

DEVIN NUNES UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN, CALIFORNIA  
21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ★★★★★



## General Petraeus reports to Congress



After a comprehensive assessment from General David Petraeus on the status of Iraq, it continues to be apparent that American goals can be realized in the country and that defeat is not a foregone conclusion. Though the current findings should not minimize the enormity of the challenges faced by Iraqis and their American allies, it is clear they are capable of tackling and addressing the problems confronting them today.

**The progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts has been substantial.**  
~General David Petraeus

stantial. The Petraeus Report highlighted several of the key milestones and showed that in large measure the military objectives of the surge are being met.

### Iran and Syria fueling violence

Currently, the primary source of conflict in Iraq is related to differences among sectarian and ethnic communities and their competition for resources and power. Ongoing conflicts with Syria and Iran have added additional complexity and magnified violence.

In order to bring stability to the country, additional forces were requested in 2006 to protect the population and quell ensuing violence. As a result, we have witnessed a renewed focus on improving security, dismantling al Qaida sanctuaries, and the disruption of Iranian-supported militia extremists.

### Iraqi's reject violence in Anbar Province

No region in Iraq has exemplified positive security progress more than Anbar Province. In 2006, an intelligence report concluded that Anbar had been lost to al Qaida. However, that report failed to consider the growing dissatisfaction among local residents, who had grown tired of suffering under the Taliban-like rule of al Qaida. With newfound community support, an additional 4,000 Marines were sent to Anbar to fight the terrorists and insurgents. These soldiers were part of the military surge requested by our gen-

erals in Iraq. Thanks to their hard work, a city al Qaida once considered a stronghold is returning to normal. Anbar citizens who once feared beheading for talking to an American or Iraqi soldier now report terrorist activity.

### Overall security improvements

Though there have been difficult losses and setbacks, General Petraeus concluded in his report to Congress that there has been marked improvement in the overall security environment.

The overall number of security incidents in Iraq has declined substantially in the past couple months, and the number of incidents this month are at their lowest levels since 2006. Our significant successes against al Qaida elements operating in Iraq have greatly contributed to improved security conditions. Thanks to the ongoing partnership between Coalition and Iraqi forces, we have seen a reduction in the ethno-sectarian violence and many Shia militia extremists have been disrupted.

### Iranian interference

There has been, however, continuing interference on the part of Iran. Since the surge, U.S. Forces have targeted Shia extremists, capturing a number of senior leaders and fighters. One notable success was the capture of the deputy commander of Lebanese Hezbollah Department 2800, an organization created

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## Coal: A valuable energy source

The United States is currently experiencing the consequences of federal, state and local government policies that limit energy production. American policymakers are failing to exploit the U.S.'s abundant resources and are under-investing in alternative energy. As a result, the U.S. is increasingly dependent on foreign sources of energy, much of which is located in unstable regions of the world.

### An oil alternative that can work today

In response to this challenge, Rep. Nunes has proposed legislation that would invest billions of dollars in renewable and alternative energy, all at no cost to the taxpayer (see the Washington Report, June 2007). One of the provisions contained in his legislation has the potential of eliminating the nation's reliance on Middle Eastern oil and is discussed further below.

### Time tested and currently in use

As early as 1944, Germany was producing 90% of its fuel needs through a process that transforms coal into a liquid fuel capable of replacing oil. The "coal-to-liquid" process, better known as CTL, is also being used by South Africa today to supply a quarter of that nation's transportation fuel. Indeed, the high cost and reduced supply of oil has resulted in a significant global effort to diversify energy sources. This year alone China is building a \$2 billion CTL plant that will

begin production this fall, and they have plans to build many more.

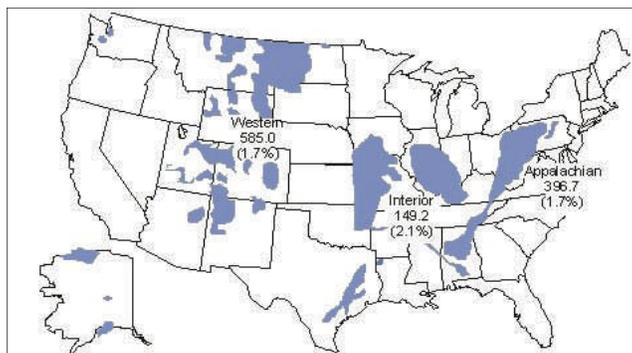
### How CTL works

The production of CTL fuels begins with coal as a raw material being liquefied through intense heat and pressure to create a synthetic gas. The synthetic gas enters a second stage, called the Fischer-Tropsch process, which converts the synthetic gas into clean liquid fuels and other chemical products. In fact, diesel fuel produced by this process is virtually sulfur-free and is cleaner than conventional diesel. It burns more completely and emissions are significantly lower than low-sulfur diesel. The carbon dioxide that is spun off of this process is a stationary, concentrated source and is ready for capture and possible sequestration underground.

### CTL hindered by financial risk

Energy producers are interested in the development of a CTL market in the United States. However, the construction of CTL plants is extremely expensive and such an investment is considered highly risky by Wall Street investors because of the unstable price of oil. If the price of oil drops significantly below today's prices, CTL based fuel would not be competitive due to the cost of production. For this reason, oil price volatility could result in the CTL plant investment becoming stranded.

The insecurity of the oil market and the manipulation of the market by cartels has prevented the development of many alternative fuels in the United States. In order to eliminate our nation's dependence on Middle Eastern oil, the federal government needs to provide market-based risk mitigation options for CTL fuel producers. Rep. Nunes' legislation would help do just that.



Coal production by coal producing region, 2005.  
SOURCE: Energy Information Administration.

### The Nunes plan

The legislation proposed by Rep. Nunes would develop a commercial futures market for CTL fuels by auctioning off long-term commodity "put contracts" – similar to the "put contracts" typically used for corn or soybeans. The "put contracts" will be offered for up to 20 years in length, and their size and price will be determined through a free-market auction.

For example, if the federal government auctions a "put contract" for \$50 per barrel of oil (known as the "strike price"), then the CTL fuel producer has the right, but not the obligation, to exercise that "put contract" if the price per barrel of oil goes below \$50. If the price per barrel of oil falls to \$45 and the CTL fuel producer decides to exercise the "put contract," then the federal government would pay the CTL fuel producer \$50 and take possession of the fuel. The put contract also allows the CTL producer to proceed with the sale of CTL fuel on the open market, with the government paying the \$5 difference in price.

This proposal will provide long-term stability in the CTL market, increasing investments from Wall Street. Once this occurs, the free market will take over and significantly expand the production of CTL fuels. With a 250-year supply of coal in the U.S. and the availability of carbon sequestration technology, this legislation and the resulting production of CTL fuels will significantly reduce, if not eliminate, America's reliance on Middle Eastern oil.



According to the U.S. Department of Energy and several other independent panels of experts, pollution-free, carbon-neutral electricity from coal is a near-term reality if we continue to make sound investments in technology (Center for Advanced Energy Development).

## College students: A chance to experience Washington, D.C.

Gaining experience in a professional atmosphere not only compliments and enhances a political science curriculum, but it can provide a young person with a valuable glimpse into what a political career in Washington, D.C. is like.

An internship in Rep. Nunes' office is an unforgettable experience for any young person considering a career in politics. Working in the office provides a behind-the-scenes look at developing policy as well as in-depth knowledge about how a congressional office operates.

Interns work with legislative staff, often conducting policy research and assisting with special projects. They will also be exposed to how a congressional office communicates with constituents, both in person and through written communication. Working with the legislative team also shows interns how policy is formed and how it is affected by the political environment. Conducting Capitol building tours for visiting constituents is also a perk of being an intern!

Interns are also encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities available to Capitol Hill staffers. For instance, the Intern Lecture Series brings a number of high-profile Washington insiders, such as Former Secretary of State



**There is no better way to learn about politics in Washington than by working in a Congressional office.**

Colin Powell, to the Hill to address interns. These and other seminars are designed to help interns learn more about the government and how to play a

role in lawmaking. There are also occasional opportunities to learn about government activity outside of Congress, including visits with our nation's military.

Interning on Capitol Hill is not all work and no play. Sooner or later interns are bound to rub shoulders with someone famous. Former interns have seen past presidents in the hallways as well as celebrities and professional athletes who are on Capitol Hill testifying about their issue of choice.

Additionally, interns are strongly encouraged to take advantage of their time in Washington, D.C. The White House, Pentagon and Supreme Court are just some of the sites for which Rep. Nunes can arrange tours.

Rep. Nunes' office employs two interns year-round. The length of the internship usually depends on the student's schedule. Anyone interested in an internship should contact their academic advisor about when to come and whether they will receive class credit.

Visit [www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov) to download an internship application. Rep. Nunes is currently looking for 2008 interns.

## Military Academy Night 2007: Learn about the process

If you are a student interested in pursuing a college education at a United States Service Academy, you are encouraged to attend the annual 21<sup>st</sup> Congressional District Academy Night.

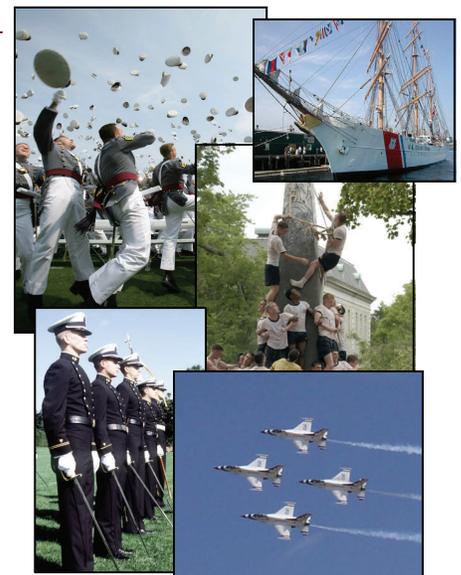
Academy Night is an opportunity for you and your parents to learn more about the nomination and appointment process.

Liaisons representing the Air Force, Merchant Marine, Military and Naval Academies will be in attendance to answer questions and review the admissions procedure.

If you would like to participate or have questions, please call (559) 733-3861 and ask to speak with the Academy Night coordinator.

Academy nomination information can be found in the Constituent Services section of Congressman Nunes' website:

[www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov)



Selected images from the U.S. Military, Coast Guard, Naval, Merchant Marine, and Air Force Academies.

**Time:**  
**7:00 PM, Wednesday**  
**October 10, 2007**

**Location:**  
**2800 West Burrel Avenue,**  
**Visalia, CA**

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to train and support militia extremists by the Iranian Republican Guard. These



An Iranian weapons cache found in Iraq.

elements assassinate and kidnap Iraqi governmental leaders and kill American soldiers with advanced explosive devices provided by Iran. It is apparent that Iran is attempting to create a Hezbollah like force in Iraq.

## Iraq committing more to security

A key highlight in 2007, as it was in 2006, is that Iraq will spend more on its security forces than it will receive in security assistance from the United States. Iraq continues to take the steps necessary to become self sufficient and independent. Political benchmarks are not being met in a timely fashion, a source of significant disappointment. However, reconciliation among ethnic groups is happening throughout the country on a smaller scale. As the security situation improves, the political process should accelerate.

## Long-term commitment but reduced presence

Iraq's problems will require long-term effort and do not contain any quick solutions. Though Petraeus felt it was pre-

ture to make recommendations on the pace of force reduction beyond 2008, he did say that reductions will continue beyond the pre-surge levels by mid-July.

The vision for a reduced American presence has the support of Iraqi leaders from all communities. However, their success will require U.S. political, economic, and security engagement that extends beyond several years. We must continue to work on securing safety for the Iraqi people and transitioning security tasks to them.

To read the testimonies of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, please visit [www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov).

## Benchmark Assessment: Is the Iraqi government meeting our expectations?

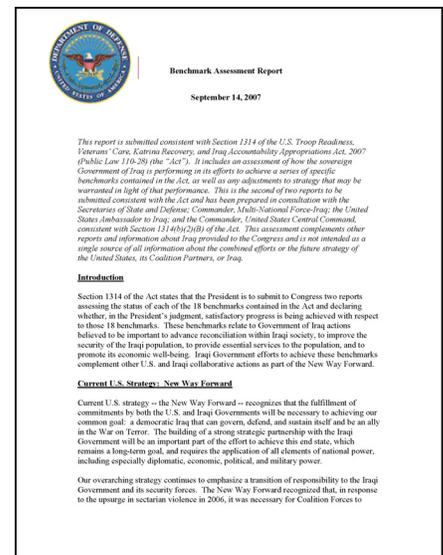
The president is required by law to submit to Congress two reports assessing the status of 18 benchmarks established by Congress and declaring whether, in the president's judgment, satisfactory progress is being achieved with respect to those 18 benchmarks. These benchmarks relate to Government of Iraq actions believed to be important to advance reconciliation within Iraqi society, to improve the security of the Iraqi population, to provide essential services to the population, and to promote its economic well-being. Iraqi Government efforts to achieve these benchmarks complement other U.S. and Iraqi collaborative actions as part of the New Way Forward.

### Assessment: political reconciliation

While key national legislation has not yet passed, the objectives of such laws are in some ways already being achieved. For example, there is no revenue sharing law, and yet significant oil revenues are being distributed by the central government to the provinces in an equitable manner. There is no provincial powers law, and yet the provincial governors and councils are making deci-

sions on budget expenditures through engagement with the central government and ministries and are providing essential services for their constituents. There is no amnesty law, and yet immunity is being granted to many former insurgents, who in turn are being recruited to join legitimate security institutions. There is no de-Ba'athification reform law, and yet more than 45,000 former Ba'athist members of the old armed services have been granted pensions or even restored to active duty or Iraqi government service. Amnesty or de-Ba'athification laws were assumed necessary to drive a wedge between nationalist elements of the largely Sunni insurgency and al Qaida. In fact, Sunnis in record numbers are turning against al Qaida, reclaiming their communities, and turning towards the central government for additional resources. These are precisely the "effects" the benchmarks were intended to produce, even if the formal benchmarks themselves have not been met. In the coming months, our strategy will increasingly focus on helping the Iraqis knit together this new "bottom-up" progress with the "top-down" political process. It will still remain vital for Iraq's national government to codify what is

happening in practice through formal legislation over time.



### Interested in reading more?

The entire Benchmark Assessment, which was recently submitted to Congress, is available on Rep. Nunes' web-site:

[www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov)

## Prospects for stability in Iraq

The National Intelligence Council (NIC), formed in 1973, is responsible for providing government leaders with substantive expertise on critical national security issues. The NIC's key mission is to provide policymakers with the best, unvarnished, and unbiased information. This information is contained in periodic reports known as National Intelligence Estimates (NIE).

The latest NIE, presented to Congress in August, is an update to *Prospects for Iraq's Stability*. The report contains a number of measurements related to the War in Iraq and describes that there have been measurable but uneven improvements in Iraq's security situation since January 2007. The unclassified key judgments are available at [www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov).

### Further NIE details:

- Iraqi security forces will improve moderately over the next year, but insurgent and sectarian violence will remain high, causing extreme challenges for the Iraqi government.
- Perceptions that the Coalition is withdrawing will probably encourage actions (anticipating a power vacuum) to seek local security solutions that could intensify sectarian violence and intra-sectarian competition.
- The Iraqi government's support and acceptance of any military plan is key to success in Iraq.
- The emergence of "bottom-up" security initiatives represents the best prospect for improved security over the next six to 12 months.
- Iraqi Security Forces involved in combined operations with Coalition forces have performed adequately, and some units have demonstrated increasing professional competence. However, the ISF have not improved enough to conduct major operations independent of the Coalition on a sustained basis in multiple locations.

- In anticipation of a reduction in Coalition forces, Iran is trying to leverage its power within Iraq by assisting armed groups, thereby increasing violence.

### Conclusions:

The NIE concludes by stating that changing the mission of Coalition forces from a primarily counterinsurgency and stabilization role to a primary combat support role for Iraqi forces and counterterrorist operations to prevent terrorists from establishing a safe haven would erode security gains achieved thus far.

Read the NIE Summary online:  
[www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov)

### Watch for it:

Rep. Devin Nunes traveled to Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in September. Watch for a *Special Edition* of the *Washington Report* in early October.

## Guest Column: Successful "active" land management

While the Giant Sequoias of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are the most famous trees in the 21<sup>st</sup> District, residents also benefit from the 20,000 acres of Sierra Nevada forestland (Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek areas east of Fresno) owned by Southern California Edison (SCE).

The power company purchased this land in 1919 from the Fresno Flume and Lumber Company as the site for the Shaver Lake hydroelectric reservoir. For the first 60 years, SCE allowed the land to recover from the heavy logging activities of the previous owner. That changed in 1980, when the company adopted an "active" land management plan to help restore the forestlands to a natural, pre-European condition.

forestlands were thickly blanketed with trees and that's simply not true," explained John R. Mount, SCE's Forest Manager. "Natural conditions were open and pine-dominated, with a mix of trees and brush of various ages."

To achieve these natural conditions, SCE employs methods that were considered revolutionary 25 years ago and still meet with some resistance today, including both prescribed fires (approximately 1,000 acres are burned every year) and selective timber harvesting. These efforts reduce the likelihood of catastrophic

see [LAND](#) on page 6

*Both photos at right were taken in the same location and illustrate how managing the land properly affects the environment. Facing one direction (TOP) is the Mountain Home State Demonstration Forest, and facing the other direction (BOTTOM) is the Sequoia National Monument. Differences in land management are dramatically evident.*



"There is a misperception that 'natural'

## Myth vs. Fact: Reporting suspicious activity



**Myth:** An individual who reports suspicious behavior to authorities can be subject to legal action by the person(s) they reported.

**Fact:** The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed legislation to protect U.S. citizens from being sued as a result of reporting suspicious behavior.

In today's world, Americans are reminded almost daily to remain vigilant

against terrorists by reporting any suspicious activity or persons. Individuals have become accustomed to look for unattended baggage or suspicious packages as well as people who are behaving strangely.

Earlier this year, six imams were removed from a US Airways flight after a fellow passenger reported that the imams were making anti-U.S. remarks during the boarding process and behaving suspiciously. In the days following, the imams alleged that they were removed because of prejudices against Muslims. They sought legal restitution from the people who reported them as well as the airline.

In light of this fact and other terrorism-related concerns, Congress passed H.R. 1, Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act. Passage of the bill was critical, particularly as it was necessary to protect Americans who re-

port suspicious behavior from frivolous lawsuits.

Moreover, with the passage of H.R. 1, several additional changes to our laws have been made:

- Fully implements the 9/11 Commission's recommendations;
- Requires screening of cargo on passenger planes;
- Improves screening of cargo at ports;
- Improves the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board;
- Distributes homeland security funds based on risk;
- Improves interoperability for first responders.

The FBI operates a website so that Americans can report suspected terrorist activity. This site can also be used to report suspected criminal activity.

<https://tips.fbi.gov>

### LAND from page 5

wildfire and improve wildlife habitat by restoring natural conditions.

**"There is a misperception that 'natural' forestlands were thickly blanketed with trees and that's simply not true."**

*-John R. Mount, SCE's Forest Manager*

The results of these active management efforts speak for themselves: among the wildlife harbored by Edison forests are several state or federally listed species, including a pair of bald eagles, eleven pairs of osprey, seven pairs of spotted owls and one pair of great gray owls. Fishers and pine martens have been sighted on the property as well. Black bear, mountain lion and mule deer populations are prospering on the land. Songbirds are very abundant and populations are monitored every summer.

Wildlife isn't alone in enjoying the SCE forestlands, however. The revenues from the timber harvesting program help finance programs for the general public, including hiking, camping, skiing, and environmental educational programs. This has provided the opportunity for more than half a million visitors annually to enjoy the beauty and recreational activities.

These lands also are used as a research forest for ozone studies, ecosystem research, soil studies and disease-resistant tree identification. The power company has worked with agencies like the California Air Resources Board, the U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Forestry and the University of California - Davis.

The SCE forestry program and Forest Manager Mount were awarded the Wildlife Society's 2001 Conservationist of the Year Award and the Governor's 2001 Environmental and Economic Leadership Award in the category of Watershed and Ecosystem Management.

**-By John R. Mount, SCE Forest Manager**

## MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT U.S. FORESTS

**MYTH:** A natural forest supports more ecological diversity than a managed forest.

**FACT:** Managed forests, even those with some clearcutting, often produce more biodiversity than completely natural forests, according to U.S. Forest Service studies in the Lake States and New England.

**MYTH:** Forest management harms fragile wetlands.

**FACT:** In fact, good forest management is the environmentally preferred land use for wetlands, as confirmed by the National Wetlands Policy Forum .

**MYTH:** Forest management harms all wildlife.

**FACT:** Forest management can help wildlife. Forest management creates openings that stimulate the growth of food sources which is the prime reason why forest species such as elk, deer, turkey and antelope are far more plentiful today than earlier in the century.

*Source: The Bugwood Network*

## Assuring the safety of imports

There have been several recent incidents involving unsafe imports from China. These have ranged from contaminated pet food to unsafe paint on children's toys. With the dramatic increase in imports from China, the challenges associated with protecting American consumers have been magnified. Recent incidents highlight this challenge and point to possible inadequacies of U.S. import safeguards.

Two federal agencies – the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) – are primarily responsible for the government's food regulatory system, although a number of other federal, state, and local agencies also have important roles. For imports, FSIS (which has oversight over most meat and poultry) relies on a very different regulatory system than FDA (which has oversight over other foods).

Although all imported food products must meet the same safety standards as domestically produced foods, international trade rules permit a foreign country to apply its own, differing, regulatory authorities and institutional systems in meeting such standards, under an internationally recognized concept known as "equivalence."

Furthermore, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is the federal agency responsible for ensuring the safety of non-food products and has overseen the recall of unsafe toys. They are also charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction.

In the 110th Congress, bills have been introduced aimed at clarifying and expanding federal authorities and/or reorganizing agency responsibilities. Earlier this year, the Senate passed the FDA Revitalization Act (S. 1082) that would require domestic and foreign facilities to

notify the FDA of food safety problems, and would require the FDA to establish a central registry for collecting information and notifying the public about dangerous foods and adulterated human or animal foods.

Additionally, a number of congressional committees have held hearings on, or launched investigations related to, food imports from China and elsewhere. These hearings included reviews of U.S. laws and regulations designed to ensure their safety. Congress is also evaluating how American companies responded after learning about unsafe toys.



*Toy maker Mattel and pet food manufacturer Hill's Pet Nutrition voluntarily recalled defective products produced in China earlier this year.*

To report adverse reactions or other problems with FDA-regulated products, contact the FDA district office consumer complaint coordinator for California at (510) 337-6741.

To report problems with other consumer products, you can visit the consumer resource center online at <http://www.consumer.gov/>. Complaint forms can be submitted to the Federal Trade Commission electronically.



### California-China Trade Facts:

- ▶ China is the 4th largest international market for California exports
- ▶ Between 2000-2005 exports to China increased 121%
- ▶ Exports to China have grown \$5.5 billion from 2002-2006
- ▶ China is California's fastest growing export market

### Other Trade Facts:

- ▶ California had more than \$128 billion in export shipments of merchandise in 2006
- ▶ California's exports were 2nd largest in the United States
- ▶ More than 51,000 companies exported goods from California in 2005
- ▶ 49,000 of California exporters (over 95%) are small and medium sized businesses, with fewer than 500 employees
- ▶ Nearly 90% of exports from California are manufactured goods

Have a question or are you concerned about pending legislation? Let Rep. Nunes know how you feel. Visit [www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov) to send him an email.

# WASHINGTON REPORT

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21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ★★ ★★ ★★ ★★



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