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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 April 1987

Dear Charles,

at flap

Visit of M Chirac: 26 April

This letter contains briefing as requested in your letter of 13 April. As you will appreciate, the Foreign Secretary is overseas and has not been able to consider it.

Chirac's domestic position is considerably less rosy than when he and the Prime Minister last met, at the European Council in December. Things started to go wrong when French students took to the streets in that month to protest at modest proposals to reform higher education: Chirac first insisted that he would not yield to pressure, then, after the death of a student, did so, thereby giving the impression of indecisiveness. A strike by French railwaymen and power workers was eventually resolved without breach of public sector pay policy, but left France cold, dark and immobile over the New Year. Economic indicators in recent months have suggested that inflation and employment will be higher, and growth rate lower, than Chirac needs to prove the success of his Government's policy. French efforts to secure the release of all the French hostages in the Lebanon have been repeatedly frustrated. Six are still held. All these elements have contributed to a sharp drop in Chirac's showing in the opinion polls, and have increased the governing coalition's fissiparous tendencies.

Chirac's chances of achieving a triumphant two years as Prime Minister on which to base his campaign in the Presidential elections due by May 1988 have therefore been much reduced, although his standing could yet rise again. His government have put off ambitious social initiatives (such as reforming nationality law) and are concentrating on uncontroversial management. He asserts that the maturity date for his economic policy should be completion of the internal market in 1992, rather than elections in 1988. He has both the government and party machines at his disposal, and is a formidable campaigner. His visit to Chequers, like that last month to Washington and his proposed trip to Moscow in May, is intended to raise his status on the international stage. But for the moment Barre is the front-running candidate of the Right for those elections.

/East/West Issues

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East/West Issues

Chirac's office have said that he will want to put East/West issues and arms control at the top of the agenda at Chequers. He will be interested in hearing the Prime Minister's account of her visit to Moscow, especially in view of his own projected visit. We understand that the French have proposed dates around 14-15 May, but the Russians have not yet reacted, perhaps because of recent tit-for-tat expulsions after the French discovered a spying operation - involving Soviet diplomats - against Ariane's rocket-motor technology. Chirac has expressed unconcern about the visit, which may not be wholly feigned: he knows that the Prime Minister's visit will be a hard act to follow.

It will also be a useful opportunity to exchange assessments of where the Alliance now stands, following Mr Shultz's visit to Moscow. The Prime Minister should say that we welcomed the fact that the US did not enter into any commitment on INF, but committed themselves to consult Allies. Gorbachev's proposal for zero-zero down to 500kms will require an early response from the Alliance. While we share French concerns over denuclearisation of Europe, Gorbachev's proposal cleverly responds to our concern about circumvention by SRINF of an LRINF agreement, which the Prime Minister explained to Mr Gorbachev, by an offer to abolish the former. Shultz finds the zero-zero offer hard to refuse. Our decisions will need to be based on military advice as well as careful political judgement. We shall need to keep in mind the wide range of systems (not just land-based missiles) available to give effect to strategy. We must be able to explain to our publics where we decide to draw the line, and be ready and able to carry through any matching deployment that we decide is necessary in order to maintain our strategic position.

During the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union Mr Gorbachev agreed on a step-by-step approach and on priorities within it. He also agreed to consider ideas on ways ahead on strategic weapons. It is to be hoped that this will allow the two sides to pursue 50% cuts. Mr Shultz's statement to the Allies that the 10-year prospect for the complete abolition of ballistic missiles is not at present being addressed is welcome.

Gorbachev has also offered separate talks on conventional forces and tactical missiles with a range of less than 500km. We shall need to consider very carefully how best to deal with the still shorter range systems, given the Soviet preponderance in those and in the conventional and chemical fields.

/Discussions



Discussions on conventional stability between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Vienna are currently in recess and resume on 11 May. Progress hitherto has been slightly greater than expected, but the task of Alliance negotiators is complicated by continued feuding between the French and Americans over the relationship between the eventual negotiations and the CSCE process, specifically further work on confidence building. The French want explicit linkage, the Americans total separation. We are content to see some sort of linkage between the two sets of negotiations and concerned that procedural disagreements are impeding consideration of substance. The Prime Minister could usefully emphasise to M Chirac the need to reach a common position within the Alliance soon. She might add that as far as the United Kingdom is concerned the essential points are that negotiations about "conventional stability" (ie the possible limitation and reduction of armed forces) should take place between the 23 governments of NATO and the Warsaw Pact; and that decisions about the terms of reference for and conduct of such negotiations should also be taken by those 23 governments only. Provided that these conditions are met we would be open to some form of broad political linkage with the CSCE (which is what the French want) and to systematic arrangements for informing the neutral countries about the course of the negotiations and for allowing them to make some kind of occasional input. We would also be content for the conventional stability talks and the further talks on confidence building measures to take place in the same city, starting at the same time.

This apart, we have the impression that France is not much interested in coordinating positions with other Western countries at the Vienna CSCE meeting. This applies particularly to coordination within the NATO sixteen. The Prime Minister could point out to M Chirac that the West must speak with one voice if we are to avoid falling prey to Soviet wedge-driving and get a result that meets our collective security interests.

EC Issues

In discussion of Community financing we recommend that the Prime Minister reiterate our wish to work with the French Government. The French attach particular importance to control of non-obligatory expenditure but they are prepared to see changes to the individual CAP commodity regimes, particularly cereals. Like us, the French do not accept the Commission's proposal to increase their own resource ceiling to 1.4% of GNP. They are, however, willing to see an increase in the VAT ceiling to 1.6% at the end of the year. More detailed notes on EC issues are attached.

/Other International Issues



Other International Issues

Venice Summit

We expect the Summit discussion to focus on world growth prospects, imbalances and exchange rates. We and the French share the view that the general directions of policy must be:

- a more credible US approach by Administration and Congress to reducing their fiscal deficit;
- action by Japan to reduce its external surplus by more vigorous growth of domestic demand and more imports; and
- more vigorous growth of German domestic demand.

These prescriptions are needed to maintain good total growth prospects and to support continuing exchange rate stability - as also is avoidance of protectionism. On major (middle-income) debtors, the need is to persevere with, develop and strengthen the case-by-case strategy which was first fully set out at the London Summit.

Chirac may raise French ideas for an initiative in Venice on the treatment of the poorest countries, especially of Sub-Saharan Africa. They had begun to canvass unpromising ideas for special IMF/IBRD facilities at cheap rates to finance debt repayment and to compensate for loss of export proceeds due to low commodity prices. At the recent IMF/IBRD meetings, the Chancellor made a more direct proposal:

- conversion of past aid loans to outright grants (the UK and some others have been doing this);
- very long rescheduling periods, up to 20 years, for official debt (the main part of the debt of these poorest countries is official, not commercial bank, debt);
- reduction of interest rates on official debt to a few points below the market rate (a new proposal, but essential if the future burden of debt is not to grow for ever by successive capitalisation of unpaid current interest).

The Prime Minister might commend this approach to Chirac, and hope that the French will help to see it put into effect. We hope by the time of the Summit to have attracted at least majority support.

/WEU

WEU

The French are concerned that the Europeans may be divided by Gorbachev's arms control proposals, and look to WEU as a means of keeping them together. Chirac's proposal for a WEU Charter of Principles on European Security (first presented in December) is advocated by the French as a means of rallying public support in Europe for nuclear deterrence and for European and trans-Atlantic solidarity on defence. The proposal is now being followed up by means of an internal WEU document (which is coming out on lines acceptable to us). The French accept that there will be no public declaration at the WEU Ministerial meeting on 27/28 April. But they would like to see further work within WEU leading to a substantial public statement - Chirac would still like this to be a "Charter" - at the next WEU Ministerial meeting in the autumn. We recommend that the Prime Minister welcome the substance of the principles enunciated by Chirac in his December speech and the closeness of British and French views on security issues. She should however question the effect within the Alliance of any solemn declaration on security issued by the WEU and emphasise her concern that any eventual public communique or statement must not be divisive within NATO or generate American misgivings.

Arab/Israel

Chirac would no doubt be interested to have an account of the Prime Minister's discussions of Arab/Israel with King Hussein on 9 April. It would be useful to underline the importance of the UN Secretary-General's informal consultations with the Five Permanent Security Council Members, amongst others, aimed at finding common ground for an international conference. We recommend that she stress that our commitment to advancing the peace process is in no way reduced by our break in relations with Syria. Syria must not be allowed to create divisions among the Twelve or to camouflage her own reluctance to enter serious dialogue about peace. There has been no change in Syrian policy to justify renewed EC Presidency contacts with Damascus.

Iran/Iraq and Shipping in the Gulf

The French, while working as fellow Permanent Members in Security Council discussions, have misrepresented our views on a settlement to the conflict. They may believe this helps them in Iraq. They may be trying to discredit us with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries over our approach to a EC/GCC agreement. We need to look for ways of working with the French while giving them no excuse to present Britain to the Arabs as complacent, dilatory or unimaginative. The Prime Minister might take the line that France and Britain are Permanent Members with experience of the Middle

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East, who can and should work together in seeking ways of ending this conflict. Britain has been working for months at New York and in other contacts to identify effective ways of getting both combatants to stop fighting and start talking. The momentum of talks among the Five in New York risks being lost, because Iran cannot be brought into constructive dialogue. Largely to restore their credibility with the Gulf Arabs following Irangate, the Americans are pressing for a mandatory resolution now. Such a resolution may be necessary at some stage. But is there no mileage left in talks between the UN Secretary-General and the parties?

The other area of cooperation with France concerns shipping in the Gulf. Anglo-French Naval staff talks have taken place, and political talks are set for 23 April. The Prime Minister might underline our keenness for close cooperation with the French on the spot, mainly exchanges of information: two experienced medium powers should remain sufficiently active to be a force for moderation. The Silkworm missile is a new, destabilizing element on which Chirac's opinion would be valuable.

Falkland Islands

We recommend that the Prime Minister reiterate our continuing concern about any French arms sales to Argentina which might increase the threat against the Falklands, particularly airfield attack weapons, advanced combat aircraft and missile control technology. (We have no evidence of imminent sales of equipment, but cannot be sure that the French would not yield to the temptation of profitable contracts.) If the question of FICZ arises the Prime Minister might note that the FICZ regime has been successfully operating since 1 February without incident, providing valuable opportunities for Community fishermen, including the French.

Bilateral Issues

There are two issues on which the French seek reassurance from us; and one on which we await satisfaction from them.

Channel Fixed Link. They have two worries. First is the possibility of a General Election delaying the Channel Tunnel Bill and thus putting a further question mark over the financing (Eurotunnel are also fretting about slow progress in the House of Lords). The Prime Minister can reassure M Chirac that even in the event of an early election final passage of the Bill could take place before the Summer Recess. Eurotunnel's raising of the third tranche of equity has in any case been postponed to October. Second is the delay in reaching agreement between British Rail and the SNCF and the two Governments on high-speed trains (principally because

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the French are dissatisfied with the frequency of through trains envisaged by BR in the peak period). This is putting in question the aim of announcing agreement in principle in June, which is required both to begin design and construction work and to enable Eurotunnel's financing to proceed. The delay is also causing the French to decline to commit themselves to equal shares of the construction business. In the light of further official level meetings with the French Mr Moore proposes to bring the Prime Minister up to date before she sees M Chirac.

Airbus The French Transport Ministry has recommended agreement to 90% launch aid for Aérospatiale for its share in the A330 and A340 projects; the Council of Ministers is due to consider the recommendation next week, and is likely to agree it. Chirac will be interested in our attitude to British Aerospace's request for launch aid in the same proportions. Negotiations continue between the Department of Trade and Industry and BAe; the latter have rejected offers of £300m and £400m (90% represents £750m). The four Airbus governments earlier agreed that decisions on launch aid need not be announced before the Paris Air Show in June; the FRG are not expected to decide on Messerschmidt Bolkow Blum's request for support until the end of May at the earliest.

Compensation for Lamb Lorries. When French farmers attacked a number of British lorries carrying lamb last October, the French Government promised full compensation for losses (French Agriculture Minister to Mr Jopling, and President Mitterrand to the Prime Minister during lunch at Downing Street on 16 October). French officials have since attempted to interpret this undertaking in a restrictive light, offering compensation only for physical damage to goods or drivers, but excluding other losses directly attributable to the attacks: (extra fuel costs, loss of return loads, drivers' time etc.) Such damages can run to £2000-£3000 per incident, causing significant financial hardship to UK companies. We understand that French Ministries are now seeking together a formula that will enable them to fulfil the assurances given in October. It would be useful if the Prime Minister could remind Chirac that this is a sensitive political issue in the United Kingdom, which needs to be resolved as promised if it is not to become an irritant again.

Bilateral Defence Relations

The French are taking a more forward position on defence issues than for many years. We are benefiting from this. Mr Younger's successful meeting with Giraud in March and the visit this month to Paris of the House of Commons Defence Committee have marked a new qualitative stage. We want this to continue. We are also gradually evolving a good nuclear relationship. We want to develop further

/collaboration



collaboration to coordinate equipment procurement. The proposed bilateral equipment collaboration conference in the autumn will be a good opportunity to take this forward. We are also still examining whether we can join forces with the French over the new generation of surface-to-air missiles.

Anglo-French arrangements for periodic exchanges of visits by nuclear-powered submarines have been put under threat by a problem over government indemnities in the event of an accident. Where HMG accepts unlimited liability, French legislation currently sets a limit of FF 500m. Initial indications are that the French are reluctant to accept our latest proposals (put to them last month) for resolving this difficulty. We do not recommend that the Prime Minister raise this, but if Chirac does, she might say that both sides share keenness for these visits to continue, but we need to be able to reassure our public opinion that full compensation would be paid in the event of an accident.

Franco-British Council

There have been indications that the French are tempted to interpret the Prime Minister's decision not to attend the Council's Conference in Cardiff at the end of May as indicating that we attach less importance than formerly to the Council's work. We recommend that the Prime Minister confirm to Chirac that this is not the case: that we still believe that the Council has an important role in extending the range of contacts between French and British people: that she intends to send the Conference a message and to receive the Council's two Chairmen afterwards to hear their report. If Chirac did the same, this would be useful confirmation that governments valued the Council's work.

I attach a scene-setting telegram from HM Embassy in Paris which gives further general background.

Yours ever

L Parker

(L Parker)
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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH M CHIRAC

COMMUNITY FINANCING

- We are not satisfied with the Commission's report. Their proposals are far too ambitious and loaded towards the Mediterranean. No question of our agreeing to doubling of the structural funds or an increase in own resources to 1.4% of GNP (equivalent to 2.1% VAT rate).
- We have to stabilise the budgetary costs of the CAP. These reforms are more of a problem for Germany than for France. If Germans continue to block price adjustments and agri-monetary reform, they will render the system unfinanceable. Must work together to persuade them of this.
- Recognise sensitivity of CAP in France. But we worked together to get decisions on milk and beef in December. Further adjustments have to be made, including reform of the agrimonetary system.
- Essential that expenditure control should apply to all parts of budget. For non-obligatory (non-agricultural) expenditure, we must ensure that the maximum rate of increase which is what the Community can afford, is not exceeded. We worked together to achieve this in the 1987 budget and must ensure that this becomes the rule for the future. Cannot accept that control should not apply to expenditure resulting from Single European Act.
- We have given your officials ideas on stabilising mechanisms for the CAP and on the control of non-obligatory expenditure. Ready to consider your ideas. Should continue to consult closely in run up to European Council.

[As necessary]

- Only when necessary changes in CAP and expenditure control have been made can we judge if any increase in own resources is needed.



- Fontainebleau Agreement stipulates that the maximum rate may be increased to 1.6% on 1 January 1988 by unanimous decision of the Council and after approval by national parliaments.

- We shall not put a proposal for any further increase to the present British Parliament. Decisions will not be reached at the June European Council. But we should use that meeting to get greater realism into these discussions, and to pave the way for solutions later, based on more effective expenditure control.

- Even with the Fontainebleau correction, we remain the second largest contributor to the Community budget. We are still contributing substantially more than France. We will not agree to any solution that would leave us worse off than Fontainebleau. Indeed, we should like to see some improvements.



[If M Chirac argues that a decision to increase the VAT ceiling to 1.6% will be necessary by the end of the year, and that this is also the German view]

- We will not go beyond the text of Fontainebleau. Our attitude will depend on whether it is possible to reach agreement on effective measures of expenditure control. That is the question that has to be addressed first.

[If M Chirac argues that EC expenditure on oils and fats can only be stabilised through the introduction of an oils and fats tax]

- Such a tax would simply pass on the costs to consumers. In Britain it would increase the price of margarine by 18% and vegetable oils by 33%. It would hit the exports of the developing countries. It also would trigger retaliation by the United States. We are ready to respond firmly to US protectionist actions, but not to start a trade conflict ourselves. The increase in costs in this sector should be dealt with as envisaged in the Spanish Accession Treaty, through the introduction of effective guarantee thresholds. We are working together on reforms in the cereals sector We have also to get reforms of the Mediterranean regimes, especially olive oil, notwithstanding Italian resistance.

[If M. Chirac raises the projected 1987 deficit]

- This will need to be dealt with by shifting from advance FEOGA payments to reimbursement. That will help expenditure control. We shall not provide finance outside the own resources. We would not participate in another inter-governmental agreement.



EC Research and Development (if raised)

- We have not accepted the Presidency proposal for a five year programme at 5.6 becus. There is no guarantee that the additional 800 million ecus due to be spent after 1991 could not be pulled forward into the programme. Cannot decide how much the Community can afford to spend on research until we know how it proposes to manage other expenditure.



INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE

- Important to keep up momentum for reform of world agriculture (not just CAP), in context of GATT. Current focus the OECD Ministerial (12-13 May). Common interest in engaging the US in negotiations on their farm subsidies while we carry forward CAP reform.



EC/TURKEY

- Now that Turkey has applied, important to handle application in a way that protects our interests and preserves Turkey's relations with the West. Should follow formal procedure under Article 237 of EEC Treaty, ie referral to Commission for its Opinion.

- Should discourage speculation about the outcome. Community will have its work cut out to absorb Spain and Portugal.

EC/JAPAN

- Must increase pressure on the Japanese both on specific issues and the restructuring of their economy. Following G5/G7 meetings in Washington (8-10 April) Japanese agreed to introduce a supplementary expansionary package in the autumn worth \$35bn (their figures).

- Venice Summit should bind the Japanese to their commitment to introduce the expansionary package and hold them to their commitment in G7 statement to open up their markets to foreign goods and services.

- EC has set in hand programme of action on Japan. Important to carry this forward. French support valuable. Need to see:

- accelerated processing of Commission proposals on anti-dumping of components.

- consideration of unbinding tariffs in XXIV.6 negotiations with Japan.

- rapid action to prevent diversion of exports if US take retaliatory action on semi-conductors.

- consideration of general Article XXIII case against Japan.



CULTURAL COOPERATION (if raised)

- Will look at what you propose, with a view to preliminary discussion by Culture Ministers of EC member states in June.

- Considerable cultural cooperation at European level already. Agree with you that Community not always effective or appropriate means of encouraging cooperation: tends to lack flexibility and to cost more than it should because it covers such a disparate range of interests.

BACKGROUND

(i) COMMUNITY FINANCING

1. The Commission's proposals are being discussed in COREPER. There will be an interim report to the Foreign Affairs Council at the end of April. There will also be discussion in ECOFIN. The southern member states and Ireland are supporting the Commission's proposal for an increase in the own resources to 1.4% of Community GNP - equivalent to 2.1% of VAT - by 1992. France and Germany appear to be thinking in terms of an increase to 1.6% of VAT in 1988.

2. The Commission proposals, though otherwise unacceptable, do contain a number of ideas we would like to see developed, most notably on the need to introduce stabilising mechanisms into the marketing regimes to ensure that agricultural expenditure does not overshoot the budgetary provision.

3. In the past the French have been reluctant to face up to any need for reform of the CAP. Now, however, even though they still regard the principles of the CAP, including its protectionist mechanisms ("Community preference") as sacrosanct, they have recognised that things must change. They are more prepared than the Germans to face up to the implications of a realistic pricing policy.

4. The French profess to agree that all budgetary expenditure should be subject to more effective control. They have always been wary of any approach that seemed to single out the CAP. They are likely to back our line that doubling the structural funds and exempting 'expenditure resulting from the Single European Act from budgetary discipline are both unacceptable.

5. We have given French officials preliminary papers setting out our ideas on stabilising mechanisms for the CAP and improved control over non-obligatory expenditure (summaries attached). These are being worked up in a form which the Prime Minister can use at the European Council.

(ii) CULTURAL COOPERATION

6. M. Chirac wrote to the Prime Minister and other Heads of Government in March, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, to suggest that the European Community should be more than a "businessman's Europe". He suggested reinforced cooperation in education and culture in order to contribute to the realisation of a People's Europe. He said that, in order to get over the institutional problems that often obstruct initiatives with the Community, a very pragmatic approach should be adopted. He hoped the French ideas could be taken forward at a meeting of Culture Ministers.

7. The Prime Minister has already replied to M. Chirac's letter. EC Culture Ministers are due to meet in June and will have a first informal discussion of the French ideas then. We shall not be able to agree to many of the French proposals, but others will also have problems with aspects of them. Insofar as the French are envisaging action outside the Community framework, their initiative may usefully delay decisions on some Community proposals with which we disagree.

8. Part of the motivation behind these proposals may be the French desire to promote audio-visual cooperation in Europe on which little progress has been made at Community level. The UK is opposed to the approach of both the Commission and the French in this area as being both costly and bureaucratic. However, we understand that there is a good deal of scepticism within the French Government about the initiative, which is the brainchild of M. Bosson, the junior Minister for European Affairs.



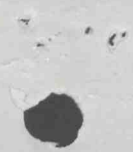
(iii) EC/TURKEY

- Foreign Affairs Council will consider handling of Turkish application on 27 April. Germans and Greeks may attempt to block straightforward reference to Commission for Opinion under Article 237. UK has supported Presidency attempts to ensure issue is treated as simple procedural question.
- Turks expect that it will be two or three years before Commission deliver Opinion. They welcome the time this will give them to get past their 1988 election and make further economic adjustments. All other member states will insist on such a timetable.
- Commission Opinion will consider possible consequences of Turkish accession. Turkey's economy ten to fifteen years behind even Portugal. Turkish per capita income 1/7 of EC average. Population likely to be about 70 million by time of eventual accession. Some industrial sectors (heavy engineering, consumer durables) still heavily protected; difficult to adjust to free competition.
- Turkey would be very substantial beneficiary, especially from CAP regimes (EC support prices up to 180% higher than Turkey's and large expansion of Turkish agriculture planned) and from structural funds. Cost to budget only marginally offset by contributions from own resources: Turkish imports very low and VAT base very narrow. Possible increase in UK net contribution (after abatement) of 15-25% (£140 to £200m per annum at 1986 prices).
- Politically, many member states reluctant to consider accession of a state not yet democratic and with poor human rights record. (Spain, Portugal, Greece achieved democracy before applying).
- Accession may help strengthen Turkish democracy; bolster commitment to NATO and the West and reduce risk of increase of Soviet or fundamentalist Muslim influence. Alternatives to Western alignment, however, probably not attractive enough to prompt Turks eg. to withdraw from NATO if EC application were rejected.

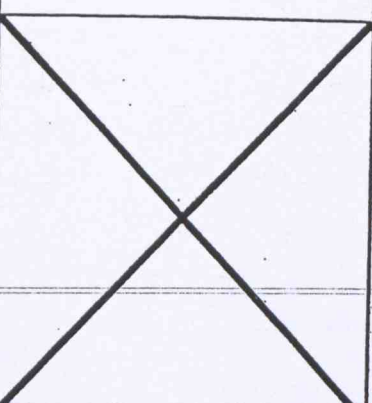
/- Clearly



- Clearly undesirable to deliver snub to Turks or to be over-welcoming: full economic assessment necessary first step. Possible compromise in further improvements to Association Agreement, which would offer exclusive relationship without economic and social dislocation on both sides. Possible areas include unblocking of aid; further concessions on trade; closer political dialogue.



A The National Archives

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