

CPEC and Re-Orientation of China-Pakistan Relations

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ABSTRACT

The 'One Belt One Road' term refers to 'The Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt. This mega initiative was announced by Chinese president, Xi Jinping, in September 2013 during his official state visit to Kazakhstan. Pakistan is most important pillar of this Chinese initiative. Under the One Belt One Road framework, several corridors will be built in future. Whereas, with the development of OBOR, regional economies will boost up to \$2.5 trillion and more than 4.4 billion population will get benefits across 65 countries. The Silk Road Economic Belt will link China, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe through the Persian Gulf and South East Asia and Indian Ocean. However, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will be built to connect the Pakistan's Port Gawadar with Chinese city of Kashagar in autonomous province Xinjiang. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project is a game changer for the region and particularly for China and Pakistan, through the development of roads, railways, oil and gas pipe lines. Thus, the project brings wealth and prosperity across the region, particularly in Pakistan. But on the other hand, Pakistan is facing serious internal and external threats from terrorism and extremism since 2001. This work is an attempt to enlighten the prospects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and constraints in the way of this mega projects.

Key words: Economic Cooperation, Silk Road Economic Belt, OBOR, CPEC, Gawadar Port, Terrorism, Separatism

Introduction

Foreign policy, also known as the foreign relations, plays a vital role in determination of a country's position. Basically, foreign policy determines the relation with other countries. It is made through the high level of decision-making processes by the governments while keeping in view their national interests. Usually, foreign policy is constructed by the heads of governments and foreign ministers. Foreign policies of countries, which can be affected by the external global circumstances, vary from each other's and from time to time. It has the lasting impacts on the other countries and determines the international relations. Monroe Doctrine is the clear-cut example of it. Foreign relations are not a new phenomenon even it can be traced back in primitive times. In primitive times people have relations with other people only in oral form but gradually it started to

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be organized. Foreign policy has a much importance in international sphere. It must protect the territorial integrity and the interests of its citizens both within and outside the state. Maintenance of the prestige of a country is also protected only through the foreign policy of a country because it also determines the action of a state towards the other either it will be peaceful or aggressive one (Lanteigne, 2019). Foreign policy is a way through which link with the other member state of international community can be established. They interact with each other to promote their national interests. Economic development of a country is also based upon the foreign policy of that country. It also determines the influence of a state upon the other states like United States of America (USA). Good foreign policy can make many states dependent upon a state and a bad foreign policy can make a state dependent upon many other states (Lu, 2018). As Foreign policy is important for a state but there are many factors which can influence it.

As far as internal factors are concerned, these include: geography, population, culture and historical traditions etc. There are also some external factors like international organizations, international law, treaties, contracts and structure of a country at sub-regional, regional and global level etc. Foreign policy of a country also faces some challenges. So, Pakistan and China, which are also good friends, also facing some challenges to their foreign policies. Co-existence, survival as a nuclear country, unity with Muslim world, good relations with neighboring countries, Kashmir issue, terrorism, and many others challenges are confronted by Pakistan's foreign policy. Domestic political stability, foreign security, territorial integrity, national unification, economic and social development etc. are the challenges to China's foreign policy. Both the countries have mostly the same foreign policy challenges. Both started to interact in a cooperative way and paved the way towards the development. They helped each other's in every thick and thin (Camilleri, 1980).

Relations of Pakistan and China are not a new thing even they have been good and close friends since their inception. Beside this they also consider each other as a strategic ally and helped in solving the regional issues. They have started their diplomatic relations from 1951 and their relationship has a great past and a bright beneficial future. Both share the Karakoram Highway which has been referred as 'Eight Wonder of World' by some scholars. Beside this they also share a border of 510km which starts from the eastern tip of Wakhan Corridor and ends near the Karakoram Pass. Demarcation of boundaries between Pakistan and China was made in 1963. China also provided its yeoman services to Pakistan in economic and military point of view. Pakistan also served as a bridge between the China and the western world. Both supports each other at their territorial claims i.e. Pakistan on Taiwan, Xinjiang and Tibet and China on Kashmir. Pakistan ambassador to China said that their relations are stronger than steel, higher than mountains, dearer than eye sight, sweeter than honey, deeper than oceans and so on. Presently they have started China - Pakistan Economic Corridor (G. Ali, 2017).

CPEC is an economic developmental project which is beneficial for the economy of both countries. China - Pakistan Economic Corridor runs from

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Kashgar to Gwadar. Its original worth was \$46 billion but now extended to \$62 billion. This project rapidly making Pakistani infrastructure modernize. Except this it also strengthens its economy by energy projects, transport network and special economic zones. On 13 November 2016, this became partly operational. A vast network of railways and highways are to be built under the support of CPEC. As it is a developmental project, long motorway of 1100 km from Lahore to Karachi, Karakorum Highway from Chinese border to Hasan Abdal will be completely reconstructed. Main railway line between Karachi to Peshawar will also be upgraded. It will provide the 2.3 million jobs between the 2015-2030 and will also add 2-2.5 percent to the annual economic growth of Pakistan. Beside all this it will bring the economic development, strategic strength and political stability in Pakistan. CPEC has much potential impacts for Pakistan as it can be compared with the Marshal Plan. Many countries are against this project as Indian government has labeled it a debt-trap. CPEC is the extension of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (Bhattacharjee, 2015).

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a global developmental strategic plan of Chinese government which has its investment in 152 countries of the world. It is also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR), Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and 21st Century Maritime Road. This project has a completion date of 2049 which is the 100th anniversary of People's Republic of China (Sarker, Hossin, Yin, & Sarkar, 2018).

The Aforesaid initiative is further divided into Six Corridors, which are,

- China, Mongolia, Russia Corridor which is consisted upon two railway tracks i.e. shorter and larger track. Longer track links Beijing and Tianjin with European Russia through Mongolia while the shorter track links China's northeastern port of Dalian with Russian town of Chita.
- China-IndoChina-Peninsular Corridor which connects Asian Mainland States by railway track. This track will begin from China and will travel to Singapore.
- China - Pakistan Economic Corridor which connects the Kashgar with Gwadar through a network of highways, pipelines and railways.
- The Eurasian Land Bridge which connects the China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland and Germany. Beside this China already has an operational land route with Germany.
- China-Central Asia- West Asia Corridor through which China will get the gas and oil from the Persian Gulf via Iran by joining the operational Central Asian Gas Pipeline. It is the most complicated corridor.
- Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor which will connect the Bangladesh, India and Myanmar with China. Myanmar is connected through the oil and gas pipeline with south-eastern part of China (Leandro, 2018).

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With the launch of China - Pakistan Economic Corridor many developments have been made in, Pakistan in, every aspect of life especially the economic one. With the initiation of CPEC, Sino-Pakistan relations have been re-orientated. Many agreements and MoU were signed after CPEC. It also strengthened the bilateral ties between both countries. It rooted back to the Musharraf era. After 2013, Pakistan got many aids from the China to develop its economy and military. Long term plans have also been made by the both countries in respect of CPEC. According to which Pakistan will be the 20th largest economy of world by the end of 2030 and 16th largest economy by the end of 2050. CPEC also paved the way for the exchange of culture, language, social activities and ideologies. After the initiation of China - Pakistan Economic Corridor exchange of visits was also took place between both countries. Later, this proved the fate changer for the Pakistan. It also provided job opportunities to the both ends i.e. Pakistan and China. Educational developments have also been made between in both countries. In Pakistan many Chinese study centers have been opened. Students are also getting scholarships from the ends of both countries. Re-Orientation of China-Pakistan relation after the CPEC is divided into five different perspectives (Curtis, 2012).

Economic relations

With the signing of China - Pakistan Economic Corridor economic developments started to take place in Pakistan. As CPEC is the economic project, especially, so the relations boosted up in this perspective. First meeting to develop the economic ties held on August 2013 in Islamabad. Many power projects like, Sino Hydro Resource project, Gaddani Power Park Project and two coal fired projects etc. were signed between both countries. With this tourism industry also developed and Pakistan paved its way towards the good economy. As CPEC is entering the next phase, Pakistan will launch the free economic zones for China where the industries will be shifted from China to Pakistan. China provided 186 million rupees for a research laboratory of cotton to increase the production which enhanced the Pakistani economy. Metro Train Project named as Orange Line is being built up according to the extension plans of CPEC. Pakistan also signed a currency swap, with China, in 2014. "In October 2016, the IMF chief Christine Lagarde confirmed her economic assessment in Islamabad that Pakistan's economy was 'out of crisis. The World Bank predicted in 2016 that by 2018, Pakistan's economic growth will increase to a "robust" 5.4% due to greater inflow of foreign investment, namely from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Ahmar, 2014)."

Except this, it also reduced the poverty through the job opportunities and boosted the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rate of Pakistan's economy. Infrastructure is also developing day by day with this tourism industry is also rising. Many other developments are being made to enhance the economy of both countries especially the agricultural developments of KPK, Baluchistan and

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FATA. Since 2013-14, “the economy has witnessed a smooth upward trend in growth rate. Real GDP growth was above four percent in 2013-14 and has smoothly increased during the last four years to reach 5.28 percent in 2016-17, which is the highest in 10 years (Hussain & Anjum, 2014).” Pakistan is a developing country and its economy is also developing day by day. One day it will enter itself into the developed world. It also faced some downfalls on different times but now the economy is going upward. “As of May 2019, the growth rate has been revised and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) has predicted that future growth rates will be 2.9%, the lowest in South Asia. According to the World Bank, poverty in Pakistan fell from 64.3% in 2002 to 29.5% in 2014. The country's worsening macroeconomic position has led to Moody's downgrading Pakistan's debt outlook to ‘negative’. In 2017, Pakistan's GDP in terms of purchasing power parity crossed \$1 trillion. By May 2019, the Pakistani rupee had undergone a year-on-year depreciation of 30% vis-a-vis the US Dollar (Zaman & Arslan, 2014).”

Pakistan's economy developed in many aspects after 2013 like, industrial sector, agricultural sector, service sector, inflation, government revenues and expenditures, current account, foreign exchange reserves, foreign direct investment, foreign trade, stock market, poverty alleviation, employment, revenue and tourism.

Political and diplomatic relations

Political and diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan started in 1951 but since 2013 they have been boosted up. Chinese president, Xi Jinping, visited Pakistan in 2015 and Pakistan welcomed him by giving guard of honor and 21-gun salute. Before his visit he published an article in which he stated, “When I was young, I heard many touching stories about Pakistan and the friendship between our two countries. To name just a few, I learned that the Pakistani people were working hard to build their beautiful country, and that Pakistan opened an air corridor for China to reach out to the world and supported China in restoring its lawful seat in the United Nations. The stories have left me with a deep impression. I look forward to my upcoming state visit to Pakistan.” CPEC is also accommodating the Khan's vision of bringing transparency to the whole process. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, also said that there will be no compromise on Pakistan's interest regarding CPEC. Pakistani government has started many human developmental and social welfare projects under the umbrella of CPEC like, health, education, water and technical training (Afridi & Khalid, 2016).

Under the umbrella of CPEC Pakistani political system is progressing towards the true democratic system. Chinese political system is now being taught in different universities of Pakistan. Officials from the both end making beneficial policies for both countries. China also aided Pakistan after 2013 to bring stability in it especially the political one. Chinese Vice President said “CPEC is a

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consensus that transcends political parties, regions and communities across Pakistan. It also enjoys the most extensive and strongest support in China. Beijing had hosted the first meeting of the Political Parties Forum on the CPEC, which was participated by 10 major political parties from Pakistan. The meeting had concluded with the Beijing Declaration, in which all the participating parties reiterated their support for the CPEC, agreed to further enhance intra-party exchanges, discussions and cooperation and rejected negative propaganda against the project (Syed, 2019).”

After 2013, officials from both sides visited each other’s country and signed many agreements to enhance their cooperation and development. Since 1951, diplomatic relations have been developed but second decade of 21st century have much importance. This decade is the milestone for the crucial diplomatic relations of Pakistan and China. Chinese president said “we should strengthen mutual assistance and deepen strategic cooperation. We should keep the good tradition of frequent high-level visits and meetings, work together on major strategic issues, and support each other on issues involving our respective core interests and major concerns.” Pakistan Foreign minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, received the Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan. Beside this Pakistani President, Arif Alvi, conferred Pakistan’s highest civil award, Nishan-e-Pakistan, to Chinese Vice President. On this occasion, many projects were inaugurated including the Rashakai Special Economic Zone project, 660 KV transmission line project, Huawei Technical Support Centre and Institute at University of Punjab. This proves, with the initiation of CPEC many developments have been made in, Pakistan, political and diplomatic relations with China (Aoyama, 2016).

Military relations

Strong military ties have been established with China specially to counter the regional power India and later to Russia and Unites States. In recent years many military projects have also been made between both countries. In 2017, Chinese built low to medium Altitude was imported by Pakistan for its air defense system. Military relations improved after CPEC when China exported, training air craft, space technology, Al Khalid tanks, Airborne Warning and Control System and K-8 Karakorum were exported by China to Pakistan. Both countries also started a series of mutual exercises for the advancement of military. Weapons and military techniques are also being made between both countries. JF Thunder-17 jets were also given by China to Pakistan which made Pakistani Air Force stronger. Chinese government appreciated the Pakistan’s fight against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Al-Qaeda. “China is the largest investor in Pakistan's Gwadar Deep Sea Port, which is strategically located at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. It is viewed warily by both America and India as a possible launchpad for the Chinese Navy, giving them the ability to launch submarines and warships in the Indian Ocean. China has recently pledged to invest nearly 43 billion US dollars (Chaudhri, 1986).”

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Both are the strategic partners and they started many mutual military exercises. Navies of Pakistan and China are organized a series of bilateral exercise in water off the coast of Shanghai. And China is also going to open its second offshore naval base near Pakistani base which is most important strategically. A deal is also made between both countries in which China is agreed to sell eight modified diesel electric attack submarine to Pakistan between 4 billion US dollar and 5 billion US dollar. Chinese General Zhang Youxia, in September 2018, described that military cooperation is the 'backbone' of China - Pakistan relations. "Security cooperation has become an increasingly important aspect of China's some \$62 billion investment in Pakistan, made under the umbrella of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)." Except this Chinese President also said, "we should stick together in face of difficulty and jointly meet security challenges. China will work with Pakistan to tackle non-traditional security threats to provide a reliable security guarantee for bilateral economic cooperation and common development." All this shows that CPEC is also a base for the mutual military exercises and developments in both countries. Both started the joint military actions to meet the regional security challenges (Chohan, 2018).

Social and cultural relations

There are a lot of cultural exchanges projects in both countries and new institutions and projects are establishing from both ends. In the shades of thousands of years of civilizations, both the cultures have strong roots. Xinjiang had made great improvements in living standards of people from 1978-2018 in which post CPEC era is most important. People to people contact was made between the local inhabitants and Chinese visitors. Through visits, exchange of ideas and ideologies are being made by the both ends. Many Chinese language learning institutions have also been established throughout Pakistan. People of Pakistan are also learning about the Chinese culture. Chinese men are also marriages with Pakistani girls which is the symbol common social life (Niazi, Shoaib, & Khalid, 2020).

There are many cultural and social resemblances between Pakistan and China. Both took steps to promote the two-way exchanges since the establishment of People's Republic of China. March 25, 1965 is very much important because both countries signed The Cultural Cooperation Agreement on this day. Cultural exchange delegations also visiting each other's country from many years. "Chinese art troupes made visits to various Pakistani cities and performed dance, folk song, played traditional instrumental and acrobatic. Two-way exchanges have also taken place in the areas like painting, handicrafts as well as puppet show. literature, quite a few writings from both sides have been translated into each other's language throughout the years." These exchanges are in lot of fields especially in education, information, literature, youth affairs, archives, health, publications, cultural relics, women affairs, sports and art. On Chinese New Year elders give money to their

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younger ones same the tradition lies in Pakistan, money is given to youngers on Eid. This is not in red-pockets per say, but the concept is same (Jiqiong & Keyu, 2017).

Cricket is hardly known in China, but Pakistan is paying great effort to recognize it in China. Asian cricket Council has signed Rashid Khan, former Pakistani bowler, to train the Chinese young cricketers. Chinese also love the Pakistani music and they are also learning the Pakistani Dance. In the field of film agreement of cooperation is signed and implemented in both countries. "In mid 1980s several TV programs were jointly produced by two countries' TV channels including Affection on the Highway which captured the fondness from the people of both countries." CPEC will enable the people of both sides to understand each other's culture to a great extent. Many Chinese and Pakistani are also visiting each other's country. In South Asia, both made highest cultural exchange projects with comparison to other countries (Kataria & Naveed, 2014).

Exchange of students

For Pakistani students, China is most preferable place to get Higher Education in these days. Students from both ends are learning languages and promoting it. China established an Urdu Department at Peking University in 1950s. through which books from Urdu literature to Chinese literature were translated. Chinese universities also offering the Urdu Language courses at different levels. Chinese language is also very much popular in Pakistan. Many schools throughout the country has started teaching Chinese language at very basic level. China Study Centers are also being opened in many universities of Pakistan. Chinese President said, "we should enhance close exchanges to build lasting friendship. This year is the year of China - Pakistan friendly exchanges. We should conduct diverse and colorful events of celebrations and encourage more contacts and exchanges between young Chinese and Pakistanis. in the next five years, China will provide 2000 training opportunities for Pakistan and train 1000 Chinese language teachers for Pakistan (L. Ali, Mi, Shah, Khan, & Imran, 2017)."

Quality education is the need of hour for Pakistani students and China is providing it at very cheap rates. Before the initiation of CPEC only handful Pakistani get quality education from western universities but now China welcomes the Pakistani students from every stratum. Students are also getting scholarships from both ends to carry out their study. "China-Pakistan educational exchanges and cooperation have developed a lot too over the past years. China offers hundreds of scholarships to Pakistani students not only for learning Chinese language but also in other areas. According to Pakistani education attach in Beijing, currently over 25,000 Pakistani students have been studying in different fields in China (Jiqiong & Keyu, 2017)." Many MoU are signed between universities of Pakistan and China. During Pakistani Prime Minister, Imran Khan, visit to China both countries signed two important MoU to cooperate in higher education and meteorological sectors. Tehmina Firdous, Pakistani postgraduate

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student at Communication University of China said, "China has a world-class modern education system with Chinese characteristics and offer great opportunities to Pakistani students to learn practical work, especially for those who are working in the field of media to learn advanced techniques (Yan & Ka Tat Tsang, 2005)."

CPEC is not only the economic cooperation but a great project for Pakistan which will change its fate in every aspect of life. Relations of Pakistan and China established in 1951 but the 2013 is the year of renaissance for both countries. The hall mark of this year is that this is the base of Pak-China unbreakable relations. Under the umbrella of CPEC Pakistan developed socially, politically, diplomatically, economically and militarily.

Conclusion

"All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them."--*Walt Disney* (Disney & Eisenhower, 1994) As Aristotle said, 'Man is a social animal'. People cannot live in isolation they have to cooperate with each other to fulfill their needs. Nations like people can also not live in isolation they have to interact with other nations to achieve their national goals. 21st century gave a new wave to the concept of cooperation and coordination. This century is the century of world cooperation. Countries are making treaties and agreements for development. Bilateral, trilateral and multilateral projects have been started in this century. Countries are shaping their relations with other countries in every aspect but especially in the economic one. Countries in every region of the world are making economic cooperative organizations like SAARC, NAFTA, European Union, and ECO etc. Economy of a country is considered as the backbone of that country. Without a strong economy a country cannot be powerful in any field. Strong economy is the pre-requisite of a strong military. Today, US is the super power with extraordinary military but behind her success is the strong economy. Without a Strong economy a country cannot influence others, cannot defend herself, cannot dominate others and cannot develop relations with many states. So, the survival of a country depends upon the economy. In today's world, countries are making economic cooperation for their development. OBOR is the outstanding example of it.

OBOR is the project which is started by the Xi Jinping, President of China. It is the access of China to the westward through roads and water. Pakistan and China are good friends since their inception. They also support each other in every dimension. Cooperation and coordination between both are rooted back to their freedom. In 1951, bilateral cooperation and diplomatic relations started between both countries. Except this, Pakistan supported China in Sino-India war of 1962. In response, China supported Pakistan in war of 1965 and 1971 and in Kashmir issue. Keeping in view this cooperation, Chinas - Pakistan Economic Corridor started between both countries which is the flagship project of OBOR. CPEC is

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crucial for the economies of both countries. This project will make the less developed areas of both countries a developed one. China - Pakistan Economic Corridor needs security and stability for both ends for the successful completion of this project. China and Pakistan are facing many internal and external issues which are dangerous for this kind of project.

For the development of a country internal issues can be solved. Pakistan and China both are facing many internal issues. Situation in both countries is becoming worse day by day. When America was on her developmental path first, she resolved her internal issues. Internal conflicts and evils make a country hallow and disintegrated. East Pakistan separated due to internal issues which is the example of this. Nepotism, lack of meritocracy, favoritism, terrorism, militancy and political instability etc. prevails in both countries i.e. Pakistan and China. political instability is a hinderance in the way of success. These internal issues are not only affecting the CPEC but the whole country. Relations of Pakistan with Russia, US and India are downgrading day by day. China and Pakistan are cooperating and making bilateral agreements to tackle all these issues. Before the CPEC there were no such developments, but more developments and cooperation started between both countries with the initiation of CPEC. China and Pakistan are dependent on each other. China needs oil which she gets from Gulf Region and Pakistan has the Gwadar Port. On the other hand, Pakistan is interested in China due to her infrastructural development and promotion in trade. So, both are paving each other's way for each other's success. This project will also bring the prosperity in the whole region and within Pakistan. Equality of provinces of Pakistan will also be possible with this project. Solutions of these internal evils will be proved beneficial for both countries.

Except internal issues, there are some external issues which are disrupting the CPEC. These external issues are also the challenges to the foreign policies of Pakistan and China. Tussle between China and US is happening because China is emerging as world's largest economic power. Relations of India and Pakistan are also not good. Terrorism in Afghanistan is also affecting Pakistan and China. This is also harmful for CPEC. Both countries cannot only depend each other and be restricted to CPEC. They must have to make more agreements and deals with other states. Good relations should be made and managed with other countries. America is the country which has direct and indirect concerns in every country's state affair. Pakistan and China both should reshape their foreign policies and resolve their foreign policy challenges. Without this OBOR will never be completed and the CPEC also. Pakistan and India both are spending their handsome amount on their defense. India is also disrupting the CPEC by opening new departments for this purpose. Narendra Modi is supporting the Baluchistan separatist movements. If the tensions will be resolved, then there will be no need for both countries to spend their much amount on defense. And that money can be spent on developmental projects. Pakistan and China have included the Afghanistan in this game changer and fate changer project. But this very challenging for both countries as Afghanistan is shaking hands with India i.e. which is unhappy with

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this project. Tussle between China and United States is more challengeable than any other issue.

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