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**DTG**

211400Z JUN 91

**FROM**

FM DIA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):10 USC 424

**TO**

(b)(3):10 USC 424

**CONTROLS**

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/\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*/

**BODY**

SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN OVERVIEW BRIEFING (U)

(b)(1);(b)(6);Sec. 1.4(c)

2. (U) GENERAL BACKGROUND

A. (S) SINCE YOU ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH ZAIRE'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WITH ITS HISTORY, WE WILL ADDRESS THESE THEMES ONLY AS THEY BEAR ON CURRENT SECURITY STRUCTURES AND SECURITY ISSUES. HOWEVER, SEVERAL GENERAL COMMENTS ARE WARRANTED. FIRST, WE SHOULD RECALL THE SHEER SIZE AND VAST LAND AREA OF THE COUNTRY, ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. THE SIZE ALONE POSES CHALLENGES TO MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS, BUT THIS FACTOR IS COMPOUNDED BY A FORMIDABLY VARIED TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION WHICH RANGE FROM TROPICAL RAIN FOREST TO HILLY SAVANNAH TO VAST SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS. IT IS FURTHER COMPOUNDED BY AN INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH HAS ALL BUT COLLAPSED IN MUCH OF RURAL ZAIRE IN THE 31 YEARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE.

B. (S) PATTERNS OF PRECIPITATION ALSO BEAR PROFOUNDLY ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MILITARY CAPABILITIES. THE RAINS ARE VERY HARD ON THAT NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH IS STILL INTACT. THE CLIMATE HAS A VARYING BUT OFTEN NEGATIVE AFFECT ON MILITARY GROUND AND AIR TRANSPORT OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

C. (S) ALSO BEARING ON GENERAL MILITARY CAPABILITIES IS ZAIRE'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY. ITS 35 MILLION OR SO PEOPLE CAN BE DIVIDED INTO OVER 200 DISTINCT ETHNO-LINGUISTIC GROUPINGS. THE

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ETHNIC DIVERSITY, ALONG WITH REGIONAL ANTAGONISMS AND A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT CLASS DISTINCTION BETWEEN HAVES AND HAVE NOTS IS BOTH AN INTERNAL SECURITY ISSUE IN ZAIRE AND A FACTOR IN TENSIONS WITHIN ZAIRE.S SECURITY SERVICES.

D. (S) NOW FOR A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF PRECOLONIAL STATES IN PARTS OF ZAIRE OR OVERLAPPING THE BORDERS OF WHAT WOULD NOW BE ZAIRE. ALL OF THESE HAD MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, AND ALL CONDUCTED MILITARY OPERATIONS TO AGGRANDIZE TERRITORY OR SUBDUE RECALCITRANT VASSALS.

E. (S) JUST PRIOR TO THE COLONIAL PERIOD, AFRICAN OUTSIDERS FROM THE EAST ESTABLISHED CONQUEST KINGDOMS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN ZAIRE. IN THE EAST, SWAHILI-SPEAKING AFRO-ARABS ESTABLISHED SEVERAL TEMPORARY SLAVE STATES BY THE LATE 1880.S. THESE WERE DESTROYED BY EUROPEAN LED ARMIES IN THE 1890S.

F. (S) IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE ARMY OF MODERN ZAIRE HAS NO ROOTS IN INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS AND HAS MADE NO EFFORT TO REVIVE A PRECOLONIAL MILITARY HERITAGE. HOWEVER, THE COLONIAL MILITARY AND THE MODERN ZAIRIAN ARMY ARE STRIKINGLY SIMILAR IN SOME WAYS TO THE SLAVE ARMIES OF THE 19TH CENTURY AFRO-ARAB TRADERS. TODAY.S ZAIRIAN SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COLONIAL STATE.

G. (S) THE COLONIAL SECURITY FORCE, CALLED THE "FORCE PUBLIQUE," SERVED BOTH MILITARY AND POLICE ROLES. THE BELGIANS OBTAINED MANPOWER BY IMPRESSMENT, IN COOPERATION WITH LOCAL CHIEFS. THIS RESULTED IN RECRUITS OF MARGINAL QUALITY. THE FORCE CONSISTED OF AN INDIGENOUS RANK AND FILE WHILE UNTIL THE LATE 1950S ALL COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WERE EUROPEANS. THE FORCE PUBLIQUE MADE A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO STRIP AWAY THE LINKS OF ITS MEMBERS TO CIVILIAN COMMUNITIES. DISCIPLINE WAS TYPICALLY VERY HARSH AND OFTEN ARBITRARY. LIVING CONDITIONS WERE GENERALLY POOR AND PAY WAS VERY LOW. EUROPEAN OFFICERS THROUGHOUT THE COLONIAL PERIOD WERE NOTORIOUS FOR A PATRONIZING AND CALLOUS RACISM. NOT SURPRISINGLY THERE WERE SEVERAL SPECTACULAR MUTINIES.

H. (S) THE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION MADE NO PROVISION FOR INDIGENOUS OFFICER LEADERSHIP UNTIL THE LATE 1950S. WHEN INDEPENDENCE ARRIVED PRECIPITOUSLY IN 1960, AND THE FORCE PUBLIQUE BECAME THE NEW NATIONAL ARMY, THE COUNTRY HAD A MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT THAT WAS SINGULARLY UNPREPARED TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN NATION BUILDING.

I. (S) THE COLONIAL PAST STILL EXERTS A PROFOUND-IF SUBTLE-INFLUENCE ON THE NATURE OF THE ZAIRIAN MILITARY. IT CAN BE

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SEEN, FOR INSTANCE, IN THE ALMOST INSURMOUNTABLY LARGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEADERSHIP AND THE RANKS, IN THE LACK OF AN ETHIC WHICH STRESSES RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERS FOR THE WELFARE OF THEIR SOLDIERS, IN CALLOUS TREATMENT OF SUBORDINATES, IN THE USE BY SENIOR LEADERS OF PERSONNEL AND GOVERNMENT MATERIEL FOR PERSONAL PROFIT, IN BRUTALITY AS A WAY OF LIFE, AND IN POOR CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS. EVENTS IN THE THIRTY ONE YEARS SINCE ZAIRIAN INDEPENDENCE HAVE DONE LITTLE TO IMPROVE THIS LEGACY. HERE ARE LISTED SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS PERIOD.

- 1960 INDEPENDENCE (30 JUNE) ARMY MUTINIES 6 DAYS AFTER INDEPENDENCE.
- 1960-63 KATANGA SECESSION.
- 1960-64 UN TROOP PRESENCE.
- 1963-65 SIMBA REBELLION, FOREIGN INTERVENTION.
- 1965 MOBUTU SEIZES CONTROL.
- 1966-1967 MUTINIES BY FORMER KATANGAN GENDARMES AND MERCENARIES.
- 1967 MOBUTU CONSOLIDATES HIS CONTROL, NEW CONSTITUTION.
- 1975 ZAIRE INTERVENES IN ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR, ROUTED BY MPLA AND CUBANS.
- 1977/1978 ANTIREGIME DISSIDENTS BASED IN ANGOLA INVADE SHABA REGION (SHABA I AND II), MOROCCO, BELGIUM, FRANCE AND U.S. SUPPORT MOBUTU REGIME.
- 1983/1984 ZAIRE SENDS TO TROOPS TO CHAD IN SUPPORT OF HABRE REGIME.
- 1984/1985 ANTIREGIME DISSIDENTS BASED IN TANZANIA INVADE REMOTE LAKESIDE TOWN OF MOBA.
- 1986 ZAIRE INTERVENES IN TOGO IN SUPPORT OF EYADEMA REGIME.
- 1990 ZAIRE INTERVENES IN **RWANDA** IN SUPPORT OF HABYARIMANA REGIME.

J. (C) IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, THE ARMY FRAGMENTED INTO SEVERAL COMPETING POWER CENTERS, TIED TO VARIOUS POLITICAL LEADERS AND OPERATING IN MUCH OF THE COUNTRY AS AUTONOMOUS BANDS. ITS WEAKNESS WAS GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED DURING THE SIMBA REBELLION, WHICH REQUIRED FOREIGN INTERVENTION AND A SIZABLE FORCE OF FOREIGN MERCENARIES TO QUELL.

K. (C) IN THE WAKE OF A SUCCESSION OF INEPT GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL TURMOIL, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL MOBUTU SEIZED  
/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 \*\*\*\*\*/

POWER IN A BLOODLESS COUP IN NOVEMBER OF 1965. IT TOOK HIM

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SEVERAL YEARS TO PACIFY THE COUNTRYSIDE AND TO ELIMINATE POLITICAL AND MILITARY RIVALS. AS HIS CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP STYLE EVOLVED, HE RELEGATED THE ARMY TO A SECONDARY SUPPORTING ROLE IN HIS REGIME, ALTHOUGH HIS OLD ARMY COMRADES HAVE CONTINUED TO PLAY KEY ROLES. THROUGHOUT THE EARLY 1970.S, MOBUTU STROVE TO REBUILD HIS ARMY WITH SIGNIFICANT U.S. AND BELGIAN ASSISTANCE. DESPITE THIS EFFORT, THE ARMY PERFORMED POORLY WHEN HE COMMITTED IT IN NORTHERN ANGOLA IN 1975 AND 1976 IN SUPPORT OF HOLDEN ROBERTO.S NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA (FNLA). THIS WEAKNESS WAS EVEN MORE MANIFEST IN 1977 AND 1978 WHEN THE NEW MARXIST GOVERNMENT IN ANGOLA RECIPROCATED BY PERMITTING ZAIRIAN DISSIDENTS TO INVADE ZAIRE.S MINERAL RICH SHABA PROVINCE. AGAIN, WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS THE ZAIRIAN MILITARY PERFORMANCE WAS PITIFUL. ONLY THE INTERVENTION OF MOBUTU.S FOREIGN ALLIES, PARTICULARLY MOROCCO, FRANCE, BELGIUM AND THE U.S. SAVED HIS REGIME. AND WHEN FOREIGN TROOPS PUSHED BACK THE REBELS, THE ZAIRIAN ARMY THOROUGHLY BRUTALIZED THE VILLAGERS OF WESTERN SHABA, THOUSANDS OF WHICH FLED INTO NEIGHBORING ANGOLA.

L. (C) FOLLOWING THE MILITARY DISASTERS IN SHABA, MOBUTU REORGANIZED HIS ARMY WITH FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, THE IMPROVEMENT IN OVERALL CAPABILITIES WAS NEGLIBLE. SIX YEARS LATER, IN 1984 AND 1985, SMALL NUMBERS OF DISSIDENTS BASED IN TANZANIA ATTACKED AND BRIEFLY CAPTURED THE REMOTE LAKESIDE TOWN OF MOBA IN EASTERN SHABA. GOVERNMENT FORCES SOON RECAPTURED THE TOWN, BUT THEIR INEFFICIENCY AND BRUTALITY WERE EVIDENT. PREDICTABLY, MOBUTU AGAIN REORGANIZED HIS MILITARY WITH FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. EQUALLY PREDICTABLE, LITTLE IMPROVEMENT IN CAPABILITY EMERGED. THIS WAS EVIDENT IN OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR, WHEN MOBUTU DISPATCHED TWO BATTALIONS OF HIS ELITE UNITS TO SUPPORT THE RWANDAN REGIME OF JUVENAL HABYARIMANA AGAINST AN INVASION BY UGANDAN BASED DISSIDENTS. ALTHOUGH THEY PROVIDED **RWANDA** AN IMPORTANT BOOST IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE CRISIS, THE ZAIROIS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED A CAPACITY FOR LOOTING AND HARASSING LOCAL CIVILIANS. THEIR PERFORMANCE ON THE BATTLEFIELD WAS UNIMPRESSIVE AND AN EMBARRASSED MOBUTU WAS SOON OBLIGED TO ORDER THEM OUT OF **RWANDA**. ZAIRE OFFERED TO SEND TROOPS TO SAUDI ARABIA IN THE WAKE OF IRAQ.S INVASION OF KUWAIT. THE COALITION APPRECIATED ZAIRE.S SUPPORT IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, BUT ALL PARTIES POINTEDLY IGNORED THE OFFER OF TROOPS.

3. (U) INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT.

A. (S/NF) BEFORE WE LOOK SPECIFICALLY AT THE ZAIRIAN MILITARY STRUCTURE ITSELF, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO BRIEFLY CONSIDER

THE CURRENT INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT TO THE REGIME. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE AT LEAST 10 SEPARATE ZAIRIAN DISSIDENT GROUPS, NONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN A PERMANENT ORGANIZED PRESENCE IN ZAIRE ITSELF. THOSE THAT ARE ACTIVE ARE BASED EXTERNALLY IN ANGOLA, TANZANIA AND UGANDA. ONLY THE THREE BELOW HAVE CAUSED ANY SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS FOR THE REGIME IN RECENT YEARS.

B. ~~(S/NF)~~ KEY DISSIDENT GROUPS:

- FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE CONGO (FLNC), UP TO SEVERAL THOUSAND ARMED COMBATANTS, BASES IN ANGOLA: COMPOSED LARGELY OF DISSIDENTS FROM WESTERN SHABA: CURRENTLY UNDER TIGHT ANGOLAN CONTROL.

- PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRP), 50-100 PERSONNEL BASED IN TANZANIA: MAINLY ENGAGED IN BANDITRY NEAR LAKE TANGANYIKA.

- CONGOLESE LIBERATION PARTY (PLC), LESS THAN 300 PERSONNEL, BASED IN UGANDA: MAINLY ENGAGED IN BANDITRY NEAR ZAIRE-UGANDA BORDER: POSSIBLY SOME LIBYAN SUPPORT.

C. ~~(S/NF)~~ EVEN THESE THREE GROUPS NOW POSE AT BEST ONLY A MINIMAL INSURGENT THREAT ON THE REMOTE PERIPHERY OF THE STATE. THEIR NUMBERS ARE SMALL. THEIR POLITICAL SUPPORT WITHIN THE COUNTRY IS VERY LIMITED. THEIR MILITARY CAPABILITIES ARE NEGLIGIBLE. THEY ALL LACK A WELL-ARTICULATED POLITICAL AGENDA AND AGREE ONLY ON THEIR COMMON HATRED OF MOBUTU.

D. ~~(S)~~ AS YOU KNOW, THE MOST SERIOUS INTERNAL THREAT TO THE REGIME IS THE POTENTIAL FOR A WIDESPREAD AND LARGE-SCALE BREAKDOWN IN PUBLIC ORDER GROWING OUT OF ECONOMIC DESPERATION AND ESCALATING POPULAR RESENTMENT. GIVEN THE RIGHT MOBILIZING EVENT, SUCH DISORDER COULD OVERWHELM SECURITY FORCES SENT TO QUELL IT.

E. ~~(S)~~ EXTERNAL THREATS TO ZAIRE CAN BE DIVIDED INTO AT LEAST TWO DISTINCT CATEGORIES: FIRST, THE TENSIONS WHICH GROW DIRECTLY OUT OF THE PERSONALITY AND ACTIVITIES OF MOBUTU HIMSELF; AND SECOND, THE INHERENT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST WHICH ZAIRE WOULD HAVE WITH VARIOUS OF ITS NEIGHBORS REGARDLESS OF ITS GOVERNMENT. IN SEVERAL CASES, THESE CATEGORIES OVERLAP.

F. ~~(S)~~ MOBUTU SEES HIMSELF AS A FIGURE OF DESTINY WITH A REGIONAL IF NOT INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. THIS, AND HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH WESTERN NATIONS AND INTERESTS, HAS RESULTED IN A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH HAS BEEN ANATHEMA TO MORE RADICAL AFRICAN LEADERS. IN FACT, THROUGH THE 1980S, MOBUTU CHARACTERIZED HIS COUNTRY AS SURROUNDED BY A RED BELT OF HOSTILE RADICAL STATES SUPPORTED BY LIBYA AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND BENT ON HIS DEMISE. HIS ACTIVE MILITARY SUPPORT IN THE MID-1980S TO

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SUCH FOREIGN REGIMES AS THOSE OF HABRE IN CHAD AND EYADEMA IN TOGO GREW OUT OF A SENSE OF SHARED THREAT. HOWEVER, IN RECENT YEARS, ZAIRE'S RELATIONS WITH EVEN ITS MOST HOSTILE NEIGHBORS HAVE IMPROVED. EXCEPT FOR ANGOLA, ALL NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES LACK EITHER THE MOTIVATION OR THE MEANS TO SERIOUSLY THREATEN ZAIRE.

G. (S/NF) IN THE LATE 1980S, (b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c) STUDIES ON MOBUTU'. BEHALF OF THE EXTERNAL THREAT TO ZAIRE. (b)(1);1.4 (c) CONCLUDED THAT THE EXTERNAL THREAT WAS NEGLIGIBLE AND THAT WHAT MOBUTU REALLY NEEDED WAS A PROGRAM TO BETTER TRAIN, SUPPLY AND DISCIPLINE THE ARMY HE ALREADY HAD. MOBUTU RESPONDED BY (b)(1);1.4 (c) THEN PLOWING MORE MONEY INTO UNNEEDED WEAPONS.

H. (S) MOBUTU HAS WARMED IN RECENT MONTHS TO LIBYA. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, LIBYA'S MUAMMAR QHADAFI WOULD GLEEFULLY DESTABILIZE THE REGIME OF HIS OLD NEMESIS MOBUTU. QADHAFI'S EXASPERATION WAS PROBABLY HEIGHTENED EARLIER THIS YEAR, WHEN FORMER LIBYAN POWS WERE EVACUATED FROM CHAD AND TEMPORARILY LODGED IN ZAIRE. EVEN SO, QADHAFI LACKS CURRENT ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY TO FOMENT SERIOUS TROUBLE. MOBUTU HAS OUTLASTED OTHERS OF HIS MORE VOCAL ENEMIES SUCH AS TANZANIA'S NYERERE.

I. (S) ANGOLA HAS BOTH THE INCENTIVE AND THE MEANS TO THREATEN THE SECURITY OF THE MOBUTU REGIME. HOWEVER, ASSUMING THAT THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONTINUES WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTION, ANGOLA WILL BE PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL ISSUES FOR AT LEAST SEVERAL YEARS. EVEN SO, ANGOLA WILL EMERGE FROM ITS CIVIL WAR WITH BY FAR THE MOST COMBAT EXPERIENCED AND BEST EQUIPPED MILITARY IN THE REGION. ZAIRE SHARES A LONG  
/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 003 \*\*\*\*\*/  
BORDER WITH ANGOLA AND ANY NUMBER OF ISSUES COULD SOUR RELATIONS.

J. (S) UGANDA'S MUSEVENI IS CONTEMPTUOUS OF MOBUTU'S IDEOLOGY AND POLICY, AND COVETS A PROMINENT REGIONAL ROLE FOR HIMSELF. HOWEVER, UGANDA'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS REMAIN SUBSTANTIAL AND THE COMMON BORDER IS VERY REMOTE FROM ZAIRES POWER CENTER. STILL, MUSEVENI'S RELATIVELY LARGE ARMY AND SUPPORT TO ANTI-MOBUTU DISSIDENTS HAVE BEEN VALID CONCERNS TO KINSHASA.

K. (S) REGARDLESS OF WHO RULES ZAIRE, HOWEVER, NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO POSE POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. THE SUDANESE CIVIL WAR, AND ITS ATTENDANT FLOOD OF REFUGEES HAVE ALREADY SPILLED OVER INTO NORTH EASTERN ZAIRE. ZAIRE HAS PROVIDED VERY LIMITED SUPPORT TO JOHN GARANG'S SPLA INSURGENTS. A FUTURE SUDANESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY IF IT

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ESTABLISHES A MILITANT MUSLIM REGIME, COULD BE A PROBLEM. IN ADDITION, POTENTIALLY PAINFUL TRANSITIONS TO POLITICAL PLURALISM ARE OCCURRING IN ZAMBIA, CONGO, ANGOLA, **RWANDA** AND BURUNDI. ONSETS OF VIOLENCE IN THESE COUNTRIES WILL WITHOUT QUESTION BEAR UPON ZAIRE'S INTERNAL SECURITY. IT IS ALSO CONCEIVABLE THAT REGIMES COULD EMERGE IN THESE COUNTRIES ON RELATIVELY SHORT NOTICE WHICH WOULD BE HOSTILE TO ZAIRE AND POSE A THREAT, EITHER OF OVERT MILITARY ACTION OR OF COVERT MEDDLING IN ZAIRIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ALSO ETHNICALLY BASED VIOLENCE IN **RWANDA** CARRIES SOME POTENTIAL TO INFLAME THE WHOLE REGION, WITH THE LARGE HUTU AND TUTSI REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN VARIOUS NEIGHBORING STATES.

L. ~~(S)~~ IN SUMMARY THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL INTERNAL THREAT TO THE MOBUTU REGIME, BUT A MINIMAL EXTERNAL THREAT AT THIS TIME TO EITHER MOBUTU HIMSELF OR TO ZAIRE AS A NATION. HOWEVER, THE EXTERNAL THREAT ENVIRONMENT COULD CHANGE RAPIDLY AND DRAMATICALLY WITH LITTLE WARNING.

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