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DIRECTORATE OF
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WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

The Struggle for a Yugoslav National Identity

25X1



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The Struggle for a Yugoslav National Identity

Deep-rooted nationality rivalries have handicapped Yugoslavia since its creation at the end of World War I. In the last two years, the interplay of government reforms, continuing economic problems, and a freer political climate has led to a resurgence of bitter regional and nationality animosities. These antagonisms threaten President Tito's efforts to build a system that will promote the survival of an independent, non-aligned Yugoslavia once he leaves the scene.

In its simplest form, the Yugoslav nationality problem has been a struggle by non-Serbs against Serbian hegemony. During the period between World War I and II, the monarchy treated Yugoslavia as an extension of greater Serbia. The suspicion and distrust resulting from that experience still color the outlook of many Yugoslav minorities—most particularly the Croats. The Communists, who led the partisan resistance in World War II under the banner of "brotherhood and unity," believed, perhaps naively, that the creation of a federal government of six republics and two provinces at the close of World War II would solve the nationalities problem. The problem did in fact fade during the first two decades of Communist rule, but this was more the result of Tito's leadership than the system.

The new burst of national animosities has set back Tito's efforts to create a decentralized socialist state that would grant wide-ranging freedom of expression. A shaken Communist Party finds itself once more looking for a way to enable the more than 15 nationalities within the Yugoslav borders to live and work together in harmony. Tito will be 80 in May; time is not on his or the party's side. A great deal remains to be done. Foremost, the party must recognize the paradox in its past attitude toward the nationalities: the encouragement of ethnic individuality works at cross-purposes with Yugoslav unity. As long as this paradox exists, nationality tensions will continue.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR A YUGOSLAV NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Nationalities

Yugoslavia was spawned by the decadent Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires. The new country was built around the kingdom of Serbia. History had given it few unifying traditions. The country is a crazy quilt of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural differences. No other country in Europe is as ethnically complex. The problem is so complicated, the differences so great, the passions so intense, and the people so outspoken, that it defies easy solution. *

To the north and west are the Catholic Slovenes and Croats, whose historical ties to the West and economically more advanced societies nurture feelings of superiority. To the south and east are the Serbs around whom modern Yugoslavia was formed. The Serbs are, for the most part, members of the Orthodox Church. The Serbian monarchy dominated the inter-war Yugoslav government, and even today the Serbs—many of whom feel they have been chosen to play a leading role in the nation—predominate in the federal administration. There are also Albanians in Kosovo, who demand national recognition and equality; Montenegrins, with a proud and independent past all their own; and Macedonians, whose national consciousness has been encouraged in Tito's Yugoslavia.

The rivalry between Serb and Croat is the most notorious and has the bloodiest history. It cuts across republic boundaries and can be found wherever the two live side by side, i.e., in the republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia.

President Tito has been more successful than any previous Yugoslav leader in keeping nationality antagonisms at bay. He did so for more than

**See fold-out map at end of article.*

SECRET

SECRET

25 years, leading some observers to speculate that he had found the secret for making Yugoslavia's diverse nationalities work together. Such speculation proved premature. The system he built was unable—short of his direct, personal intervention—to cope with rampant Croatian nationalism late last year.

The socialist revolution in Yugoslavia, then, has not adequately come to grips with the country's nationality problem. The old antagonisms are still very much alive. Croatian nationalism is just one part of this complicated problem, which will undoubtedly flare again and could reach massive proportions in the succession period.

The Party and the Army

Throughout most of the 1950s and the 1960s, the official party line reflected the naive attitude that the "nationality question" no longer existed because the political-social system precluded domination of one nation over another. Vestiges of "bourgeois nationalism" were acknowledged but were treated as isolated phenomena. Failing to perceive the magnitude of the problem, the party did not act appropriately. Communist educators failed to meet the challenge of teaching new patterns of relations based on social and class rather than national and regional interests. The Communists did give Yugoslavia a federal government, establish ethnic republics, and grant certain rights to individual peoples. But at that point they stopped. Their system whetted national appetites and in many instances left an unfilled craving for more.

In the fall of 1970, Tito unveiled reforms unlike any that had been seen before in a Communist country with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Decentralization in the government and economy, already under way for some time, was to be dramatically accelerated by an extensive two-stage constitutional reform. Most of the remaining vestiges of doctrinaire Communism were tossed overboard in favor of a

freer, more open system and society. The reforms were Tito's effort to create a system that would enable a self-managing, non-aligned Yugoslavia to survive his passing.

The party was the critical ingredient in these plans. Under the decentralization, the burden of maintaining unity and cohesion was to fall squarely on the federal party. It is here that the program broke down. In the heady atmosphere of frank, open political discussion, regional nationalism flared. The federal party could not cope with the challenge of a nationalist-infested Croatian party leadership in the closing months of 1971. Tito had to intervene personally, the Croatian party hierarchy was purged, and the federal party was left shaken by its inability to deal with the Croatian challenge.

The party now must find a way to reassert itself and in so doing guard against a recurrence of nationalism in its own ranks. Tito has made it clear that he does not want to discard his reforms and that he still regards decentralization as the best way to ensure the survival of an independent Yugoslavia once he is gone. As a first step, this will mean putting some teeth into the party apparatus concerned with enforcing discipline.

The military, like the party, has been a mainstay of the regime. There is one basic difference; the army is a Serb stronghold. The army has traditionally supported Tito's policies, and, at the height of the Croatian crisis when the federal party seemed unable to cope, Tito turned to the military once again. He sought and received army support for his move against the Croatian leaders.

With the party still searching for solutions to its problems, the importance of the military as a unifying force has increased. In fact, the success of the whole decentralization process could ultimately rest on the army during the post-Tito era. This means that the army will be in a good position to demand at some future date a share of power with the political leaders.

SECRET

SERBIA

Serbia Proper
92.5% - Serbs
7.5% - Other

Where It Began

Serbian nationalism is intense and strongly identifies with the Yugoslav federation. Serbs tend to be aggressive, political realists who see in Yugoslavia the fulfillment of their 19th century dream of a union of the south Slavs. They are clannish to a fault, and more than five decades of predominance in the federal government have given them a firm grip on the levers of power which has only recently been challenged by Tito's plans for extensive decentralization.

Cognizant of the role their republic played in creating modern Yugoslavia, the Serbs tend to view themselves as the champions and guardians of the state. The boidness of their past actions and their lack of concern for the rights of the nation's minorities have raised suspicions about their intentions and alienated others—in particular the Croats. This has weakened rather than strengthened the federation. The Serbs may point with pride to the fact that they were the nucleus around which Yugoslavia was formed in 1918. Others cannot forget that inter-war Yugoslavia was not a federation of equal nationalities. It was in fact the kingdom of greater Serbia. Serb oppression and mismanagement of the nationality question, particularly under the royal dictatorship from 1929 to 1939, was a direct cause of the disaffection of the Croats when the Germans invaded in April 1940.

Special Report

-4-

10 March 1972

Concern over Serbian hegemony has persisted since World War II. Prior to July 1966, the guardian of Serb interests was Aleksander Rankovic. A doctrinaire Communist and then vice president of Yugoslavia, he maintained tight control over the state security service and was considered Tito's heir-apparent. From this power base, Rankovic kept a close eye on Serb interests. He used his office and access to Tito to bloc attempts at decentralization, which Serbs tend to view as an attempt to weaken their position.

Rankovic, who began to take his role as heir apparent too seriously, was dismissed in 1966. Since then, the winds of change have begun to blow in Serbia. Under the enlightened leadership of Marko Nikezic, the Serbian party has struck a pose of moderation. The Serbs officially advocate a path between the extremes of tight centralization and complete republic autonomy. A very capable party secretary, Mrs. Latinka Perovic, has aided Nikezic in his efforts. Sensitive to the nation's highly volatile nationality problem, Mrs. Perovic has pledged herself and her fellow Serbs to work for unity. She warned that Serbia must avoid giving the impression of trying to impose "anything" on others. She went a step further and expressed faith in the government's and economic reforms. She cautioned against their abandonment by describing the problem ahead as one of rebuilding unity, without returning to "centralist reforms" and "greater state hegemony."

Others, such as the Croats, refuse to see any change in the Serbs. Indeed, there are differences between the Serbian leadership and segments of the populace. An undercurrent of opposition to Nikezic and Perovic is discernible. Some Serbs argue that the reforms have gone too far and point to the Croatian crisis last December as proof. These same critics see greater autonomy for Kosovo and Vojvodina (both part of Serbia) as an attempt by the republic's enemies to weaken Serbian power and influence.



SECRET

Where It Could End

Croatia
 80.3% - Croats
 15.0% - Serbs
 4.7% - Other

The Croats, because of their cultural, historical, and religious ties to the West, feel superior to the rest of the nation, save Slovenia. They are determined to count as Croats and as a result push for nearly full republic autonomy. Zagreb, their republic capital, is haunted by the fear that any attempt to strengthen federal authority will mean a return to Serbian domination. The Croats' position on autonomy, which would turn the federal authority into a flimsy facade for six or even eight tiny Balkan states, wins little support elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

The Croats are generally admired for their efficiency and business know-how, but their record on the nationality question has won them little love or respect. Their chauvinism burst forth in fratricide during World War II when a Nazi puppet regime ruled the republic. Croatian fascists conducted a witch-hunt against the republic's Serbian minority, slaughtering thousands who refused to give up the Orthodox religion. Even the Croatian wing of the Yugoslav Communist Party during that period was tainted with nationalism.

More than a quarter of a century of Communism has not dampened Croatia's nationalist zeal. The relative ease with which nationalist elements caught hold in the Croatian party and won popular support for their defiance of the federal party illustrates this. Moreover, the magnitude of the resulting purge, which brought down the republic's highly popular young leadership and cost some 400 officials their jobs, only heightened republic nationalism. The ousted leaders have now taken on an aura of martyrdom. Should Tito not prove his charges of emigre ties to top republic leaders, they may well return to the center of the republic's political stage in the succession period.

CROATIA

Special Report

-6-

10 March 1972

SECRET

SECRET

BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA

A Cordon Sanitaire

Mountainous Bosnia-Hercegovina is in many respects a microcosm of Yugoslavia's nationality make-up. Its inhabitants are nearly equally divided among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, leading some to label the republic an artificially created *cordon sanitaire* between the rival Serb and Croat republics. National chauvinism conjures up terrible memories of the Yugoslav civil war during World War II—a great deal of which was fought in Bosnia-Hercegovina. The scars are deep, and the republic's post-war efforts to establish nationality equality have been only partially successful.

The resurgence of Croatian nationalism last year had an immediate impact in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Extremist students from Zagreb crossed into the republic to seek support from their Croatian kinfolk. Simultaneously, the Croatian cultural association *Matica Hrvatska* began distributing nationalist propaganda. Nationality relations were particularly strained with the publication of the brochure, *Siroki Brijeg*, which extolled as martyrs a group of Croatian nationalists who died at the hands of the partisans in World War II. Aware of the potential appeal of such activity, republic officials in Sarajevo quickly squelched it.

The Muslims are the key to keeping this republic's nationality problem in check. They are hypersensitive to both Croatian and Serbian nationalism, having been caught between the two before. They are determined that it should never happen again. The Muslims insist on full equality within Bosnia-Hercegovina and parity representation with the Croats and Serbs in the republic government.

Bosnia and Hercegovina
 42.9% - Serbs
 21.7% - Croats
 25.7% - Ethnic Muslims of unspecified nationality
 8.4% - Undeclared Yugoslavs
 1.3% - Other

SECRET

SECRET

MONTENEGRO

Betwixt and Between



Zarkovic

In Montenegro, as in Serbia, a new brand of leadership has emerged typified by such men as presidium member Vidoje Zarkovic. These leaders are willing to compromise to benefit the federation. They support the governmental and economic decentralization. As in Serbia, there is a gap between the leadership and the basically nationalistic population.

The Montenegrins, situated in a small quarter of Yugoslavia along the Adriatic Coast bordering Albania, are ethnic Serbs who settled in the Black Mountains in the Middle Ages. The Montenegrins successfully fought off the Turks and remained independent throughout the 500 years of Turkish dominance in the Balkans. These tough mountaineers thus view themselves as superior to the rest of the Yugoslav peoples.

The republic harbors strong pro-Russian sympathies dating back to the days of Peter the Great when sailors of the first Russian Navy trained in Montenegro. From that time on, Montenegro and Russia periodically cooperated in waging war against the Ottoman Empire. Even today, similarities between the Soviet and the Montenegrin approach to Communism are apparent. The Montenegrin Communist Party, for example, is one of the most conservative in Yugoslavia and favors many elements of a more orthodox Communist political and economic system. Montenegrins, like many Serbs, favor strong central authority.

Montenegro
81.4% - Montenegrins
6.5% - Slovenes
5.5% - Albanians
6.6% - Other

SECRET

Slovenia
95.6% - Slovenes
4.4% - Other

SLOVENIA

Kardelj



Mainstay of the Federation

Croatian-style nationalism, with its undercurrent of separatist sentiment, has never had a strong appeal for the Slovenes. During the period between the wars, the Slovenes tended to favor a strong government in Belgrade. Since World War II, a good argument can be made for the case that the Slovenes have done more to shape Yugoslavia's non-aligned and self-management policies than any other people in the federation. A great deal of this is due to the talents of one man, Edvard Kardelj. While others in Slovenia may have greater popular support, it is to Kardelj,

Tito's long-time friend and adviser, that the aging chief of state turns for theoretical justification of Yugoslavia's unorthodox policies.

To a great extent, the current decentralization and constitutional changes embody long-standing Slovenian demands for greater republic autonomy, including increased control over taxes, more rapid progress toward a market economy and a larger voice in foreign affairs. The explanation is twofold. First, as part of the Austrian empire the Slovenes learned that, to achieve their objectives, they had to work within a political system rather than against it. Second, the Slovenes recognize that their prospects for successfully going it alone outside the federation are poor; Slovenia completely disappeared as an entity during World War II when Italy and Germany each took part of it.

The Slovenes are proud of their cultural and national heritage, so much so that they often offend other minorities who accuse them of being self-centered. Though from time to time there have been expressions of discontent and rumbling of nationalism, the Slovenes rarely resort to extra-legal means to gain their objectives. For the most part, the complainers accuse the federation of inhibiting Slovenia's economic development or argue that the republic gives too much to the federation for what it gets in return.

National minorities are practically nonexistent in Slovenia, and the people themselves appear content to see their own cultural and national identity flower within the Yugoslav system. They want the new decentralized Yugoslav system to work. This fact can be seen in the republic's own constitutional reforms. Ljubljana took the lead in proposing that the federal plan for a collective government leadership be adopted at the republic level. Underlying Slovenia's ties to the federation is a belief in the Yugoslav "idea" and a faith that a federation of equal nations will produce a stronger, viable Yugoslavia.

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SECRET

THE PROVINCES

Vojvodina
 54.9% - Serbs
 23.9% - Hungarians
 7.8% - Croats
 13.4% - Other

* Kosovo
 67.0% - Albanians
 23.5% - Serbs
 9.5% - Other

*Recent data indicates a rise to 74%.

Kosovo: Aspirations of a Primitive People

Reverberations from Croatian nationalism were felt strongly in the predominantly Albanian-inhabited province of Kosovo. Here, Serb-Albanian antagonisms have long simmered. Kosovo is one of the two autonomous provinces attached to the republic of Serbia. The Serbs and Albanians disagree over what the region's relationship to Serbia should be. Indeed the Albanians question whether it should have any ties to

the republic at all. For the Serbs, the province is hallowed ground, the site of their defeat by invading Turks in 1389. Moreover, the first Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, established in 1346, is located in the Kosovo town of Pec. Most Serbs feel, if only for historical reasons, they should have a say in the running of the province. The Albanians, on the other hand, make up 74 percent of the population. They claim that, as descendants of the Illyrians, they are the original inhabitants and that the Slavs are interlopers.

Albanian aspirations stirred in the latter half of 1960 with the ouster of Rankovic and the gradual easing of the political climate in Yugoslavia. Demands for language and employment equality, increased economic aid, and greater political autonomy were followed in 1968 by public demonstrations. Since then, federal authorities have put new emphasis on solving Kosovo's problems and have singled the region out for massive economic assistance. They reason that if the province's enormous problems can be overcome, then the federation will have passed a major hurdle in reducing the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots."

In fact, with the federal government putting so much of its money and prestige on the line in Kosovo, the province may become the bellwether for Yugoslavia. The attitude of Serbia will be crucial. Nationality disturbances involving Serbs living in Kosovo could have serious repercussions in Serbia proper, alienating that republic from the whole reform process. Thus, the federal authorities must satisfy the demands of the basically primitive and highly explosive Albanians without offending Serbian sensitivities.

The nationality tensions in the province are ready made for foreign meddling. Tirane, which for years flooded the area with its particular brand of Marxist-Leninist propaganda, recently toned down broadcasts to Kosovo following improved Albanian-Yugoslav relations. Tirane, however, has not given up its claim to speak out on behalf of its fellow Albanians in Yugoslavia.

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Vojvodina: Emerging "Yugoslavism"

Serbia's other autonomous province, Vojvodina, is the breadbasket of Yugoslavia. This ethnically complex province contains over 900,000 Serbs, 500,000 Hungarians, 150,000 Croats, 90,000 Slovaks, and 65,000 Romanians; the remaining 236,000 inhabitants are Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, and Ruthenians.

Vojvodina, despite its diverse national make-up, has been remarkably free of chauvinism, and its Croatian minority was not aroused by the recent events in Croatia. In World War II, indigenous German and Hungarian elements committed a number of excesses against the local Serbian population. But in the post-war period, the province has succeeded in developing an exemplary relationship among its nationalities.

Nowhere else in Yugoslavia is the feeling of being a "Yugoslav" as well developed as here. A remarkably high number of mixed marriages have contributed to this. The tranquility of the province's Hungarians and Romanians is in part a by-product of Yugoslavia's good relations with neighboring Romania and Hungary.

Macedonia
71.2% - Macedonians
*13.0% - Albanians
9.4% - Turks
6.4% - Other

*Recent data indicates a drop to 11%.

MACEDONIA**Federation Means Survival**

Macedonian nationalism is inextricably linked with the existence of a Yugoslav nation. The Macedonians have nothing to gain and everything to lose should the federal system fail. Only through membership in the federation has the distinctness of the Macedonians been recognized and allowed expression. Although Macedonia may at times have sympathized with Croatian positions, the republic's nationalism has never run counter to the basic interests of the federation.

Situated at the southeastern end of the country next to Bulgaria, the republic of Macedonia was established after World War II. Sofia refuses to recognize the existence of a Macedonian nation, culture, and language—a refusal most Yugoslav Macedonians read as an expression of age-old Bulgarian claims to the region. Bulgarian needling over the "Macedonian question" has only heightened the republic's sense of national identity and solidified its ties to Yugoslavia.

The only minority problem within the republic centers on the Albanians who comprise

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approximately 11 percent of the population. They are an irritant in Yugoslav-Albanian relations. In late 1968, at the time of the demonstrations in Kosovo, violence erupted in several predominantly Albanian towns in Macedonia, including the fairly large community of Tetovo. Since then, however, the situation has been calm.

Nationalism and the Economy

Economic problems have in recent years severely complicated the nationality problem. Enmities will persist at least as long as there are economic disparities between the different regions of Yugoslavia. Belgrade recognizes this and has become a clearing house for redistributing capital from richer to poorer regions in an effort to close the gap between the "haves" and "have nots." The policy has had only minor success, creating nearly as many problems as it has solved. There is a huge income gap between the richer north and poorer south. There is also a basic contradiction in national policy intended to resolve the problem: the political objective of closing the gap conflicts with the economic goal of achieving a more efficient, stable economy. The result is a compromise and not much progress toward either objective.

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR UNDERDEVELOPED REGIONS

1966	\$ 39,600,000
1967	92,160,000
1968	110,240,000
1969	115,600,000
1970	147,520,000

The funds are divided almost equally between Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia.

Economically advanced republics such as Croatia complain loudly that they are being bled dry of the investment resources and foreign exchange needed to modernize and expand their own industrial plant. Nationalists in Croatia raised this argument prior to the political upheavals there. Even so, the provinces and the republics that do get the money are dissatisfied. The differing socioeconomic backgrounds, the disparity in natural resources, and the varying rates of population growth make it clear that the economic disparities will persist and continue to complicate the nationality question indefinitely.

Meddling from Abroad

Belgrade is acutely aware of its vulnerability to outside meddling. The Yugoslavs must contend not only with the highly volatile community of Yugoslav emigres in the West but also with the Soviets. On the latter, Yugoslav apprehensions have roots which pre-date the Tito-Stalin break of 1948. In 1934, the Comintern proposed the dismemberment of Yugoslavia along nationality lines. The willingness of Stalin and subsequent Soviet leaders to prod Belgrade on Bulgarian claims to Macedonia has kept Yugoslav concern alive.

There are reports of Soviet support for Croatian emigres in the West. Although conclusive proof of Soviet involvement is lacking, one fact is clear: throughout 1971 Croatia was subjected to an unprecedented volume of emigre separatist propaganda. Rumors have since circulated that some of the top leaders who were ousted in December had direct ties to these emigres and in some unspecified way played a part in activities in Croatia.

There are fascist emigre groups, collectively known as the *Ustashi*, which have a brutal history of bombing and killing. Last April, they assassinated the Yugoslav ambassador to Sweden and wounded several members of the Yugoslav Embassy staff in Stockholm. They apparently were responsible for four bombings in January which took 27 lives and caused numerous injuries.

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When Tito Goes

The struggle to create a Yugoslav national identity will continue. After 27 years in power, Tito is still trying to forge a nation in which the constituent ethnic groups set regional prejudices aside in the interest of the federation as a whole. Yugoslavia has made some progress toward this goal. Nevertheless, Croatian nationalism late last year provided a sharp setback to the one body that supposedly had rid itself of republic nationalism—the Communist Party. The federal party has been shaken by its inability to handle the situation. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia now has to face cold reality—the post-war successes of Communism are mainly attributable to the leadership of Tito rather than the application of Marxism-Leninism.

The party has set about recovering lost ground, focusing its initial efforts on Croatia and to a lesser extent on Kosovo. Elsewhere, for example in Slovenia and Vojvodina, there is a high degree of political maturity and willingness to put regional nationalism aside in an effort to work within the decentralized system. Even Serbia is displaying significant flexibility in setting aside past national prejudices.

There are forces at work that augur well for the federation. Social mobility and, to a lesser

extent, internal migration stemming from rapid industrialization are chipping away at regional prejudices. The mixing and fusing of peoples goes slowly, but it has been speeded up since the end of the war and ultimately could save Yugoslav unity. In recent years, the regime has consulted the populace on numerous problems concerning the nation's future. This dialogue and the fact that some decisions are being made by consensus at high levels in the party and government give the country's diverse nationalities a voice and a stake in a unified future. These efforts already may have paid dividends in helping prevent the Croatian nationalist example from spreading to other regions.

No high-ranking Yugoslav official, least of all President Tito, wants to throw over this unique system. The chief executive is nearly 80 and in a race against time. Opportunities to bring the force of his personality to bear as a stabilizing factor will be limited. And, at the same time, a major shift in power relationships is taking place. The armed forces, which have consistently been loyal to Tito, have taken on a broader political role as a major unifying force. Symbolic of this status is the fact that the military now has the right to participate in a non-voting capacity in sessions of the federal party executive bureau. The military stands ready to step in either now or in the succession period to aid the regime in maintaining the federation.

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