

# AN ALTERNATIVE TO PLANCHEREL'S CRITERION FOR BILINEAR OPERATORS

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ABSTRACT. We prove that bilinear operators associated with  $L^q$  multipliers with sufficiently many derivatives in  $L^\infty$  are bounded from  $L^2 \times L^2$  to  $L^1$  when  $q < 4$ . In the absence of Plancherel's identity on  $L^1$ , the range  $q < 4$  in the bilinear case should be compared to  $q = \infty$  in the classical  $L^2 \rightarrow L^2$  boundedness for linear multiplier operators.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Function spaces provide quantitative ways to measure integrability, smoothness, and to certain extent, cancellation properties of functions. A space of central importance is  $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$  which appears at the crossroads of many echelons of function spaces. An important feature of  $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$  is *Plancherel's identity*, which says that the Fourier transform

$$\widehat{f}(\xi) = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \int_{|x| \leq N} f(x) e^{-2\pi i x \cdot \xi} dx \quad (\text{limit in } L^2)$$

of a square-integrable function  $f$  satisfies

$$(1) \quad \|f\|_{L^2} = \|\widehat{f}\|_{L^2}$$

(here  $x \cdot y$  is the dot product on  $\mathbb{R}^n$ ). This simple identity provides an alternative way to calculate  $L^2$  norms. It also trivializes the characterization of the  $L^2$ -boundedness of convolution operators  $\varphi \mapsto \varphi * K$ , where  $K$  is a tempered distribution. Plancherel's identity yields that such a convolution operator is bounded on  $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$  if and only if the distributional Fourier transform of  $K$  is a bounded function. Convolution operators can also be expressed as multiplier operators. A multiplier operator has the form

$$S_m(\varphi)(x) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} m(\xi) \widehat{\varphi}(\xi) e^{2\pi i x \cdot \xi} d\xi,$$

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where  $m$  is a bounded function on  $\mathbb{R}^n$  and is initially defined on Schwartz functions  $\varphi$ . We note that  $S_m(\varphi) = \varphi * K$  whenever  $\widehat{K} = m$ . In view of Plancherel's identity we have

$$\|S_m(f)\|_{L^2} = \|\widehat{S_m(f)}\|_{L^2} = \|m\widehat{f}\|_{L^2}$$

and it follows from this that  $S_m$  is  $L^2$  bounded if and only if  $m$  is an  $L^\infty$  function. Moreover, the norm of  $S_m$  from  $L^2$  to itself is equal to  $\|m\|_{L^\infty}$ . This simple characterization of the  $L^2 \rightarrow L^2$  boundedness of multiplier operators is a direct consequence of Plancherel's identity, and for this reason we simply refer to it as *Plancherel's criterion*.

In this note we ask whether there exist boundedness criteria for *bilinear translation-invariant operators* analogous to Plancherel's criterion. Bilinear translation-invariant operators have the form

$$T(f, g)(x) = \text{p.v.} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} K(x - y, x - z) f(y) g(z) dy dz, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^n,$$

where where  $f, g$  are Schwartz functions and  $K$  is a distribution on  $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$  that coincides with a suitable function on  $\mathbb{R}^{2n} \setminus \{(0, 0)\}$ . These operators can also be expressed as *bilinear multiplier operators*, i.e., operators of the form

$$T_m(f, g)(x) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} m(\xi, \eta) \widehat{f}(\xi) \widehat{g}(\eta) e^{2\pi i x \cdot (\xi + \eta)} d\xi d\eta,$$

initially defined for Schwartz functions  $f, g$  where  $m$  is a bounded function on  $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$ . Note that  $m$  coincides with the distributional Fourier transform of  $K$ . We refer to [4, Section 6] for general material related to the bilinear translation-invariant operators. These operators may map the product  $L^{p_1}(\mathbb{R}^n) \times L^{p_2}(\mathbb{R}^n)$  to  $L^p(\mathbb{R}^n)$  when  $1/p_1 + 1/p_2 = 1/p$  but in this note, we only focus on the  $L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1$  boundedness of such operators. Such estimates are central and play the same role in bilinear theory as the  $L^2$  boundedness plays in linear multiplier theory. As Plancherel's identity (1) does not hold on  $L^1$ , there does not seem to be a straightforward way to characterize the boundedness of bilinear multiplier operators from  $L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1$ . But for functions  $m$  with bounded derivatives up to a certain order, such a characterization is possible.

As we restrict attention to multipliers all of whose derivatives are bounded, we introduce the space

$$\mathcal{L}^\infty(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) = \{m : \mathbb{R}^{2n} \rightarrow \mathbb{C} : \partial^\alpha m \text{ exist for all } \alpha \text{ and } \|\partial^\alpha m\|_{L^\infty} < \infty\}.$$

In the linear setting we have  $m \in L^\infty$  if and only if the corresponding linear operator is bounded on  $L^2$ . So one may guess that a bilinear operator  $T_m$  is bounded from  $L^2 \times L^2$  to  $L^1$  when  $m$  lies in  $\mathcal{L}^\infty$ . However Bényi and Torres [1] provided an example of a function  $m \in \mathcal{L}^\infty$  for which the associated bilinear operator  $T_m$  is unbounded from  $L^{p_1} \times L^{p_2}$  to  $L^p$  for any  $1 \leq p_1, p_2 < \infty$  satisfying  $1/p = 1/p_1 + 1/p_2$ . The counterexample of Bényi and Torres is also complemented by a subsequent positive result of He, Honzík, and the author [2, Corollary 8], who showed that the mere  $L^2$  integrability of functions in  $\mathcal{L}^\infty$  suffices to yield the  $L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1$  boundedness of  $T_m$ .

It turns out that the magnitude of integrability of a function  $m$  in  $\mathcal{L}^\infty$  characterizes the boundedness of the bilinear multiplier operator  $T_m$  from  $L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1$ . We provide a proof of the main direction of this equivalence, the one that yields the boundedness of the operator.

**Theorem 1.1.** [3] *Let  $1 \leq q < 4$  and set  $M_q = \left\lfloor \frac{2n}{4-q} \right\rfloor + 1$ . Let  $m$  be a function in  $L^q(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) \cap \mathcal{C}^{M_q}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  satisfying*

$$(2) \quad \|\partial^\alpha m\|_{L^\infty} \leq C_0 < \infty \quad \text{for all multiindices } \alpha \text{ with } |\alpha| \leq M_q.$$

*Then there is a constant  $C$  depending on  $n$  and  $q$  such that the bilinear operator  $T_m$  with multiplier  $m$  satisfies*

$$(3) \quad \|T_m\|_{L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1} \leq C C_0^{1-\frac{q}{4}} \|m\|_{L^q}^{\frac{q}{4}}.$$

Additionally, we are aware of examples indicating that for any  $q \geq 4$  there exist functions  $m \in L^q(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) \cap \mathcal{L}^\infty(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  such that the associated operator  $T_m$  does not map  $L^2 \times L^2$  to  $L^1$ ; see [3] for  $q > 4$  and [5] for  $q = 4$ . These counterexamples complement Theorem 1.1 and indicate its sharpness; as this note is based on the lecture of the author at the Function Spaces XII conference, we do not describe these counterexamples here.

## 2. PRODUCT-TYPE WAVELETS

We plan to outline the proof of Theorem 1.1. This is based on the product-type wavelet method initiated by He, Honzík and the author in [2]. Our approach here incorporates several crucial combinatorial improvements. For the sake of a simple and clear presentation, we prove Theorem 1.1 only in the case where  $n = 1$ .

We recall some facts related to product-type wavelets that will be crucial in our approach of proving Theorem 1.1 For a fixed  $M \in \mathbb{N}$  there exist real-valued compactly supported functions  $\psi_F, \psi_M$  in  $\mathcal{C}^k(\mathbb{R})$ ,

called *father wavelet* and *mother wavelet*, respectively, that satisfy

$$\|\psi_F\|_{L^2(\mathbb{R})} = \|\psi_M\|_{L^2(\mathbb{R})} = 1$$

and

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} x^k \psi_M(x) dx = 0 \quad \text{for all } 0 \leq k \leq M.$$

Then the family of functions

$$\begin{aligned} & \bigcup_{\mu_1, \mu_2 \in \mathbb{Z}} \left\{ \psi_F(x_1 - \mu_1) \psi_F(x_2 - \mu_2) \right\} \\ & \cup \bigcup_{\mu_1, \mu_2 \in \mathbb{Z}} \bigcup_{\lambda=0}^{\infty} \left\{ 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_F(2^\lambda x_1 - \mu_1) 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_M(2^\lambda x_2 - \mu_2) \right\} \\ & \cup \bigcup_{\mu_1, \mu_2 \in \mathbb{Z}} \bigcup_{\lambda=0}^{\infty} \left\{ 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_M(2^\lambda x_1 - \mu_1) 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_F(2^\lambda x_2 - \mu_2) \right\} \\ & \cup \bigcup_{\mu_1, \mu_2 \in \mathbb{Z}} \bigcup_{\lambda=0}^{\infty} \left\{ 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_M(2^\lambda x_1 - \mu_1) 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_M(2^\lambda x_2 - \mu_2) \right\} \end{aligned}$$

forms an orthonormal basis of  $L^2(\mathbb{R}^2)$ . This result is due to Triebel<sup>1</sup> and its proof can be found in Triebel [6].

We denote by  $\mathcal{J}$  the set of all pairs  $(\lambda, G)$  such that either  $\lambda = 0$  and  $G = (F, F)$ , or  $\lambda$  is a nonnegative integer and  $G$  has the form  $(F, M)$ ,  $(M, F)$ , or  $(M, M)$ . For  $(\lambda, G) \in \mathcal{J}$  and  $(\mu_1, \mu_2) \in \mathbb{Z}^2$  we set

$$\Psi_{\mu_1, \mu_2}^{\lambda, G}(x_1, x_2) = 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_{G_1}(2^\lambda x_1 - \mu_1) 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \psi_{G_2}(2^\lambda x_2 - \mu_2).$$

for  $(x_1, x_2) \in \mathbb{R}^2$ , where  $G = (G_1, G_2)$  and  $(\lambda, G) \in \mathcal{J}$ .

The cancellation of wavelets is manifested in the following result.

**Lemma 2.1.** *Let  $M$  be a positive integer. Assume that  $m \in \mathcal{C}^{M+1}$  is a function on  $\mathbb{R}^2$  such that*

$$\sup_{|\alpha| \leq M+1} \|\partial^\alpha m\|_{L^\infty} \leq C_0 < \infty.$$

*Then for  $(\lambda, G) \in \mathcal{J}$  and  $(\mu_1, \mu_2) \in \mathbb{Z}^2$  we have*

$$(4) \quad |\langle \Psi_{\mu_1, \mu_2}^{\lambda, G}, m \rangle| \leq CC_0 2^{-(M+2)\lambda},$$

*provided that  $\psi_M$  has  $M$  vanishing moments.*

This lemma can be easily proved and is essentially a restatement of Lemma 7 in [2]. Note that if  $G = (F, F)$  there is no cancellation, however, there is no decay claimed in (4), as  $\lambda = 0$  in this case.

<sup>1</sup>as confirmed by him during the Function Spaces XII conference

## 3. PROOF OF THEOREM 1.1

*Proof.* To prove the theorem we use the product type wavelets introduced in the previous section. We begin by fixing a large number  $M$  to be determined later, which denotes the number of vanishing moments of the mother wavelet.

For  $(\lambda, G) \in \mathcal{J}$  and  $\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2$  we denote the wavelet coefficient by

$$b_\mu^{\lambda, G} = \langle \Psi_\mu^{\lambda, G}, m \rangle.$$

By [7, Theorem 1.64] and by the fact that  $L^q = F_{q,2}^0$ , we obtain

$$(5) \quad \|m\|_{L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)} \approx \left\| \left( \sum_{(\lambda, G) \in \mathcal{J}} \sum_{\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2} |b_\mu^{\lambda, G} 2^\lambda \chi_{Q_{\lambda\mu}}|^2 \right)^{1/2} \right\|_{L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)},$$

where  $Q_{\lambda\mu}$  is the cube centered at  $2^{-\lambda}\mu$  with sidelength  $2^{1-\lambda}$ .

Now, let us fix  $(\lambda, G) \in \mathcal{J}$ . For notational simplicity, we write  $b_\mu$  instead of  $b_\mu^{\lambda, G}$  in what follows. We also denote by  $\tilde{Q}_{\lambda\mu}$  the cube centered at  $2^{-\lambda}\mu$  with sidelength  $2^{-\lambda}$ . Noting that these cubes are pairwise disjoint in  $\mu$  (for the fixed value of  $\lambda$ ), the equivalence (5) yields

$$\begin{aligned} \|m\|_{L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)} &\gtrsim 2^\lambda \left\| \left( \sum_{\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2} |b_\mu|^2 \chi_{Q_{\lambda\mu}} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \right\|_{L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)} \\ &\geq 2^\lambda \left\| \left( \sum_{\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2} |b_\mu|^2 \chi_{\tilde{Q}_{\lambda\mu}} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \right\|_{L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)} \\ &= 2^\lambda \left\| \sum_{\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2} |b_\mu| \chi_{\tilde{Q}_{\lambda\mu}} \right\|_{L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)} \\ &= 2^{\lambda(1-\frac{2}{q})} \left( \sum_{\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2} |b_\mu|^q \right)^{\frac{1}{q}}. \end{aligned}$$

Setting  $b = (b_\mu)_{\mu \in \mathbb{Z}^2}$ , the preceding sequence of inequalities yields

$$(6) \quad \|b\|_{\ell^q} \leq C 2^{-\lambda(1-\frac{2}{q})} \|m\|_{L^q}$$

Also, Lemma 2.1 implies that

$$(7) \quad \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} \leq CC_0 2^{-\lambda(M+2)},$$

where  $M$  is the number of vanishing moments of  $\psi_M$ .

We have an infinite  $\times$  infinite matrix of wavelet coefficients indexed by  $\mathbb{Z}^2$ . To better organize these coefficients, define

$$U_r = \{(k, l) \in \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z} = \mathbb{Z}^2 : 2^{-r-1} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} < |b_{(k,l)}| \leq 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty}\},$$

where  $r$  is a nonnegative integer. Also, we write  $U_r$  as a union of the following two disjoint sets:

$$\begin{aligned} U_r^1 &= \{(k, l) \in U_r : \text{card}\{s : (k, s) \in U_r\} \geq K\}; \\ U_r^2 &= \{(k, l) \in U_r : \text{card}\{s : (k, s) \in U_r\} < K\}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $K$  is a positive number to be determined. Thinking of  $U_r$  an infinite  $\times$  infinite matrix with integers entries, in this splitting, we placed in  $U_r^1$  all columns of  $U_r$  that have size greater than or equal to  $K$  and in  $U_r^2$  the remaining ones. We call  $U_r^1$  the long columns of  $U_r$  and  $U_r^2$  the short columns. Let us denote

$$E = \{k \in \mathbb{Z} : (k, l) \in U_r^1 \text{ for some } l \in \mathbb{Z}\}.$$

This set is exactly the set of projections of all long columns. Then

$$(\text{card}E) K [2^{-(r+1)} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty}]^q \leq \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r^1} |b_{(k,l)}|^q \leq \|b\|_{\ell^q}^q,$$

and therefore

$$(8) \quad \text{card}E \leq K^{-1} [2^{-(r+1)} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty}]^{-q} \|b\|_{\ell^q}^q$$

Having separated the wavelet coefficients in groups we proceed with the analysis of the sums of the decomposition associated these groups. Given  $(k, l) \in \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}$ , it follows from the definition of  $\Psi_{(k,l)}^{\lambda,G}$  that  $\Psi_{(k,l)}^{\lambda,G}$  can be written in the tensor product form

$$\Psi_{(k,l)}^{\lambda,G}(x_1, x_2) = \omega_{1,k}(x_1)\omega_{2,l}(x_2)$$

and

$$\|\omega_{1,k}\|_{L^\infty} \approx \|\omega_{2,l}\|_{L^\infty} = 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}}.$$

Define

$$m^{r,1} = \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r^1} b_{(k,l)} \Psi_{(k,l)}^{\lambda,G} = \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r^1} b_{(k,l)} \omega_{1,k} \omega_{2,l}.$$

Let  $\mathcal{F}^{-1}$  denote the inverse Fourier transform. Then

$$\begin{aligned} & \|T_{m^{r,1}}(f, g)\|_{L^1} \\ & \leq \left\| \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r^1} b_{(k,l)} \mathcal{F}^{-1}(\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}) \mathcal{F}^{-1}(\omega_{2,l} \widehat{g}) \right\|_{L^1} \\ & \leq \sum_{k \in E} \|\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}\|_{L^2} \left\| \sum_{l: (k,l) \in U_r^1} b_{(k,l)} \omega_{2,l} \widehat{g} \right\|_{L^2} \\ & \leq C \sum_{k \in E} \|\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}\|_{L^2} 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} \|g\|_{L^2} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\leq C \left( \sum_{k \in E} 1 \right)^{1/2} \left( \sum_{k \in E} \|\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}\|_{L^2}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} \|g\|_{L^2} \\
 &\leq C \left\{ K^{-\frac{1}{2}} [2^{-(r+1)} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty}]^{-\frac{q}{2}} \|b\|_{\ell^q}^{\frac{q}{2}} \right\} \left\{ 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} \right\} 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \|f\|_{L^2} \|g\|_{L^2},
 \end{aligned}$$

where we used estimate (8) and the property that the supports of the functions  $\omega_{1,k}$  and  $\omega_{2,l}$  have finite overlap.

Now define

$$m^{r,2} = \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r^2} b_{(k,l)} \omega_{1,k} \omega_{2,l}.$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned}
 \|T_{m^{r,2}}(f, g)\|_{L^1} &\leq \left\| \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r^2} b_{(k,l)} \mathcal{F}^{-1}(\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}) \mathcal{F}^{-1}(\omega_{2,l} \widehat{g}) \right\|_{L^1} \\
 &\leq \sum_{l: \exists k (k,l) \in U_r^2} \|\omega_{2,l} \widehat{g}\|_{L^2} \left\| \sum_{k: (k,l) \in U_r^2} b_{(k,l)} \omega_{1,k} \widehat{f} \right\|_{L^2} \\
 &\leq \left( \sum_{l \in \mathbb{Z}} \|\omega_{2,l} \widehat{g}\|_{L^2}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \left( \sum_{l: \exists k (k,l) \in U_r^2} \left\| \sum_{k: (k,l) \in U_r^2} b_{(k,l)} \omega_{1,k} \widehat{f} \right\|_{L^2}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\
 &\leq C 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \|g\|_{L^2} \left( \sum_{k: \exists l (k,l) \in U_r^2} \|\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}\|_{L^2}^2 \sum_{l: (k,l) \in U_r^2} |b_{(k,l)}|^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\
 &\leq C 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \|g\|_{L^2} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} K^{\frac{1}{2}} \left( \sum_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} \|\omega_{1,k} \widehat{f}\|_{L^2}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\
 &\leq C 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} K^{\frac{1}{2}} 2^{\frac{\lambda}{2}} \|f\|_{L^2} \|g\|_{L^2}.
 \end{aligned}$$

We have now obtained the estimates for an unknown quantity  $K$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 \|T_{\sigma_1^r}(f, g)\|_{L^1} &\leq C K^{-\frac{1}{2}} [2^{-(r+1)} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty}]^{-\frac{q}{2}} \|b\|_{\ell^q}^{\frac{q}{2}} 2^{\lambda} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} \|f\|_{L^2} \|g\|_{L^2} \\
 \|T_{\sigma_2^r}(f, g)\|_{L^1} &\leq C 2^{\lambda} 2^{-r} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty} K^{\frac{1}{2}} \|f\|_{L^2} \|g\|_{L^2}.
 \end{aligned}$$

We choose  $K$  optimally so that the two quantities on the right above are equal. The optimal choice of  $K$  is

$$K = \left( \frac{2^r \|b\|_{\ell^q}}{\|b\|_{\ell^\infty}} \right)^{\frac{q}{2}}$$

which yields for

$$m^r = \sum_{(k,l) \in U_r} b_{(k,l)} \omega_{1,k} \omega_{2,l} = m^{r,1} + m^{r,2}$$

the estimate

$$\|T_{m^r}\|_{L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1} \leq C 2^{\lambda} 2^{-r(1-\frac{q}{4})} \|b\|_{\ell^\infty}^{1-\frac{q}{4}} \|b\|_{\ell^q}^{\frac{q}{4}}.$$

Using (6) and (7) we obtain

$$\|T_{m^r}\|_{L^2 \times L^2 \rightarrow L^1} \leq CC_0^{1-\frac{q}{4}} 2^{\lambda-\lambda(1-\frac{q}{4})(M+2)+(\frac{2}{q}-1)\frac{q}{4}\lambda} 2^{-r(1-\frac{q}{4})} \|m\|_{L^q}^{\frac{q}{4}}.$$

But

$$2^{\lambda-\lambda(1-\frac{q}{4})(M+2)+(\frac{2}{q}-1)\frac{q}{4}\lambda} = 2^{\lambda[\frac{1}{2}-\frac{4-q}{4}(M+1)]}$$

and the exponent is negative only when  $M+1 > \frac{2}{4-q}$ . Thus, if we choose  $M = \lfloor \frac{2}{4-q} \rfloor$ , we can sum first over  $r$  and then over  $(\lambda, G)$  in  $\mathcal{J}$ , obtaining (3). This completes the proof of Theorem 1.1.  $\square$

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