





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Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Gen. Keane Press Briefing on Plans to Rotate Forces in Iraq

(Also participating was Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Vice Director for Operations, J-3, Joint Staff. Slides of today's briefing are available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2003/g030723-D-6570X.html>.)

Keane: Good afternoon.

Listen, I want to say up front that our soldiers are doing a magnificent job every day, and we should all be proud of them and grateful to them. We have over 368,000 soldiers deployed all over the world. They are absolutely doing what their country needs from them to do, from the Balkans, to Korea, to Afghanistan to Iraq. Many soldiers are in harm's way every day. For our soldiers, the global war on terrorism is personal, it's often brutal, it's frequently terrorizing, it is very demanding and death is always a silent companion. Yet day in and day out, they perform the mission with extraordinary dedication and competence.

Yesterday's news in Iraq is yet one more testimony to just how well-trained, well-led and motivated our soldiers are. On my recent trip to Iraq, I was greatly impressed and proud of how well our Army is performing under difficult, demanding conditions. Morale is high, and soldiers know what their missions are and they're performing them to our standards.



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My purpose today is to present to you our rotation plan for Iraq. First, I want to give you a little historical perspective. In the Army's distinguished history, unit manning and unit rotations have long been a challenge. During World War II, troops were mobilized and dispatched to the front for the duration, meaning for the duration of hostilities or indefinitely, with the exception of air crews that flew a set number of missions before rotating back to training assignments. In Korea, the Army established a rotation policy of six months for combat units and 12 months for combat support and combat service support units, and later went through a very complicated point system for individual soldiers. In Vietnam, soldiers rotated after 12 months in theater on an individual basis. Subsequent rotation policies have varied in response to the combatant commander's needs.

Since 1982, we've had a six-month unit rotation policy in the Sinai. In 1995, we began with a 12-month unit rotation in the Balkans, and shortly thereafter, changed it to a six-month rotation policy, which we are steady-stating today in Bosnia and Kosovo. Finally, our forces in Afghanistan are currently on a six-month unit rotation policy.

Let me give you a snapshot of where our soldiers are today.

(To staff.) Chart.

As I mentioned, 368,000 soldiers-plus, 120 countries. And here's where they are: South Korea, 30,000-plus; the Philippines, a thousand-plus. In the United States, 28,600 soldiers providing forces here for homeland security. In Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, 1,500 soldiers. In the KFOR and SFOR -- this is in the Balkans, as you know -- 5,100 soldiers. The largest commitment, obviously, is in Operation Iraqi Freedom and in the Southwest Asia CENTCOM AO in support of that, 167,000 soldiers. Afghanistan is 9,600, and the MFO that I mentioned is 750 soldiers.

This is what it means to us down at unit level: 24 of the 33 active component brigade combat teams are deployed overseas during fiscal year '03, or 73 percent. Of our National Guard enhanced battalions, 15 of the 45, or 33 percent of them deployed overseas in '03.

So the 368,000 is what I mentioned, and this is how it's broken down: active, 232,000-plus; Reserves, 61,000-plus; and National Guard, 74,000-plus.

Next chart.

Let me show you what's happening in Iraq. I think you're mostly familiar with it,

but the numbers you may not be as well familiar with. A hundred and fifty-six thousand troops; the vast majority of those are Army -- 133,000. You can see the Air Force, the Navy and the Marine Corps. And our coalition forces, which are beginning to grow at 12,400, to include the U.K. division. We obviously have a lot of Army helicopters in the theater as well. We work up from the southeast, from Kuwait, we have 34,000 troops. And the U.K., as you know, is in the southern sector, in Basra. And beginning to see the multinational forces coming; this is an Italian brigade, a Netherlands battalion.

The 1st MEF is the southern sector. You heard Paul Wolfowitz talk about that. A Special Forces group is in the West. In the central corridor, in Baghdad, we have the 1st Armored Division, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, and the 2nd Brigade from the 82nd Airborne Division was working the central corridor. To the west of that, out near Fallujah, is the 3rd Infantry Division. And the entire western, going to the Syrian and Jordanian border, is the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

North of Baghdad, in a very large area of operations, is the 4th Infantry Division, assisted by the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which is a part of this organization. And then up north there's the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault, which goes to the Syrian and the Iranian and Turkish borders.

That will give you a sense of where we are in Iraq and what those numbers are.

Q: Excuse me, General, if I could -- the 156,000 -- does that include the 34,000 in Kuwait or are those separate?

Keane: It does not.

Q: Are the 34,000 Army in Kuwait in addition to the 133,000 in Iraq?

Keane: It does not.

Q: It does not include that.

Keane: Right. And if that's not right, then somebody here give me a heads-up.

Listen, before I get to the specifics of the rotation policy itself, I want to let you in on the policy guidelines that are actually driving this policy. And I think it's important to understand them.

The first is, we want to provide the combatant commander, General Abizaid, the

force he needs to decisively defeat those elements that threaten security in Iraq, and allowing the Coalition Provisional Authority to meet its objectives. We want to:

Instill predictability in the force by developing a force rotation plan with an intended Iraq tour length of up to 12 months.

Use active component forces from all services, including support forces, to the extent possible, recognizing the majority of these forces are going to come from the United States Army.

But it -- for example, if we need engineer forces, the Air Force has some, and so does the Navy. And we want to make certain we can use other forces from the other services to complement the Army ground forces that are being committed to the operation, as well as our coalition forces.

Use Reserve volunteers and Reserve component forces not recently mobilized, to balance deployment stress across the force.

Craft a rotation plan to balance risk across other potential contingencies.

Eliminate or reduce in scope exercises and force commitments that would further stress the force without contributing significantly to the global war on terrorism and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Further seek to internationalize the force.

Support the Coalition Provisional Authority to rapidly develop the police force, Iraqi civil defense force and the new Iraqi army to transition the bulk of security tasks to these forces as quickly as possible.

Use contractors, when possible, to provide logistics support, training support and other functions.

Establish quality of life initiatives and incentives to support the up-to-12-month tour length policy.

Now, what we have done is we have taken General Abizaid's requirements and his needs, looked at the forces in Iraq, and we devised a plan to meet those needs.

Chart.

Down the left-hand column is the forces that are currently in Iraq, and we have labeled that "Operation Iraq Freedom 1," or in a sense, Rotation 1. And these are the units that are currently participating in that rotation.

And these are the units, "Operation Iraqi Freedom 2," that will begin replacing them.

First out, first in: 3rd Infantry Division. They'll be replaced by the headquarters of the 82nd Airborne Division, one of its maneuver brigades and a brigade task force. And the 3rd Infantry Division will be redeploying in the month of August and September and be cleared by September; 82nd Airborne Division will be in there by September.

Now, this is not a 12-month rotation. It's a six-month rotation. Why? Because the 82nd Airborne Division headquarters participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom during major combat operations. That's number one. And number two is one of their brigades has recently redeployed from Afghanistan.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Forces will be replaced by the Polish Multinational Division in the time frame indicated.

4th Infantry Division will be replaced by the 1st Infantry Division from Europe, and it will have an attached brigade from the Army National Guard -- what we refer to in the Army as an enhanced separate brigade --

Q: You know which one?

Keane: Excuse me?

Q: You know which one?

Keane: We haven't designated it -- and the time frame indicated. The Army National Guard Brigade will do a six-month rotation. We intend to alert, mobilize, train and deploy it for a six-month rotation and redeploy it. That entire deployment will last -- from alert to redeployment and return to home station -- will last a year.

The 1st Armored Division will be replaced by the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, also from an infantry brigade from the Army National Guard will be attached to it. The rotation in the theater for the Guard brigade will be six months. For the parent division, it will be one year.

The 2nd Light Cavalry Regiment will be replaced by the brigade from the 1st Cavalry Division in time frame indicated.

The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment will be replaced by a Stryker Brigade. That is a new operational organization in the Army, as many of you are familiar with. It's at Fort Lewis, Washington, and has been going through testing and evaluation. It's been doing very well in all of that. And that organization will actually overlap and complement the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. It will be there in October; however, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment will not leave until this time frame.

The 101st Airborne Division Air Assault will be replaced by a multinational division yet to be named in the time frame indicated.

The 2nd Brigade 82nd Airborne Division, which I mentioned before is in the central corridor in Baghdad, will redeploy in January and not be replaced.

And the 173rd Airborne Brigade will also redeploy in April and not be replaced.

Q: When you say that, you mean they're going home then.

Keane: They go home. All of these forces are going home in the time frames indicated and being replaced by the units indicated, except for the ones at the bottom here, those two.

What I've depicted for you is a plan that provides General Abizaid with the needed forces to meet his requirements while at the same time permitting the flow of coalition forces and permitting the recruiting and training and developing of the Iraqi police, the civil defense and the new Iraqi army. It also provides time, obviously, for the overall security situation to improve.

Chart.

I want to show you in the context for the Army of what else we're doing with our unit rotations, to give you perspective. On the left-hand side is Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and the Sinai. And you see we're finishing up a rotation in Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne Division. In the month of August it will be replaced by the 10th Mountain Division. I'm showing you the subsequent six-month rotation for the 25th Infantry Division. A brigade from the 35th Infantry Division is in Bosnia, and it will be replaced in September by one from the 34th out of the Minnesota Army National Guard.

In Kosovo, a brigade from the 28th Division from Pennsylvania will be replaced by the 34th Division from Minnesota in the February time frame. And in the Sinai, we have a battalion of the 34th Division Indiana Guard being replaced in January, as indicated, by another battalion. These are all six-month rotations.

What are your questions now? And I'll be joined by General McChrystal, who helped develop the overall plan with us. It was done in concert with the Joint Staff.

Q: General?

Keane: Yes?

Q: You mentioned the Stryker Brigade. I'm wondering what gives you the confidence that that unit is ready to operate in a real- world situation.

Keane: Well, we put it through its paces against -- the toughest opponent our forces have ever faced is in our combat training centers. And that's the standing opposing forces that we have in those training centers. They are the toughest opponent. And all of our people that have ever been in combat have said they same. They've done that. And we've put them through their paces and they're ready to go.

Q: General?

Keane: Yes?

Q: You described how this plan balances risks. I'd like to talk about the risk of the North Korean adventurism. The 1st Cav, we've understood, has been a hedge for North Korea. We see it now deployed to Iraq, as well as a brigade of the 25th out of Hawaii, also was earmarked for Korea. What will fill in to deal with a problem on the Korean peninsula?

Keane: Well, obviously, we are redeploying organizations. All those organizations that we redeploy, and I've listed all of the ones that are currently there, are coming back at the time frames indicated, are available for contingencies elsewhere in the force. That's the reality of it.

Q: They have to reconstitute for some period of time, sir.

Keane: Well, certainly. But the truth of the matter is, they are combat ready, they are trained, they've just been through a war; they're actually at the highest state of

readiness they could be at.

And if war broke out someplace else, we would obviously use the forces that are available.

Next question.

Q: General Keane, with these replacements, are the overall numbers going to stay the same, or are you looking at capabilities and adjusting numbers?

Keane: We're looking at capabilities. And that's -- that's what General Abizaid wanted us to do, and that's what we have provided him.

Q: And second, with those redeployments in '04, is the overall number then going to come down, since those units that are redeploying in '04 January and -- and April, I think it was, would -- then the overall number will come down?

Keane: Will the overall number in Iraq come down?

Q: Yes.

Keane: It's going to be pretty much the same, and then the latter part of '04 it probably would come down.

Yes.

Q: You mentioned Reserve volunteers. I mean, how much of this do you expect to be voluntary? How many units are you going to just -- just tap and say "You folks are going"? Or do you hope to mix and match among Guard and Reserve units, or --

Keane: Well, I didn't give you the specifics of the theater-level support forces that are there providing theater-level logistic support and other combat service support. The details of that would be beyond the content of this briefing. And at some point we would be more than happy to provide that to you.

In those forces, yeah, we'll be seeking some volunteers to participate in it. Some of those are much smaller organizations than the combat formations that I've discussed today. The combat formations that we will designate from the Reserve components indicated on that chart, those -- those forces are organized as such, and they're manned to readiness levels, and they'll deploy as a unit.

Yes.

Q: So you wouldn't have the --

Keane: Go ahead.

Q: So you wouldn't ask for volunteers there, you're just going to take an ESP and say, "You folks are" --

Keane: That's correct. I mean, they're a part of that parent organization. We would not canvass the United States that large to fill that in.

Yes.

Q: General, what contingencies are in place if the non-British foreign troops do not appear as hoped, or live up to expectations in performance?

Keane: You want to take it, Stan?

McChrystal: I would.

Sir, there are -- is a plan right now, starting with the British division. And then there's an expectation that we will have another division by about the first of September, made up of a number of coalition units. We are projecting a third division by about the early part of December of this year. But clearly, that's a variable in the overall construct; it could go up or down. If we get a larger contribution, that could affect the U.S. requirement, as time passes; if we get smaller, clearly we just digest. But it's one of the variables, I'd stress. The security situation in Iraq and the Iraqi internal capabilities that also affect the overall number of forces required. So we could go down anyway if, in fact, some of other variables worked out.

Q: So there are U.S. troops available if the foreign -- if the non-British foreign troops do not measure up to the capability that you would need.

McChrystal: Sir, it would go into the overall construct. I wouldn't identify units or try to speculate on that?

Q: General?

Q: General? Sir, do you have an addition two brigades of enhanced Army Guard

people that weren't on that chart that are going, that haven't been identified?

Keane: To replace the ones that are going in there?

Q: Yeah.

Keane: In other words, they're doing six-month rotations.

Q: Right.

Keane: Yes, based on the needs of the theater, we would probably replace them with two additional ones. That would take it off the chart, so we didn't put that on the charts.

Q: You haven't got those --

Keane: We haven't designated the two that are initially on there yet as well, Joe. I mean, that decision we'll probably make by Friday.

Q: General -- excuse me -- how long have you been told to anticipate this level of forces in Iraq? Is it a year, is it two, is it three?

Keane: What -- if you listen to General Abizaid, what he has told us is that he sees clearly through March of '04, and beyond March of '04, he cannot see clearly. And that will be based on conditions as they evolve.

Q: And are you prepared to go beyond March of '04? Does it become --

Keane: Oh, sure. That plan does.

Q: Does it become a point where it drains you too much to maintain that level of force in Iraq?

Keane: Well, the steady state that we have put up there, we can sustain. If the coalition divisions did not materialize and we had to go back to Army divisions, then clearly that would stress this force.

Q: What issues do you face -- do your forces face in theater regarding equipment maintenance, reconstitution of spare equipment? We understand that all the armaments, equipment are under tremendous stress and wear and tear.

Keane: The equipment at 3rd ID drew from our prepositioned stocks. Some of those brigades have been moved off the line right now and they're being reconstituted, that equipment. And the rest of the 3rd Infantry Division's equipment will be reconstituted. The other units will take their equipment home with them and reconstitute it at home station. And we have a very detailed, comprehensive Army plan to do that for our ground equipment, as well as our air equipment.

As you can imagine, the environment takes its toll here. It took its toll on us in Desert Storm; it has in Afghanistan; and it's taken its toll on our equipment here. And it will take some time to recover it, but we know how to do that. It takes resources to do it -- takes money, is what I'm talking about.

Q: So the units that are coming in are going to bring in their own equipment, and that presents another logistics challenge, I guess?

McChrystal: They're going to bring their own equipment, yeah, certainly. That's the equipment they've trained on and they're going to bring it with them. Now, we will not bring all the tanks and all the Bradley fighting vehicles and all the artillery that we need. Some of this force will be more humvee-based than it is heavy equipment-based, and that only makes sense.

Yes?

Q: I want to take you back to the issue of stressed force. Three years ago, the Bush -- the candidate George Bush and Dick Cheney criticized the Clinton administration for stressing the force, stretching things too thin, and they didn't even have a war to deal with, or the aftermath of a war.

General McChrystal, from the joint perspective, how stressed is the Army? If 24 of your 33 brigades are deployed overseas and another three are dedicated to the Striker concept, what are your concerns about a stressed force?

McChrystal: Well, the Army's working hard. Everybody's working hard right now. But unlike three years ago, we are at war, and that's the focus that we have right now.

So is the force stressed? Yes, the force is stressing hard to meet its challenges. Is it overstressed? Can it not meet its challenges? We don't have any indication of that at this point. No, sir.

Q: What are some of the indications you monitor to see that -- you know, can we

execute the national strategy of going to capital in one conflict and deterring and helping in another conflict?

McChrystal: Yes, sir. From a joint standpoint I'd answer and then turn it over to General Keane for the service.

In the joint standpoint, we work essentially what turns out to be a mathematical equation to meet potential requirements around the world, to meet contingencies, to meet our op plan obligations. And sometimes we accept risk in certain areas, based on timing or forces. But those are all carefully thought out, and we work ways to mitigate that.

Internal to the forces, they have other metrics that the work.

(To General Keane.) And sir, I --

Keane: Well, certainly the force is stretched. I mentioned every Army active component division, with the exception of the 2nd Infantry Division, which is in Korea and is very committed. It's obviously a committed division.

The facts I just showed you is that we can meet General Abizaid's capabilities. So we're able to do it.

I think what you're really getting at is not the physical nature of being able to meet that capacity. What's the impact on troops? What's the impact on their will, on their commitment to the institution?

Q: Families, if they're --

Keane: Right. And that's -- that is the issue I think is behind your question.

Right now our soldiers feel very good about what they're doing. There's enormous satisfaction in it. There's a sense of purpose. They know that what they're doing in the global war on terrorism is all about the American people.

I've been involved with my soldiers for 37 years, and in my four trips to Afghanistan and my trip to -- and four trips to Kuwait and my trip to Iraq recently, I have known for some time now, two years, that there really is something different in terms of their intensity and this dogged determination to succeed. And what's really different about it -- it's the first time in my 37 years and the first time since World War II that we have deployed our soldiers directly for the American people.

And they get it. They understand what this war on terrorism is all about. And they are citizens of this country, and they know what 9/11 has meant to this country. And they connect the dots. And they're there with that kind of focus. I mean, it's inspirational being around you. I'm Irish Catholic from New York City. It brings me to tears at times, I'll be honest with you. Just listen to how openly (sic) they are about trying to get this right.0

So their satisfaction is high. Their motivation is high. They have families, just like you do.

Can we stretch them beyond the limits and impact adversely on their families? Yes, we can. We could do that. And we don't want to do that, and so we're working very hard to avoid that.

Recruiting is very good. Our retention is very high right now. And obviously this is something we watch carefully.

Are we concerned about it? Sure, we're concerned about it, with a commitment like that.

Q: Well, if I could just follow up on that. Many in Congress are pushing for a bigger U.S. military, specifically suggesting that the Army needs two more divisions. What's your thinking about that?

Keane: Well, are we thinking about the size of the United States Army, given the level of commitments we have? Sure we are. There are some facts out there that we've learned. Since 9/11 and the commitments that we've had, the Congress has authorized us to execute a waiver where we increased our end strength about 2 percent. So that's about 10,000 more people that we have helping us on the active component side. Since 9/11, in helping with homeland security and other force protection requirements around the world, we've had another 40,000 deployed and mobilized Reserve component forces assisting us in doing that. That 50,000 or so has been our steady state to help the active component do its chores post-9/11, but prior to the Iraqi war.

But that is an interesting fact, and it's one that we're looking at very hard.

The commitment to Iraq is obviously of concern to us in terms of the size and scale of that commitment. We know we can handle it, as I just demonstrated to you. If we had to continue at that level, it would challenge us quite a bit.

We don't know right now whether the Army needs to be larger or not. There are some other things I could tell you. We need more infantry. We need more military police. We need more civil affairs. Those are facts that Keane believes we need. And we have to look at the composition of this active component force. And we need more combat service support in the active component from the Reserve component to do some of the early deploying missions that we do.

But on the flip side of that, we also know we have far too many military or uniform folks doing jobs that could be performed by members of our civilian workforce or increasing the members of the civilian workforce. That's something else that we're looking at.

So, we've thrown all of that into the hopper and we're taking a hard look at it, and we'll have an answer. And if our conclusion is, is that the force should be larger to meet all the requirements, then we'll take that conclusion down to the secretary and make our case for it. And we're not at that point yet.

Q: General, how do those needs you just mentioned -- the need for more infantry, the need for more military police -- how is that affecting the mission in Iraq? You have -- you know, you have artillery folks who are searching for weapons of mass destruction, you have infantrymen who are carrying out MP duties. How is it affecting the mission that you have in Iraq to not really have the tools you need in your kit to put exactly where you need them?

Keane: Well, I think what you find with the American soldier, or any American serviceman for that matter, is their enormous adaptability and flexibility. Remember, every soldier is trained to fight regardless of what their particular career speciality is. And we're using our artillery forces -- obviously, since the cessation of major combat operations, we haven't had any requirements for artillery so we're using those forces to help do routine patrolling and to guard facilities and the like. And those missions are well within their capacity to do so. We're using other forces in the same light to do that. And that just only makes sense. We've done that in other places, as well, during civility operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Yes?

Q: Did you consider asking the Marines to help out and -- since they're not on that? And if you did consider that, why did you choose not to do that?

Keane: I'll leave that to Stan here.

McChrystal: We in fact -- this is a product of a very detailed review that we've done that's been going on for several weeks. All the services were involved, active and Reserve components, and we started with just identifying requirements and trying to map out what we thought our assumption for requirements was without putting any services against those. And we worked it out then, a number of courses of action which would identify a mix between active and Reserve, Army forces, Marine Corps forces. As you see, there's a significant Marine Corps portion there right now. And there was a huge percentage of the Marine Corps there during the actual highest point of combat operations.

As we look at requirements as we go forward, the course of action that you see being briefed in fact takes into account Marine Corps requirements for their Marine Expeditionary units, their requirement to have forward deployed forces in Okinawa, as well. So in fact, it's a balance that worked out so that both forces, there's a matching of capabilities and there's also a rough equity. Not exact equality in tour lengths or comparing apples to oranges, but a rough equity so we maintain the force.

Q: So to make a long story short, you're not going to use Marines? I mean, is that what you're saying, sir?

McChrystal: No, Charlie, we're not saying that. We are looking at a course of action now that has the capability to use Marine Corps forces. We do not have any Marine Corps forces in the first rotation here following departure of the 1st MEF that are absolutely programmed in, but we have that flexibility to use them if, in fact, the requirement is there.

Q: When is 1st MEF scheduled to leave?

McChrystal: Sir, they're going to leave late in the summer, about the same time as the 3rd Infantry Division.

Q: Yeah, one last question. What are your expectations as far as Iraqis and contractors taking up some of the positions now being performed by U.S. military, as far as what timing and the numbers? I mean, you folks have said from the podium that at some point, the Iraqi army might be able to take over security roles --

Keane: I don't think we're set to put a time frame on it because, you know, the obvious challenges are there. You have to recruit and you have to train and ensure the force that you're developing is effective. There's a significant effort

taking place, as you know, right now with the Iraqi police and Bernie Kerik's effort there. And there is also the forming of the new Iraqi civil defense force, and that's just in its very formative, beginning stages, and the new Iraqi army is in the same state. So all that will take time. We understand the challenge associated with that, because that's what we do and we've helped other armies do that around the world. So I don't think we can characterize it by putting a time frame on it. Too premature to do that.

Q: General Keane, there's been some second-guessing of the operation in Mosul because Uday and Qusay Hussein were not taken alive. I'm just wondering, as an experienced military officer -- (inaudible) -- any observations on the people who are sort of second- guessing how that operation turned out?

Keane: Well, I don't like to comment on operation requirements, but guys we've got to use some common sense here. I mean, they offered the folks a surrender, the guys went in there, they got fired on. You know, we were then in a firefight, and the on- scene commander's going to make the decision that he needs to make to reduce that. And I think obviously they made the right decision.

What would you be asking us if we just cordoned the place off, asked for their surrender, waited for them to come out, and then they snuck out a tunnel someplace and we didn't close and deal with them? And we had to close with and deal with them once they knew we were there. It made sense. So I think our guys did absolutely the right thing.

Staff: Thank y'all very much.

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