint is enforced during Clearance and Authority Clearance Constraints Processing as described below. If more than one entry with the same policyId is present in the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension, the certification path is rejected.

4. Processing of Clearance and Authority Clearance Constraints in a PKC

This section describes the certification path processing when Clearance is asserted in the PKC under consideration.

User input, the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension, and Clearance attribute processing determines the effective clearance (henceforth called effective-clearance) for the end PKC. User input and the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension in the TA and in each PKC (up to but not including the end PKC) in a PKC certification path impact the effective-clearance. If there is more than one path to the end PKC, each path is processed independently. The process involves two steps:

- 1) collecting the Authority Clearance Constraints; and
- 2) using the Authority Clearance Constraints in the certification path and the Clearance in the end PKC to determine the effective-clearance for the subject of the end PKC.

Assuming a certification path consisting of n PKCs, the effective-clearance for the subject of the end PKC is the intersection of 1) the Clearance attribute in the subject PKC, 2) the Authority Clearance Constraints, if present, in the trust anchor, 3) user input, and 4) all Authority Clearance Constraints present in n-1 intermediate PKCs. Any effective-clearance calculation algorithm that performs this calculation and provides the same outcome as the one from the algorithm described herein is considered compliant with the requirements of this RFC.

When processing a certification path, Authority Clearance Constraints are maintained in one state variable: permitted-clearances. When processing begins, permitted-clearances is initialized to the user input value or the special value all-clearances if Authority Clearance Constraints user input is not provided. The permitted-clearances state variable is updated by first processing Authority Clearance Constraints associated with the trust anchor, and then each time an intermediate PKC that contains an Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension in the path is processed.

When processing the end PKC, the value in the Clearance attribute in the end PKC is intersected with the permitted-clearances state variable.

The output of Clearance attribute and Authority Clearance Constraint certificate extension processing is the effective-clearance (which could also be an empty list), and a status indicator of either success or failure. If the status indicator is failure, then the process also returns a reason code.

4.1. Collecting Constraints

Authority Clearance Constraints are collected from the user input, the trust anchor, and the intermediate PKCs in a certification path.

4.1.1. Certification Path Processing

When processing Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extensions for the purposes of validating a Clearance attribute in the end PKC, the processing described in this section or an equivalent algorithm MUST be performed in addition to the certification path validation.

The processing is presented as an addition to the certification path validation algorithm described in Section 6 of [RFC5280]. Note that this RFC is fully consistent with [RFC5280]; however, it augments [RFC5280] with the following steps:

- o Ability to provide and process Authority Clearance Constraints as an additional input to the certification path processing engine with Trust anchor information.
- o Requirement to process Authority Clearance Constraints present with trust anchor information.

4.1.1.1. Inputs

User input may include an Authority Clearance Constraints structure or omit it.

Trust anchor information may include the Authority Clearance Constraints structure to specify Authority Clearance Constraints for the trust anchor. In other words, the trust anchor may be constrained or unconstrained.

4.1.1.2. Initialization

If the user input includes Authority Clearance Constraints, set permitted-clearances to the input value; otherwise, set permittedclearances to the special value all-clearances.

Examine the permitted-clearances for the same Policy ID appearing more then once. If a policyId appears more than once in the permitted-clearances state variable, set effective-clearance to an empty list, set error code to "multiple instances of same clearance", and exit with failure.

If the trust anchor does not contain an Authority Clearance Constraints extension, continue at Section 4.1.1.3. Otherwise, execute the procedure described in Section 6 as an in-line macro by treating the trust anchor as a PKC.

4.1.1.3. Basic Certificate Processing

If the PKC is the last PKC (i.e., certificate n), skip the steps listed in this section. Otherwise, execute the procedure described in Section 6 as an in-line macro.

4.1.1.4. Preparation for Certificate i+1

No additional action associated with the Clearance attribute or the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extensions is taken during this phase of certification path validation as described in Section 6 of [RFC5280].

4.1.1.5. Wrap-up Procedure

To complete the processing, perform the following steps for the last PKC (i.e., certificate n).

Examine the PKC and verify that it does not contain more than one instance of the Clearance attribute. If the PKC contains more than one instance of the Clearance attribute, set effective-clearance to an empty list, set the error code to "multiple instances of an attribute", and exit with failure.

If the Clearance attribute is not present in the end PKC, set effective-clearance to an empty list and exit with success.

Set effective-clearance to the Clearance attribute in the end PKC.

4.1.1.5.1. Wrap Up Clearance

Examine effective-clearance and verify that it does not contain more than one value. If effective-clearance contains more than one value, set effective-clearance to an empty list, set error code to "multiple values", and exit with failure.

If permitted-clearances is an empty list, set effective-clearance to an empty list and exit with success.

If permitted-clearances has the special value all-clearances, exit with success.

Let us say policyId in effective-clearance is X.

If the policyId X in effective-clearance is absent from the permitted-clearances, set effective-clearance to an empty list and exit with success.

Assign those classList bits in effective-clearance a value of one (1) that have a value of one (1) both in effective-clearance and in the clearance structure in permitted-clearances associated with policyId X. Assign all other classList bits in effective-clearance a value of zero (0).

If none of the classList bits have a value of one (1) in effective-clearance, set effective-clearance to an empty list and exit with success.

Set the securityCategories in effective-clearance to the intersection of securityCategories in effective-clearance and securityCategories for policyId X in permitted-clearances using the algorithm described in Section 7. Note that an empty SET is represented by simply omitting the SET.

Exit with success.

4.1.1.6. Outputs

If certification path validation processing succeeds, effectiveclearance contains the subject's effective clearance for this certification path. Processing also returns success or failure indication and reason for failure, if applicable.

5. Clearance and Authority Clearance Constraints Processing in AC

This section describes the certification path processing when Clearance is asserted in an AC. Relevant to processing are: one TA; 0 or more CA PKCs; 0 or 1 AA PKC; and 1 AC.

User input, Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension, and Clearance attribute processing determine the effective clearance (henceforth called effective-clearance) for the subject of the AC. User input and the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extensions in the TA and in each PKC (up to and including the AA PKC) in a certification path impact the effective-clearance. If there is more than one path to the AA PKC, each path is processed independently. The process involves two steps:

- 1) collecting the Authority Clearance Constraints; and
- 2) using the Authority Clearance Constraints in the PKC certification path and the Clearance in the AC to determine the effective-clearance for the subject of the AC.

The effective-clearance for the subject of the AC is the intersection of 1) the Clearance attribute in the subject AC, 2) the Authority Clearance Constraints, if present, in trust anchor, 3) user input, and 4) all Authority Clearance Constraints present in the PKC certification path from the TA to the AA. Any effective-clearance calculation algorithm that performs this calculation and provides the same outcome as the one from the algorithm described herein is considered compliant with the requirements of this RFC.

The Authority Clearance Constraints are maintained in one state variable: permitted-clearances. When processing begins, permitted-clearances is initialized to user input or the special value all-clearances if Authority Clearance Constraints user input is not provided. The permitted-clearances state variable is updated by first processing the Authority Clearance Constraints associated with the trust anchor, and then each time a PKC (other than AC holder PKC) that contains an Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension in the path is processed.

When processing the AC, the value in the Clearance attribute in the AC is intersected with the permitted-clearances state variable.

The output of Clearance attribute and Authority Clearance Constraint certificate extension processing is the effective-clearance, which could also be an empty list; and success or failure with a reason code for failure.

5.1. Collecting Constraints

Authority Clearance Constraints are collected from the user input, the trust anchor, and all the PKCs in the AA PKC certification path.

5.1.1. Certification Path Processing

When processing Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extensions for the purpose of validating a Clearance attribute in the AC, the processing described in this section or an equivalent algorithm MUST be performed in addition to the certification path validation. The processing is presented as an addition to the PKC certification path validation algorithm described in Section 6 of [RFC5280] for the AA PKC certification path and the algorithm described in Section 5 of [RFC5755] for the AC validation. Also see the note related to [RFC5280] augmentation in Section 4.1.1.

5.1.1.1. Inputs

Same as Section 4.1.1.1.

In addition, let us assume that the PKC certification path for the AA consists of n certificates.

5.1.1.2. Initialization

Same as Section 4.1.1.2.

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Same as Section 4.1.1.3 except that the logic is applied to all n

5.1.1.4. Preparation for Certificate i+1

Same as Section 4.1.1.4.

5.1.1.5. Wrap-up Procedure

To complete the processing, perform the following steps for the AC.

Examine the AC and verify that it does not contain more than one instance of the Clearance attribute. If the AC contains more than one instance of the Clearance attribute, set effective-clearance to an empty list, set the error code to "multiple instances of an attribute", and exit with failure.

If the Clearance attribute is not present in the AC, set effectiveclearance to an empty list and exit with success.

Set effective-clearance to the Clearance attribute in the AC.

5.1.1.5.1. Wrap Up Clearance

Same as Section 4.1.1.5.1.

5.1.1.6. Outputs

Same as Section 4.1.1.6.

In addition, apply AC processing rules described in Section 5 of [RFC5755].

6. Computing the Intersection of permitted-clearances and Authority Clearance Constraints Extension

Examine the PKC and verify that it does not contain more than one instance of the Authority Clearance Constraints extension. If the PKC contains more than one instance of Authority Clearance Constraints extension, set effective-clearance to an empty list, set error code to "multiple extension instances", and exit with failure.

If the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension is not present in the PKC, no action is taken, and the permitted-clearances value is unchanged.

If the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension is present in the PKC, set the variable temp-clearances to the value of the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension. Examine the temp-clearances for the same Policy ID appearing more then once. If a policyId appears more than once in the temp-clearances state variable, set effective-clearance to an empty list, set error code to "multiple instances of same clearance", and exit with failure.

If the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension is present in the PKC and permitted-clearances contains the all-clearances special value, then assign permitted-clearances the value of temp-clearances.

If the Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension is present in the PKC and permitted-clearances does not contain the all-clearances special value, take the intersection of temp-clearances and permitted-clearances by repeating the following steps for each clearance in the permitted-clearances state variable:

- If the policyId associated with the clearance is absent in the temp-clearances, delete the clearance structure associated with the policyID from the permitted-clearances state variable.
- If the policyId is present in temp-clearances:
 - -- For every classList bit, assign the classList bit a value of one (1) for the policyId in the permitted-clearances state variable if the bit is one (1) in both the permitted-clearances state variable and the temp-clearances for that policyId; otherwise, assign the bit a value of zero (0).
 - -- If no bits are one (1) for the classList, delete the clearance structure associated with the policyId from the permitted-clearances state variable and skip the next step of processing securityCategories.
 - -- For the policyId in permitted-clearances, set the securityCategories to the intersection of securityCategories for the policyId in permitted-clearances and in temp-clearances using the algorithm described in Section 7. Note that an empty SET is represented by simply omitting the SET.
- 7. Computing the Intersection of securityCategories

The algorithm described here has the idempotent, associative, and commutative properties.

This section describes how to compute the intersection of securityCategories A and B. It uses the state variable temp-set. It also uses temporary variables X and Y.

Set the SET temp-set to empty.

Set X = A and Y = B.

If SET X is empty (i.e., securityCategories is absent), return temp-set.

If SET Y is empty (i.e., securityCategories is absent), return temp-set

For each type OID in X, if all the elements for the type OID in X and if and only if all the elements for that type OID in Y are identical, add those elements to temp-set and delete those elements from X and Y. Note: identical means that if the element with the type OID and given value is present in X, it is also present in Y with the same type OID and given value and vice versa. Delete the elements from X and from Y.

If SET X is empty (i.e., securityCategories is absent), return temp-set.

If SET Y is empty (i.e., securityCategories is absent), return temp-set.

For every element (i.e., SecurityCategory) in the SET X, carry out the following steps:

- 1. If there is no element in SET Y with the same type OID as the type OID in the element from SET X, go to step 5.
- 2. If there is an element in SET Y with the same type OID and value as in the element in SET X, carry out the following steps:
 - a) If the element is not present in the SET temp-set, add an element containing the type OID and the value to the SET temp-set.
- 3. If the processing semantics of type OID in the element in SET X is not known, go to step 5.
- 4. For each element in SET Y, do the following:
 - a) If the type OID of the element in SET Y is not the same as the element in SET X being processed, go to step 4.d.

- b) Perform type-OID-specific intersection of the value in the element in SET X with the value in the element in SET Y.
- c) If the intersection is not empty, and the element representing the type OID and intersection value is not already present in temp-set, add the element containing the type OID and intersection value as an element to temp-set.
- d) Continue to the next element in SET Y.
- 5. If more elements remain in SET X, process the next element starting with step 1.

Return temp-set.

8. Recommended securityCategories

This RFC also includes a recommended securityCategories object as follows:

```
recommended-category SECURITY-CATEGORY ::=
    { BIT STRING IDENTIFIED BY OID }
```

The above structure is provided as an example. To use this structure, the object identifier (OID) needs to be registered and the semantics of the bits in the bit string need to be enumerated.

Note that type-specific intersection of two values for this type will be simply setting the bits that are set in both values. If the resulting intersection has none of the bits set, the intersection is considered empty.

9. Security Considerations

Certificate issuers must recognize that absence of the Authority Clearance Constraints in a TA, in a CA certificate, or in an AA certificate means that in terms of the clearance, the subject Authority is not constrained.

Absence of the Clearance attribute in a certificate means that the subject has not been assigned any clearance.

If there is no Clearance associated with a TA, it means that the TA has not been assigned any clearance.

If the local security policy considers the clearance held by a subject or those supported by a CA or AA to be sensitive, then the Clearance attribute or Authority Clearance Constraints should only be

included if the subject's and Authority's certificates can be privacy protected. Also in this case, distribution of trust anchors and associated Authority Clearance Constraints extension or Clearance must also be privacy protected.

10. References

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10.1. Normative References

- [RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", BCP 14, RFC 2119, March 1997.

- [RFC5912] Hoffman, P. and J. Schaad, "New ASN.1 Modules for the Public Key Infrastructure Using X.509 (PKIX) RFC 5912, June 2010.
- [X.680] ITU-T Recommendation X.680 (2002) | ISO/IEC 8824-1:2002. Information Technology Abstract Syntax Notation One.

10.2. Informative References

- [RFC3114] Nicolls, W., "Implementing Company Classification Policy with the S/MIME Security Label", RFC 3114, May 2002.
- [RFC3739] Santesson, S., Nystrom, M., and T. Polk, "Internet X.509
 Public Key Infrastructure: Qualified Certificates
 Profile", RFC 3739, March 2004.

Appendix A. ASN.1 Module

```
This appendix provides the normative ASN.1 definitions for the
structures described in this specification using ASN.1 as defined in
X.680.
ClearanceConstraints { iso(1) identified-organization(3) dod(6)
internet(1) security(5) mechanisms(5) pkix(7) mod(0) 46 }
DEFINITIONS IMPLICIT TAGS ::=
BEGIN
-- EXPORTS ALL --
IMPORTS
-- IMPORTS from [RFC5912]
id-at-clearance, Clearance
   FROM PKIXAttributeCertificate-2009
   { iso(1) identified-organization(3) dod(6) internet(1)
     security(5) mechanisms(5) pkix(7) id-mod(0)
     id-mod-attribute-cert-02(47)
-- IMPORTS from [RFC5912]
EXTENSION, SECURITY-CATEGORY
  FROM PKIX-CommonTypes-2009
   { iso(1) identified-organization(3) dod(6) internet(1)
     security(5) mechanisms(5) pkix(7) id-mod(0)
     id-mod-pkixCommon-02(57)
   }
-- Clearance attribute OID and syntax
-- The following is a 2002 ASN.1 version for clearance.
-- It is included for convenience.
-- id-at-clearance OBJECT IDENTIFIER ::=
-- { joint-iso-ccitt(2) ds(5) attributeTypes(4) clearance (55) }
-- Clearance ::= SEQUENCE {
                OBJECT IDENTIFIER,
-- policyId
                       ClassList DEFAULT {unclassified},
-- classList
-- securityCategories SET OF SecurityCategory
```

```
{{SupportSecurityCategories }} OPTIONAL
-- }
-- ClassList ::= BIT STRING {
-- unmarked (0),
-- unclassified (1),
-- restricted (2),
-- confidential (3),
               (4),
   secret
   topSecret
                 (5)
-- }
-- SECURITY-CATEGORY ::= TYPE-IDENTIFIER
-- NOTE that the module SecurityCategory is taken from a module
-- that uses EXPLICIT tags [RFC5912]. If Clearance was not imported
-- from [RFC5912] and the comments were removed from the ASN.1
-- contained herein, then the IMPLICIT in type could also be removed
-- with no impact on the encoding.
-- SecurityCategory { SECURITY-CATEGORY:Supported } ::= SEQUENCE {
-- type [0] IMPLICIT SECURITY-CATEGORY.&id({Supported}),
    value [1] EXPLICIT SECURITY-CATEGORY.&Type
--
                                     ({Supported}{@type})
-- Authority Clearance Constraints certificate extension OID
-- and syntax
id-pe-clearanceConstraints OBJECT IDENTIFIER ::=
  { iso(1) identified-organization(3) dod(6) internet(1) security(5)
   mechanisms(5) pkix(7) pe(1) 21 
authorityClearanceConstraints EXTENSION ::= {
 SYNTAX AuthorityClearanceConstraints
  IDENTIFIED BY id-pe-clearanceConstraints
}
AuthorityClearanceConstraints ::= SEQUENCE SIZE (1..MAX) OF Clearance
END
```

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