



November/December 2001

HIGHLIGHTS

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Germany to install military base on Djibouti territory.

Eritrea

Officials and analysts say election likely to be postponed to mid-2002.

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US gives Ultimatum for Sudan warring parties.

Kenya

A team from the US working with Kenyan banks in the fight against terrorism.

Somalia

Al Barakaat closed under allegations that it has connections with al-Qaeda.

TNG appoints new PM.

REGIONAL ISSUES

East Africa next target on terrorism: Reports from Washington and London state that the United States and Britain may be planning to extend the war on terrorism to Somalia, Sudan and Yemen as soon as the campaign underway in Afghanistan is over.

... *Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha*, in reaction to the news, said there is " ...nothing that makes us fear an American strike and we cannot see any reason for such a strike," Taha said his government is aware that there are groups, which he did not identify, who are looking to lobby the US administration to take a hard-line stance against Sudan. Furthermore, the government of Sudan said there is no justification for US to attack Sudan, as there are no terrorist bases in the country. Moreover Sudan, and also Yemen, are confident that by co-operating with the United States they can avert US attack.

...*For Somalia*, however, concern is present. Reports state that the US is conducting military reconnaissance in the country to identify al-Qaeda military basis and military camps on the Kenya-Somalia borders. The Somalia Transitional National Government, however, rejected US charges that Somalia Islamic group al-Itihad has links with al-Qaeda and affirmed to the US that there are no terrorist camps in Somalia and that Somalia does not support terrorism. In related news, the French Foreign ministry stressed the need for clear evidence of connections with the al-Qaeda terrorist group, as was the case with Afghanistan, before any such move. Furthermore, a team of observers consisting of nine senior UN officials, started an official mission to assess the current security and political situation in Somalia as part of the UN efforts to verify recent US administration accusations that Somalia is sheltering several banned terrorist organizations. Somalia claims that

...*Ethiopian allegations* that Islamic extremists in Somalia have taken over Somalia has inspired the thought of US attacks on Somalia.

...*Kenya fears* that with the US considering its territory as a base to fight terrorism in Sudan and Somalia might bring retaliatory attacks from these two countries and an influx of refugees from these countries if the US should attack. (*Al-Sharq al-Awsat, December 19: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services; Daily Nation web site, December 13; PANA, December 12 ; AFP, December 12; Xinhua, December 10; Radio Banaadir, December 10: BBC Monitoring Service; Itar-Tass, Nov 26; AFP, November 25*)

Kenya orders crackdown against Somalis: Following claims that thousands of residents in the border town of Madera are connected to Al-Itihad, an organization suspected to have links with Osama Bin-Ladin, Kenya President Daniel arap Moi ordered a crackdown on illegal immigrants. The president singled out Somalis, some of whom, he said, had acquired immigration papers illegally and ordered the intensification of border surveillance to stop the influx of Somali refugees to Kenya. He also pointed out that his government will arrest all persons suspected of having terrorist links. Security had also been increased following an incursion into eastern

Kenya on November 25 when 20 heavily armed Somali militiamen ambushed and gunned down villagers. The attack is suspected to be revenge for the November 22 killing of an influential Somalia clan elder by bandits from the Kenyan side. *(East African Standard web site, December 12 & November 28)*

Border commission to reach verdict in February: The border commission for demarcating the borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea stated that it will submit its final verdict in February 2002. The commission has already heard Eritrean justification which relied on colonial boundaries and successive Ethiopian government maps. The commission will hear the Ethiopia position, which holds onto international laws and the treaties it signed with Italy in 1900, 1902 and 1908 to support its position. *(ENA web site, December 19)*

*TNG denies that
Ethiopian troops entered
Somalia.*

Ethiopia denies sending troops: Somali Prime Minister Hassan Abshir Farah refuted reports of the entrance of 1,000 Ethiopian troops into Somalia on November 23, contradicting other members of his government and witnesses, who claim that Ethiopian troops intervened in a power struggle in Puntland. The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry also denied sending troops to Puntland, claiming that Ethiopia had never supported and will never support Somali factions, but that it will consider safeguarding the rights and interests of Somalia. In related news, Somali Defense Minister Abdullahi Baqor Musa, who confirmed reports that Ethiopian soldiers had crossed the border, accused Puntland's founding leader Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, who was dismissed (in November) by local clan elders, of inviting foreigners to Somalia to help him "achieve political goals". *(AFP November 29; CNN, November 27 & 24)*

Somaliland-Djibouti border reopened: Djibouti stated that it officially reopened its border with Somaliland on November 4. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation press statement said that the government decision was a humanitarian response to the wish of the local people living on both sides of the common border. The border had been closed after a misunderstanding between the two sides in April. *(ADI news agency web site, November 4; Jamhuuriya web site, November 4: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services)*

UNHCR repatriates 558 Djibouti refugees: According to a UNHCR press release of October 31, the government of Ethiopia, together with UNHCR, completed the repatriation of 558 Djibouti refugees from Afar Region, where they had lived for the past 10 years. *(Radio Ethiopia, November 13: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services)*

Small arms meeting in Djibouti: A regional meeting on the supervision of small arms and light weapon stocks and the collection and destruction of surplus weapons was opened on December 10 by Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti. The meeting, attended by countries of the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions including Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, aimed at eradicating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. *(ADI news 10 December 2001: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Service)*

*MCC meeting urges
both parties to live up to
the spirit of Algiers
agreement.*

10th MCC meeting held on Mereb River: The tenth meeting of the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) was held on the Mereb River Bridge, on November 28. The meeting attended by the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), representatives from the African Union and Ethiopian and Eritrean military delegations, discussed the current military situation, including the disposition of Ethiopian and Eritrean forces and mine incidents. At the meeting, the Force Commander of UNMEE, Major-General Patrick Cammaert, appealed to both parties to refrain from words or deeds that might be construed as provocative. He warned against the potential volatility of small incidents or escalating behavior and urged that both parties live up to the spirit of the Algiers peace agreement. The MCC

UNMEE rejects Ethiopia
and Eritrea allegations.

agreed that in the case of future allegations or problems, an investigation team comprising a representative of UNMEE, the AU and either Ethiopian or Eritrean representatives (depending on the location in question) could be dispatched unhindered to investigate.

UNMEE says TSZ calm: Following allegations by the Ethiopia government that Eritrea had begun a military built up along the Temporary Security Zone, the United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) announced, after investigating, that it had found no indication of such a built up. The Ethiopian Government had accused Eritrea of deploying nearly 30,000 regular troops in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). UNMEE also dismissed Eritrean claims that Ethiopian troops had attacked Eritrean positions and violated the TSZ. (*WIC website, December 7; UNMEE press release, November 21*)

Livestock ban lifted for Somalia and Sudan: In September 2001, Yemen lifted an import ban on livestock from Somaliland and Somalia. The ban had been imposed nine months ago, jointly with Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE), due to an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever. Consequently, on November 30, the first Somaliland livestock barges left Berbera port for Yemen carrying cattle, sheep and goats. Similarly, Saudi Arabia lifted the ban on imports of Sudanese livestock on December 20. Sudan plans to export 600,000 sheep by February to Saudi Arabia. (*AP 20 December 2001; Somaliland Net web site, December 1*)

Repatriation Sudan-Eritrea: According to a tripartite agreement signed among the governments of Sudan and Eritrea and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), 161,000 Eritrean refugees are to repatriate to their homes at the end of the year 2002. (*Suna news agency, November 1*)

DJIBOUTI

China signs memorandum: Djibouti Minister of Presidential Affairs in Charge of Promoting Investments, Osman Ahmed Moussa and the Chinese group of Shenzhen Lanxiang Industry signed a memorandum of understanding on the achievement of investments in Djibouti on November 21. The main objective of the Chinese delegation is to make Djibouti a shipping port for goods made in China. (*ADI news agency web site, November 20 and 21: Quoted by BBC Monitoring*)

Germany to install military base: A 17-member German military delegation visited Djibouti for five-days starting from December 2. The mission led by Navy Captain Gunther Fritz was conducted as an evaluation mission that focused on a plan to station a German military contingent on Djibouti territory, which is believed to offer geo-strategic opportunities for maneuvers by ground, air and sea forces. The delegates also held a first broad-based working meeting involving high-ranking Djibouti government and army officials. (*ADI news agency web site, December 3: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services*)

ERITREA

Election to be postponed: Regional analysts and government officials said on December 19 that the parliamentary elections planned for December 2001 are likely to be postponed up to mid-2002 due to internal political instability and regional issues that need priority. Eritrea's deputy ambassador in Nairobi, Temedhin Temariam, told reporters that Eritrea does not have the appropriate institutions in place for elections. He said the draft of electoral law and the law on parties first had to be ratified. Temedhin also said elections could only take place once there was regional peace, notably with Ethiopia, and internal stability. (*IRIN, December 19*)

Djibouti

Eritrea

Radio programme suspended
after broadcasting since
October.

Ethiopia

Diplomats returned to Eritrea: On November 7 and 8, the ambassadors of Holland, Germany and France, the Danish Chargé d'Affaires and the Delegate for the European Commission returned to Eritrea. In early October the diplomats were recalled from Eritrea in protest the expulsion of the Italian ambassador to Asmara. The diplomats are now sent back with the task of "seeking a dialogue with Eritrea on questions of human rights and public liberties." The Italian ambassador, Antonio Bandini, who is also the European Union's chief of mission in Eritrea, and whose expulsion on October 1 sparked the diplomatic row, however, has not returned to Asmara. (*AFP, November 9*)

Eritrea suspends UNMEE's radio programme: Eritrea on October 24 suspended United Nations Mission for Eritrea and Ethiopia's (UNMEE's) weekly radio programme transmission, which had been broadcasting its program since January. UNMEE's chief public information officer, Jean Victor Nkolo, said that UNMEE has written to the Eritrean Commissioner for the Peacekeeping Mission to express its dismay and intends to follow up the matter with the commissioner and the ministry of information. (*Addis Tribune web site, November 13*)

Port in use again: The Port of Mitsawa, for the first time since the war with Ethiopia broke out in May 1998, docked a large grain vessel donated by the United States. The World Food Program (WFP) announced on December 1 that the 15,000 tonnes of relief food marks the first significant shipment to be handled by the port since the war. (*IRIN, website December 3*)

ETHIOPIA

\$1.9 Billion debt relief: The Ministry of Finance announced, on November 13, that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have written off Ethiopia's 1.9 billion US dollars debt. The World Bank and IMF stated that Ethiopia has taken the steps necessary to reach its decision point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. On gaining the debt relief, the ministry said the resources made available by the relief would be allocated to key anti-poverty programs, which were outlined in Ethiopia's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper that is said to have brought the debt relief together with the economic reform program undertaken. In related news, the government of Germany announced that it has forgiven Ethiopia more than half of its US\$ 24 million debt and the other half rescheduled. Following Ethiopia's qualification for the World Bank and IMF HIPC initiative, Australia decided to forgive Ethiopia its US\$ 11.5 million debt. Ethiopia also signed an agreement with the US for debt relief and rescheduling amounting to approximately US\$ 100 million annually for the next 20 years from its debtors. (*Radio Ethiopia, December 17 Addis tribune, November 16; ENA, November 16, 13, 10 & 2; World Bank website, November 11*)

UNFPA allocates US\$ 24.5 Million for HSDP: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Country Office has allocated a US\$ 24.5 million budget for Ethiopia's health sector development program (HSDP) for the next five years. UNFPA stated that 80 percent of the total amount has been allocated for activities by regional government agencies and the remaining 20 percent to the federal agency. The Fund is expected to provide a significant contribution to the government's efforts to strike the balance between population size and natural resources by controlling unchecked population growth and for the judicious utilization of resources without causing environmental degradation. (*ENA, November 26; WIC, November 21*)

ADB gives US\$ 135 million loan and grant agreement: The government of Ethiopia and the African Development Bank (ADB) signed a US\$ 135 million dollars loan and grant agreement for upgrading the Butajira-Hossaena-Sodo

road for the master plan study of the Genale-Dawa integrated Natural Resource Development and for the support of the civil service reform program of the country. (ENA, Nov.20)

Three opposition parties urge the ruling party to declare state of emergency against HIV/AIDS

Opposition parties call for state of emergency against AIDS: Three opposition parties, All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE) and Oromo National Congress (ONC), criticized steps taken by the government against the spread of HIV/AIDS and called on the government to declare a state of emergency to stop the spread of the disease. The parties accused government's bureaucracy for failing to introduce anti-retroviral therapy, advocated the closure of establishments that profit from the sex trade and encouraged compulsory HIV/AIDS tests for prostitutes. (Reuters, December 4)

Ethiopia and Russian sign declaration: Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Russian President V. V. Putin signed a Declaration on Principles of Friendly Relations and Partnership agreement in Moscow, on December 3. Similarly, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin signed a consultative protocol agreement with the Russian Education Minister Vladimir Michaelovich Filippov and the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alexiyivich Avidiyev to bolster cooperation of the two countries in the education sector. (ENA, December 3)

The Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Committee has revamped their web site. Their web can be accessed at the following address:

<http://www.telecom.net.et/~dppc/>

SUDAN

Sudan

US gives ultimatum for Sudan fighting parties: US special envoy to Sudan John Danforth said the United States will not spend "month after month, year after year of fruitless negotiations," trying to end Sudan's civil war and will drop its bid if the warring parties act against peace. During his visit to Sudan, Danforth listed four confidence-building proposals for the two sides to act upon, including a cessation of hostilities in the Nuba mountains in central Sudan, an end to attacks on civilians, "zones of tranquility" where humanitarian agencies can do their work and an end to taking slaves. Danforth said that unless the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) adhere to the proposals -- which he described as a test of "good faith" --- by mid-January, he will tell U.S. President George W. Bush there is nothing more the US can do. The Sudanese government on the other hand said that the proposal puts pressure on the government rather than on SPLM. Following the end of the visit to Sudan, Ambassador Danforth told a news conference in Kenya that he is not holding much hope that the two warring parties will come to an agreement by mid-January. He said if the response to the proposal is negative, it will not be possible to have a "...warm and fuzzy relationship with the US".

US says it will withdraw its support to peace efforts if the warring parties act against peace.

... Government extended ceasefire for humanitarian reasons: In line with the four point proposal by the US special envoy John Danforth, the Government of Sudan extended its ceasefire for four weeks to enable the World Food Program (WFP) to complete its operation of airdropping 2,039 food aid provided by the US government to rebel-held areas in Nuba Mountains of central Sudan, on December 3. The government also announced that it has accepted the US proposals with respect to an indefinite cease-fire around the

Parliament elects President al-Beshir unanimously.

After two years Sudanese government left ban on daily news papers, except four papers.

Nuba Mountains for objective reasons, including the flow of relief supplies from inside the Sudan, not from abroad. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), however, had accused the government in Khartoum of violating its pledge by continuing to bomb civilian targets in the area. SPLM said that government bombing continued 3 days after it declared a ceasefire on November 12 and while WFP planes were on the ground. In related news, US special envoy for Sudan, John Danforth, said US authorities would make food available for people in government-held areas in the Nuba Mountains if a survey, to be conducted by the United States, shows the people in the area are also in need of food aid. (SUNA, December 19; Reuters, December 6; AFP, December 4, November 26, 25, 24, 19, 18 & 14; Xinhua, Nov 18; AP, November 17; Reuters, November 17)

NC re-elect President al-Beshir: Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir was re-elected unanimously to the post of chairman of the ruling National Congress (NC) in a 6,000-strong party conference on October 17. The National Congress also re-elected Ibrahim Ahmed Omar for another term as secretary general of the ruling party, (AFP, October 20 & 17)

18,000 teams to vaccinate millions against polio: Following Sudanese government and rebel foes agreement for a three-day cease-fire, over 18,000 teams launched a campaign to vaccinate 57 million children against polio to become a certified polio-free country within two to three years. The team is composed of Sudanese Health Ministry, UNICEF, WHO and NGOS. (AP, November 14; AFP, November 12)

DUP leader back after 12 years exile: On November 8, tens of thousands of supporters and senior government officials welcomed home opposition leader Ahmed al-Mirghani, deputy head of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), from 12 years of exile in Egypt. Mirghani, who headed the state council before President Omar al-Beshir seized power, said "I am returning to Sudan under the present margin of democracy for maintaining and developing it and to work for halting the bloodshed, enhancing national unity and speeding up the comprehensive political settlement". Meanwhile Beshir described Mirghani as "a symbol of the state" and acknowledged his efforts at unifying Sudan. (AFP, November 8)

Sudan lifts ban on newspapers: Sudan lifted censorship and publishing restrictions on daily newspapers except four papers, after two years, as of November 29. Following the announcement, the editors-in-chief formed a committee that appealed to the head of state, through the Information Minister, to lift the ban on the other four newspapers. They said the editors-in-chief were optimistic that President Beshir would respond positively to the appeal in the near future. The four dailies still under censorship are Al-Watan, the English Language Khartoum Monitor, Al Rai Al Akher and Alwan. (Reuters, November 29; AFP, November 28)

KENYA

US fighting terrorism in Kenya: In an effort to fight international terrorism, an elite team of United States finance experts has started working with Kenya banks on tightening the banks' internal regulations concerning the movement of money from account to account, which is done to disguise its true source. The team is also helping to draw up new laws to outlaw the practice of money laundering and to target corruption and fraud. In addition, the experts are working with the police anti-fraud unit to track down al-Qaeda cash used by terrorists to finance the US embassy bomb blasts in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Similarly, another team of US security experts is working with Internal Security Minister Julius Sunkuli in setting up a special anti-terrorist unit. (Daily Nation web site, December 8)

Clashed left 60 dead and
3,000 displaced.

World Bank suspends credit
due to alleged corruption and
fraud

Somalia

Clashes leave 60 people dead: Clashes in Tana River district, between Pokomo farmers and Wardei and Orma pastoralists over water points and pastures along the river, left 60 people dead within 15 days. The clash has left 3,000 people displaced with food insecurity. Reports from OCHA stated that food aid, emergency healthcare, clothes and cooking utensils and at least three months food rationing is needed for the displaced. The government, in a renewed effort to contain the clash that has been going on for the past 10 months, announced its decision to transfer police officers of Pokomo and Orma origin working in the area starting from December 22, as some of the police are accused of taking sides. The government has also announced the arrest of 100 people who are connected to the clash. (IRIN, December 12; KBC Online text web site, December 13: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services)

Kenya sends armed force to Sierra Leone: Kenya sent off 999 armed forces on a UN peacekeeping mission to Sierra Leone to replace another Kenyan contingent, which will be returning home. The first batch departed on December 2. In related news, 246 Kenya Peacekeeping troops departed from East Timor in late November, in line with UN moves to downsizing international troops in East Timor. (KBC radio, November 29: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services; UNTAET press office, November 20)

World Bank suspends a US\$ 30 million credit: The World Bank, claiming to have uncovered corruption and fraud following an intensive investigation, suspended a US\$ 30 million credit line for the emergency rehabilitation of roads in Kenya. The Bank stated that it is giving the government 30 days to rectify the situation if the International Development Association (IDA) credit line is to be re-opened. After the expiry of the 30 days, the World Bank has the option of canceling the funding altogether. (East African Standard web site, November 20)

Moi declares "good riddance" to High Commissioner: On receiving credentials from the British High Commissioner to Kenya Edward Clay, President Daniel arap Moi said it is prudent for foreign envoys to stop meddling in affairs and conflicts involving local political parties. The statement followed declaration of "good-riddance" on the out-going British High Commissioner, Sir Jeffrey James, who is said to have interfered in local affairs of the country. Upon receiving the credentials, Moi also said that the activities of foreign diplomats must be monitored as some may have political implications. Moi also expressed his hopes that Edward will bring back the once good relations with Britain, which he said had continued to deteriorate for the last 10 years. (KTN TV, Nairobi, December 18; East African Standard web site, December 2; Kenyan radio, November 27: Quoted by BBC Monitoring)

SOMALIA

New PM appointed: Somalia's transitional President, Abdulkassim Salat Hassan, appointed Hassan Abshir Farar as the new Prime Minister, on November 12, to replace Ali Khalif Galaydh, sacked in October after he lost a vote of confidence in parliament for failing to do enough to restore peace to Somalia. Upon appointment, Hassan Abshir said the first step to be taken by his new government will be to expedite the process of reconciliation, restore security, law and order. Critics however claim that the new Prime Minister will not have a significant impact to end the more than 10 years of factional violence as a result of the opposition it is facing from, especially, the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC), an alliance of opposition warlords who reiterated their rejection of the TNG's legitimacy. In related news Mowlid Ma'an Mohamud, Secretary general of SRRC, said the issue of power-sharing should have been discussed before the appointment. He said

US orders the closure of Al-Barakaat money transfer company under the allegation that it provides profit to al-Qaeda.

"It does not help the spirit of reconciliation to unilaterally appoint a prime minister when all sides in Somalia's conflict adopted a resolution to establish a national government ..." (AFP, Nov 13 & 12; HornAfrik Online, November 12)

US closes Al-Barakaat: The United States ordered the closure of Al Barakaat Money Transfer Company under the allegation that it is sending profits to al-Qaeda, the network led by Osama bin Laden, in early November. The company, on which thousands of Somalis rely for remittances from relatives in the diaspora, faced another blow when its foreign communication network AT&T, an American telecommunication company, cut off its service claiming that Al Barakaat is designated by the US government as an entity with which it is not allowed to do business. Commenting on the closure, the Interim President of Somalia Abdiqasim Salad Hasan said that the US should first prove the connection before taking such action. He said al-Barakaat is "...clean until proven guilty". Abdiqasim also warned that the closure will result in a greater financial burden for the Somali people, who staged a huge demonstration shouting "America think twice, give concrete and convincing evidence". Following the American decision, Ethiopia also closed down at least five money transfer companies' operations in Addis Ababa and announced that all Somalia nationals should use Banks and organizations legally operating in money transfer. (AFP, Nov 16 & 15; Radio Banaadir, Mogadishu, November 22: Quoted by BBC Monitoring Services; Addis Tribune, November 16)

Power struggle leaves Puntland in insecurity: Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, self-governing founding leader of Puntland, captured the Puntland capital Garowe on November 21. Abdullahi took control over Puntland after fierce fighting with Puntland President Jama Ali Jama who was elected on November 14 by representatives of the constituent regions of Puntland. Abdullahi claims that the Jama Ali Jama was elected by an illegal conference funded by religious extremists of Al-itiihad Al Islam. The insecurity caused by the clash has resulted in 13 deaths and evacuation of residents of the region and the expatriation of international aid agencies. (AFP, November 14 & 22; AllPuntland.com web site, November 21)

Gunmen attack Koranic school: Eighteen students were killed and nine others wounded when a group of gunmen attacked a Koranic school near the town Buulo Barde in Hiiraan Region (central Somalia), on November 15. Area residents expressed anxiety over the attacks and termed it an act of terrorism. (HornAfrik Online, November 17)

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SOURCES:

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