

Great Decisions 2019



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Class #8: State of State Department and Diplomacy

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1. Trump's unorthodox tweet diplomacy has shaken the world
2. State Dept has been sidelined
3. World is transitioning from Unipolar America to Multipolar China, EU, India, Russia ...
4. Past mistakes of US foreign policy and democracy's decline prompt debate on future role: Indispensable America or Independent America?

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Trump's unorthodox tweet diplomacy has shaken the world



- Downgraded & budgeted 30% cut in State Dept.
- As of Feb has not filled 60 ambassadorships
- Critic of close transatlantic ties & NATO
- Sees EU as strategic competitor
- Withdrew TPP, Iran & Climate Accord agreements
- Critic of closest allies: Merkel, Macron, May, Trudeau
- Doesn't appreciate or rely on State Department
- Relies on his personal deal making; shoots from hip
- Despite, perhaps due to, character flaws, his policies transfix global press



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Mission and value of State Department in 21st century



- Represent US & provide services for Americans abroad
- Help American businesses get opportunities overseas
- Staff and run 300 embassies and consulates
- Promote democracy, peace, development and cooperation, good will ...
- Negotiate treaties; help resolve conflicts and wars
- Support international development & humanitarian aid via USAID ~ \$40+bil of \$4+tril or 1% fed budget
- 8,000 professionals, multilingual, nonpartisan, career, that live with their families abroad

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Praise US foreign policy record indispensable - Obama



- United States really is an indispensable nation in our world order
- The world was healthier, wealthier and freer as a result of the US-led liberal order established at the end of the second world war
- While we all share responsibility for improving that order, only the US is now in a position to carry the burden of leadership
- If we're not on the side of what's right, if we're not making the argument and fighting for it ...then it collapses. There's nobody to fill the void.

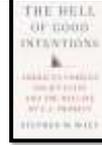
Excerpts from Obama's comments upon completing his last official trip abroad on Nov 20, 2016 as President. From www.ft.com



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Criticism of US foreign policy record



- US dropped from 1992 pinnacle of world power to one of “forever wars” and soured relations with Russia and China, EU wobbling, rising nationalism and populism
- Root of this dismal record is American foreign policy establishment’s stubborn commitment to use US power to spread democracy, open markets, and other liberal values
- Foreign policy elite were never held accountable and kept repeating same mistakes
- Best alternative is to avoid regime change, nation-building, and global social engineering
- Have a more restrained foreign policy and greater attention to problems here at home.

Source: flyleaf of Stephen M. Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*

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Most foreign views of US declined after 2008 financial crisis

Percent having favorable view of U.S.

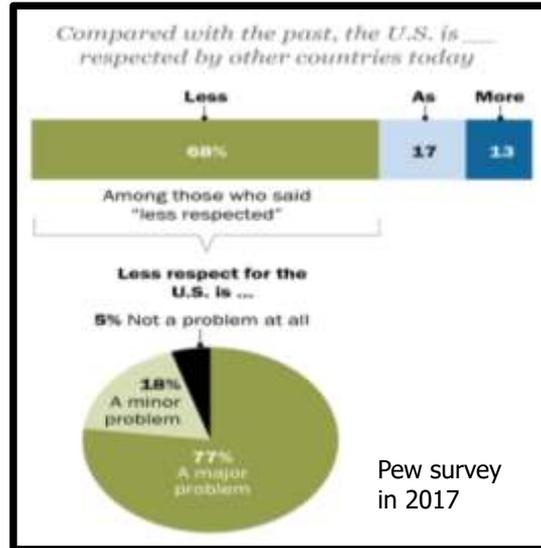
Country	2002	2008	2017
Argentina	34	22	35
Australia	-	46	48
Brazil	-	-	50
Canada	72	-	43
China	-	41	-
France	62	42	46
Germany	60	31	35
India	-	-	49
Italy	70	-	61
Japan	72	50	57
Mexico	64	47	30
Russia	61	46	41
South Korea	52	70	75
Turkey	30	12	18
UK	75	53	50
Median	62	46	47
US	-	84	85

Source: pewglobal.org/database/indicator/1/s

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Over 2/3rds Americans believe US less respected and that's a major problem



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US still strongest but gap is closing



- No other country has comparable influence
- But China, India, Russia, & EU are narrowing the gap
- US will not always be able to get its way by threat or using force
- Will need to rely more in the future on diplomacy
- Need to combine diplomatic and military strength in a cohesive strategy
- After 9/11 we led with a **military-first** strategy but going forward may need a **diplomacy-first** strategy

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US's Shrinking lead

- 1) Fewer see US as Leading Power
- 2) Asians rate US higher than Europeans
- 3) Half of Americans don't rate US a leading power

What country is the world's leading economic power?

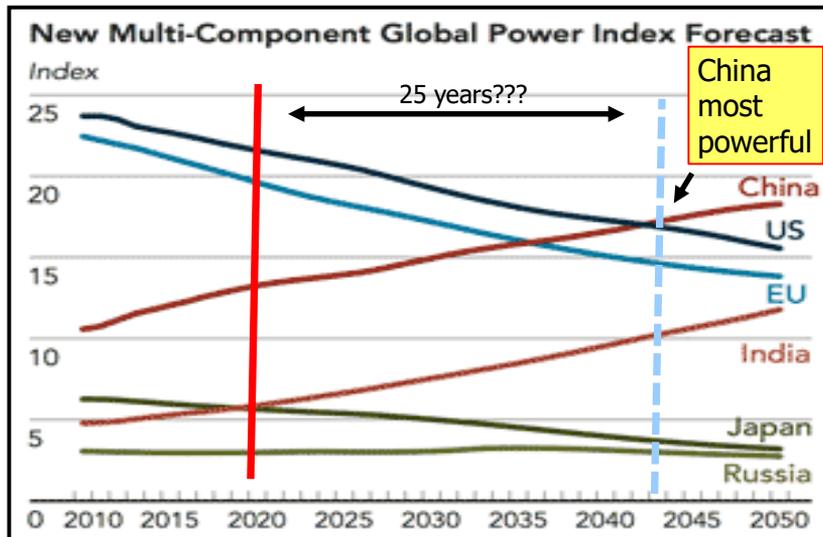
Percent responding US				
Country	2008	2013	2015	2017
Argentina	53	44	44	36
Australia	37	28	31	29
Brazil	-	57	56	44
Canada	-	28	34	32
China	48	46	44	-
France	44	34	40	37
Germany	25	19	27	24
India	-	47	66	42
Italy	-	43	44	40
Japan	52	67	59	62
Mexico	59	58	60	47
Russia	32	28	24	27
South Korea	74	61	51	66
Spain	42	27	39	35
Turkey	62	57	47	49
UK	44	33	39	31
Median	46	44	44	37
US	46	39	46	51

pewglobal.org/database/indicator/1/survey/all/

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US may not remain on top forever



China most powerful

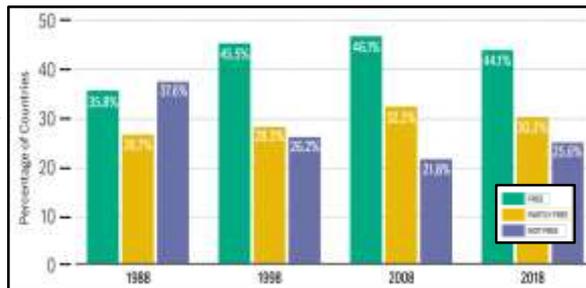
Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds

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Democracy in retreat globally

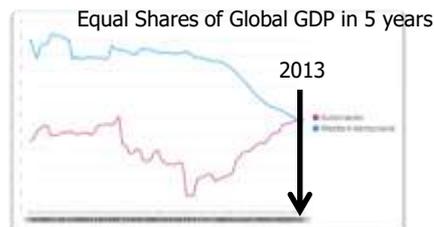
- Share of democratic countries lower than 1998 – declined for 13 years
- Many post-Cold War democracies regressed due to corruption & anti-liberal populists
- Major declines in freedom: **Nicaragua, Venezuela, Egypt, Pakistan, Brazil & China**



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Democracy's economic edge shrinking



- After Soviet collapse, seemed all were democratizing
- Rich were democracies, so rest wanted to be rich too
- But global GDP is shifting to more authoritarian
 - Due partly to strongmen such as Putin and Erdogan
 - But more importantly: due to China combining autocratic rule with market-friendly institutions and booming
- Whether democracy or autocracy rules economics in 21st century depends on pivotal countries - India, Nigeria and Indonesia

Source: When Democracy Is No Longer the Only Path to Prosperity, by Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, WSJ, March 1, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-democracy-is-no-longer-the-only-path-to-prosperity>

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Public views at odds with foreign policy experts



- US foreign policy establishment continues to be wedded to its view of American exceptionalism – to lead to world toward democracy, but an elite consensus that lacks sustainable public backing may be costly to American democracy
- But Americans favor a foreign policy that resists entanglements and foreign obligations and out of responsibility to solve other people's problems

No foreign policy has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none. - Henry Kissinger

Source: Americans Want a Less Aggressive Foreign Policy. It's Time Lawmakers Listened to Them, By Ian Bremmer, February 19, 2019, *Time Magazine*



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US polarized whether to continue support of allies



There is no more important question in world politics than this: Will U.S. public opinion continue to support an active and strategically focused foreign policy? During the Cold War and for 25 years after, there was a broad consensus in both parties that sustained engagement was necessary to protect U.S. interests. ...

That consensus is more fragile today. Will the Americans continue to honor those global commitments? For America's friends and allies, the riddle remains: Where will America's grand strategy go next? Can a nation that lacks a strategic consensus and is deeply divided along partisan lines be a reliable partner?

Abstracted from Walter Russell Meade, *WSJ*, March 5, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/allies-worry-over-u-s-public-opinion-11551741006>



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What role should America play in the world?



- **Indispensable America:** Only US can defend the liberal world order on which global stability depends. A turn inward would undermine our own security and prosperity. We will never live in a stable world while others are denied freedom.

Or

- **Independent America:** Don't try to solve other's problems. Instead, lead by example—in part, by investing in US vast untapped potential.

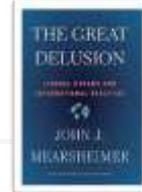
Ian Bremmer, *Superpower*, Portfolio, 2015



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Case **against** activist foreign policy: Doomed to fail!



- Policy of remaking the world in America's image is supposed to protect human rights, promote peace, and make the world safe for democracy
- But this is not what has happened
- US has ended up as a highly militarized state fighting wars that undermine peace, harm human rights, and threaten liberal values at home
- Makes far more sense to adopt a more restrained foreign policy

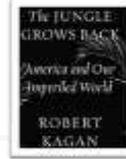
From flyleaf of *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*, by John Mearsheimer, Professor of Political Science at University of Chicago



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Case for continued US activism: The jungle grows back



American sentiment seems to be leaning increasingly toward withdrawal in the face of ... disarray. ... American withdrawal would be the worst possible response, based as it is on a fundamental and dangerous misreading of the world. Like a jungle that keeps growing back after being cut down, the world has always been full of dangerous actors who, left unchecked, possess the desire and ability to make things worse. ... [T]he historical norm has always been toward chaos--that the jungle will grow back, if we let it.

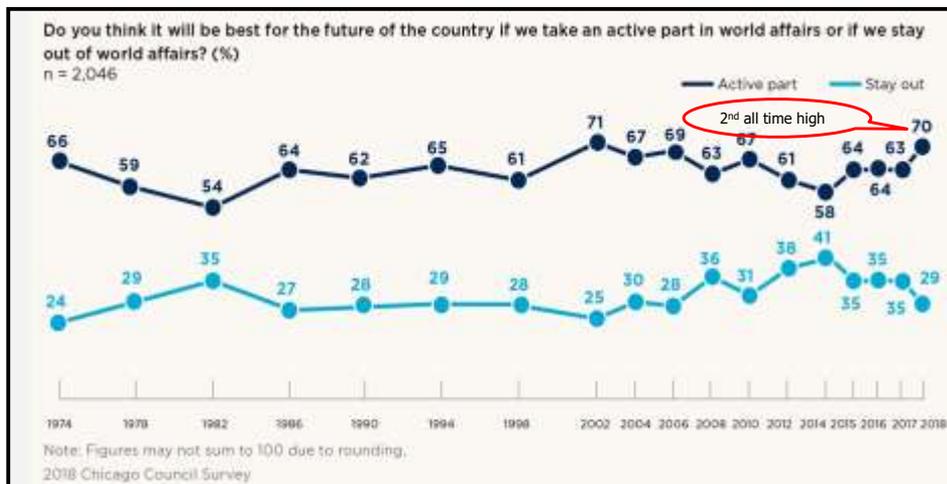
Source: Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back – America and Our Imperiled World*, 2018, flyleaf



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Despite rising nationalism, active role in world affairs supported by near record 70% in 2018



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Reflections of a diplomat



- *American diplomacy is dangerously adrift. It's tempting to simply blame President Trump. ...But the roots of America's diplomatic decay run deeper....Our dominance in a more benign post-Cold War environment lulled us into **complacency**. The shock of Sept. 11 led us to rely even more on the American **military as our tool** of first resort, with diplomacy an afterthought with fewer and fewer resources.*
- *We didn't make it any easier for ourselves at the State Department. We buried our agility and initiative with layer upon layer of **bureaucracy**. ...*
- *[D]iplomacy matters more than ever [W]e are **no longer the only country calling the shots**.... [A]dversaries are taking advantage, allies are hedging and the global order we did so much to shape and defend is teetering.*

How to Save the Power of Diplomacy, By William J. Burns, former deputy secretary of state and ambassador to Russia. *NY Times*, March 8, 2019, From <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/08/opinion/sunday/diplomacy-trump-state-department.html>>

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What world situation to anticipate & prepare for?



- Will EU remain and be strong ally or splinter?
- Will Russia and China ally closer be existential foe?
- Will Latin America quiet and remain at least not hostile to US or submit to China?
- Will Middle East remain anti-Western but corral terrorists or Saudis & Iran go to war & drag US back?
- Will India rise and counter China?
- Will cyber war and space war be greater threats than traditional war?
- Will rise of autocracy, nationalism and anti-globalism continue?



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Changed adversaries: From Middle East Terrorism to Russia & China



- Since 9/11, strategic priority of terrorism and made military major instrument of American power
- Trump shifted policy focus to great power struggle with Russia & China rather than terrorism
- This realigns military mission to contain Putin in Eastern Europe and balance China's rising power in Indo-Pacific
- **Due to change from unipolar to multipolar world, diplomacy may be as important in future as a military has been since 9/11**

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Summary and Conclusions: State of State Department



- Trump's unorthodoxy has reversed US policy & transfixed US & world foreign policy establishment
- Ended or altered alliances and agreements – creating much uncertainty and unease
- But, "America First" more closely reflects public's views than foreign experts views
- World order is evolving again: From bipolar to unipolar to now to multipolar world of great power rivalries
- Change is needed, but diplomacy calls for more than tweets: needs a dedicated global cadre building relationships and understanding and easing tensions



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Key Points of Video 8: "State of State Department"

- State Dept - center of debate on future of diplomacy
- Pompeo increased its morale and swagger
- State criticized as aristocracy of "striped pants diplomats" disconnected from reality
- Presidents have shifted much of State role to White House and National Security Council (NSC)
- Foreign relations three broad areas: defense, development, and diplomacy, but defense prioritized in war on terror
- Great Decision: What is US diplomatic role in world?



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Trump and State Department

- Trump has downgraded State Department by seeking to cut their budget
- High number of senior positions are unfilled and many exiting
- Trump has given the State Department inadequate attention or priority
- Military may not be right tool for many of the challenges facing the country



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Trump has reversed foreign policy

- Critic of close transatlantic ties
- Critical of NATO
- Sees EU as a "foe" and strategic competitor of the US
- Dismantled the multilateral trade system
- Altered view that US should keep door open to legal immigrants and refugees
- Critic of some of US closest allies, Germany's Merkel, France's Macron, Britain's Theresa May, and Canada's Justin Trudeau
- 60 ambassadorships still vacant at end of 2018

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Pompeo has tried to overcome Tillerson's controversial policies

- Pompeo has been a consistent public advocate for the State Department and morale has improved
- But the budget remains a battle
- Spending on core diplomatic capability over the past decade has been cut by 25%+

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State Department's place in Important role in American history

- Stepping stone for the presidency-Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams -but not Hillary Clinton
- Adams a famous quote on July 4, 1821: "*America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well wisher to the freedom and independence of all.*"
- Secretaries of State have played prominent roles – e.g. purchased Alaska from Russia

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Mission and value of State Department in 21st century

- Represents US & provides services for Americans abroad
- Helps American businesses secure opportunities overseas
- Nearly 300 embassies and consulates
- Role of promotion of democracy, climate change, war against drugs, health pandemics, etc.
- Negotiates treaties & helps resolve conflicts and wars
- 8,000 professionals, multilingual, nonpartisan, career, that live with their families abroad

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Challenges ahead: From Middle East Terrorism to Russia and China

- Maybe as important in future as a military has been since 9/11
- Since 9/11 strategic priority - terrorism and made military major instrument of American power
- Trump has shifted policy and now focuses on great power struggle with Russia & China rather than terrorism
- This change realigns military mission to contain Putin in Eastern Europe and balance China's rising power in Indo-Pacific

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US still strongest but gap is closing

- No other country has comparable influence
- But China, India, Russia, & EU are narrowing the gap
- US will not always be able to get its way by threat or using force
- Will need to rely more in the future on diplomacy
- Need to combine diplomatic and military strength in a cohesive strategy
- After 9/11 we led with a military-first strategy but going forward will need a diplomacy first strategy

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State of State Department: At center of debate on future of diplomacy

- As times change there needs to be some adjustments
- Presidents have tended to appoint many special envoys rather than trust traditional State Department
- Need to clarify the organizational structure
- Obama added 70 special envoys or missions to State
- Rex Tillerson proposed a 31% budget cut in State Department for two consecutive years
- But State now is less than 1% of the federal budget

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State department budget and responsibilities

- Should not overlook the importance of a trained core of professional diplomats
- Includes foreign aid, climate research, green energy ...
- Trump and Tillerson approach alienated career diplomats and many resigned and retired
- Talked about reform but most was really budget cuts and reduced support of diplomacy
- The focus was on effectiveness rather than relevance

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New Secretary Mike Pompeo changed strategy and raised morale

- Secretary Pompeo has extensive government experience and understand critical role of diplomats
- Has increased morale and emphasized “restoring swagger back to State Department”
- He was in the military for 10 years and was head of the CIA before going to the State Department
- He knows and respects the department
- But concern is that initial efforts under Tillerson and Trump may have long-term effects – e.g. applicants for foreign service jobs has declined 33%

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Political criticism of the State Department

- State has long history of presidential distrust & concern
- Viewed with suspicion as an American aristocracy of “striped pants diplomats” from East Coast Ivy League grads disconnected from reality
- Previous presidents wanted to reform State, but instead shifted much of its role to White House and National Security Council (NSC)
- Initially, NSC was to deal with the policy-setting whereas State would do the implementation
- But now NSC is much more involved in implementation

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Diplomacy is taking a backseat to rapid military solutions

- In the war on terror, diplomacy has taken a backseat to military
- In reality our foreign relations has three broad areas: defense, development, and diplomacy, but defense has been given the priority
- When we emphasize defense, emphasis upon civilian and human rights decline
- Military takes priority over diplomacy

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Trump considers himself the master of deal making

- But there's a need to balance deal making, that is making transactions, with building relationships
- There's a big difference between negotiating a trade deal and negotiating a diplomatic issue
- Diplomacy is not just a zero-sum situation-it needs to be a win-win situation of mutual benefits
- The role of the State Department of course is negotiations-deal making

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Trump relies less on State Department experience and expertise

- Trump's initial negotiation with North Korea lacked careful preparation and some off-the-cuff offers about ending wargames caused concern
- Even though we have instant communications we still need someone on the ground full-time
- Someone that understands and appreciates local views and can represent and explain US views
- Trump doesn't favor multilateral deals and has withdrawn from Paris Climate Accord, Trans Pacific Partnership, Iran deal ...

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What is the US diplomatic role in the world?

- Still debate about proper world role for US
- State role has been to engage, influence and inspire other nations
- There some 8000 career diplomats scattered in some 300 embassies and consulates around the world
- The question is what kind of a force does US want to be in the world

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What future role for the US

- How important is it for the US to play a leadership role in the world?
- Some say we can't keep fighting everyone or taking care of everybody-it's too expensive and ineffective
- Some argue it's important to develop stable enduring relationships
- It is not only important how we interact with other countries, but it is also what kind of a force will the US be in the global community of nations

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