



## DEBATE PACK

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# UK relations with Taiwan

**Westminster Hall**

**Tuesday 24 October 2017**

**9.30am**

**Debate nominated by the Backbench  
Business Committee**

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# 1. Summary

The UK position on Taiwan was succinctly summarised in written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in the course of a 2006 [inquiry](#) on East Asia (HC 860-I, para 174-5):

Under the terms of a 1972 agreement with China, HMG acknowledged the position of the government of the PRC that Taiwan was a province of China and recognised the PRC Government as the sole legal government of China [... This] remains the basis of our relations with Taiwan. We do not deal with the Taiwan authorities on a government to government basis, and we avoid any act which could be taken to imply recognition [...]  
[...] HMG's principle objectives in relation to Taiwan are economic. We seek to develop UK trade and commercial involvement with Taiwan, including inward investment. We also seek to develop a wide range of unofficial links, particularly in the educational and cultural fields. We support the further economic development of Taiwan. We also welcome Taiwan's political development and the democratic elections that have taken place there [...]

This position has not changed since then. The UK has no military ties with Taiwan. However, the UK does [support](#) "Taiwanese participation in international organisations where there is precedent for involvement, where Taiwan can contribute to the global good, and where there is no pre-requisite of nationhood for participation." In July 2017, the government expressed disappointment that Taiwan had not been allowed to attend the meeting of the Assembly of the World Health Organisation earlier this year.

On the Taiwan issue, the UK [position](#) is that it should be resolved by Taiwan and the People's Republic of China "through dialogue, in line with the views of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait."

In 2015, the UK exported £1.8 billion worth of goods and services to Taiwan and imported £3.5 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of £1.7 billion. The UK has run a trade deficit with Taiwan in each of the last 10 years, the largest being £2.6 billion in 2012. British exports to Taiwan peaked at £2.1 billion in 2010; UK imports from Taiwan peaked at £4.2 billion in 2012. UK exports to Taiwan represented 0.4% of all UK exports and 0.7% of UK imports in 2015. Overall, Taiwan was the UK's 39<sup>th</sup> largest export market and 28<sup>th</sup> largest source of imports in 2015.

## 2. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

### **First direct flight from the UK to Taiwan for five years set to take off after China Airlines launches service in bid to boost tourism**

Mail Online  
18 October 2017  
James Salmon

### **Xi Jinping talks tough on Taiwan 'separatists'**

Financial Times  
18 October 2017  
Edward White

### **Are China and Taiwan heading for war?**

This Week  
11 October 2017

### **Fostering economic ties with UK**

Taipei Times  
13 September 2017  
Ian Inkster

### **President Tsai calls for Taiwan-UK free trade agreement**

Taiwan Today  
4 August 2017

### **Trump risks angering China with \$1.4bn arms deal to Taiwan**

The Guardian  
29 June 2017

### **Taiwan's same-sex marriage ruling could cement its place as Asia's liberal beacon**

The Guardian  
22 May 2017  
Nicola Smith

### **Taiwan bans sale and consumption of dog and cat meat**

Daily Telegraph  
12 April 2017  
Nicola Smith

### **A fight to the death: stopping the death penalty in Taiwan**

The Guardian  
3 October 2016  
Owen Bowcott

**Taiwan's status not diminished in any way by U.K. position**

Focus Taiwan: News Channel

5 February 2016

**Has Britain Sold Out to Beijing?**

Foreign Policy

23 October 2015

Isabel Hilton, Jonathan Fenby and Robert Barnett

### 3. Gov.uk

#### **UK & Taiwan Share Experience on Renewable Energy and Green Finance**

##### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**18 October 2017**

A UK trade and technology mission visits Taiwan on 18-20 October to share the UK's experience in the renewable energy sector, focussing particularly on offshore wind. With the largest ever number of the UK renewable energy delegates to Taiwan, this mission is part of the British Office's "Innovation is GREAT" campaign, which will introduce innovative British technologies and services to Taiwan.

Made up of 50 representatives from 30 UK companies, the mission comprises two separate delegations: \* an offshore wind mission led by Mr Huub den Rooijen, Director of Energy, Minerals & Infrastructure of The Crown Estate, in Taiwan to share the UK's experiences of developing and managing the world's largest offshore wind market; and \* a Green Finance Mission, including representatives from the City of London Corporation, the London Stock Exchange, the Green Investment Group and other leading UK green finance institutions, here to share UK experiences of promoting investment in clean energy technology and discuss regulatory and policy tools that can help the development of Taiwan's green finance sector.

Both groups participated in the 12th "UK-Taiwan Renewable Energy Conference" today (19 October), sharing their extensive expertise on the renewable energy sector. The Conference was held in collaboration with the Bureau of Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs and covered a wide range of topics, including cross government working, marine engineering, training, green financing and operation & maintenance.

Catherine Nettleton, Representative of the British Office, said in her opening remarks: "Renewable energy is a remarkable economic driver for the UK. Our experience tells us that it can be very challenging to start a new industry, but it will be exciting to see Taiwan starting its first offshore wind farm in the foreseeable future. This mission from the UK is our largest ever, including a range of experts in the field. I'm pleased that Britain is a strong partner for Taiwan in its efforts to develop offshore wind."

A memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ChangHua County and UK Aon Taiwan Ltd was signed at the Conference today, representing the strong collaboration between the UK and Taiwan to successfully develop offshore wind in Taiwan. During its 2-day visit, the delegation will visit ChangHua County to learn more about the region's commitment to green energy development and the environment.

British firm ODE Ltd also officially launched its Taiwan Office at today's event, and has already begun recruiting skilled Taiwanese engineers.

The Green Finance delegation took part in a UK Taiwan Green Finance Roundtable with the Financial Supervisory Commission on Wednesday 18 October where policy makers and representatives of the financial services industry discussed how to accelerate investment into renewable energy. Sherry Madera, Asia Adviser, City Of London Corporation also delivered a presentation entitled "UK Green Finance Initiative: Turning Ambition into Action" in an event co-organised by the European Chamber of Commerce, the British Chamber of Commerce and the British Office Taipei.

On Thursday 12 October, the UK launched its Clean Growth Strategy to build on the success to date in delivering emissions reductions while growing the economy; UK emissions have fallen by 42% since 1990 while the economy has grown by 67%. The Clean Growth strategy announced by UK's Department for Business, Energy, Industrial strategy provides NTD23.5 billion of fund for less established technologies, such as offshore wind, with the next one planned for spring 2019.

The UK was the first country in the world to adopt statutory emission reduction targets, which require the Government to reduce emissions by 80% of the 1990 level by 2050 (Climate Change Act 2008). As part of the green industry, the UK has taken a 3.7% share of the global market for green goods and services. This puts the UK in sixth place globally.

The UK is already the world leader in offshore wind, with 6.5GW of capacity operating today, the largest in the world with continuous emphasis on technological innovation. The UK is expecting a total of 10GW to be installed by 2020, by which point offshore wind will supply between 8 and 10 percent of the UK's electricity annually. Renewable energy is a remarkable economic driver in the UK, more than 1 million jobs have so far been created in renewable energy and the total industry is worth £117 billion. The UK is also one of the world's most attractive countries to invest in renewable energy projects.

**Foreign Secretary Statement on Taiwan Elections**  
**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**16 January 2017**

The Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said:

The Presidential and legislative elections held in Taiwan today are testament to Taiwan's thriving democracy. I offer my warm congratulations to the people of Taiwan on the smooth and mature conduct of those elections and to Dr Tsai Ing-wen and her party for having won their support. I hope that Taiwan and the Chinese Government will continue their dialogue to resolve differences and maintain the recent trend of constructive relations.

**Foreign Office concerned at Taiwan executions**  
**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**29 April 2014**

A Foreign Office spokesperson said:

We have learned today with regret that Taiwan has carried out five further executions. This follows instances of multiple executions carried out in previous years. The UK is disappointed that Taiwan has not followed its declared intention to progress towards abolition, and to elevate its human rights policies to international standards. We oppose the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, and we continue to urge our partners all over the world to join what is a clear global trend towards abolition.

## 4. PQs

### **Art Works: Taiwan**

**12 Sep 2017 | 6956**

**Asked by: Nigel Evans**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Taiwanese Government to display works of art from the National Palace Museum of Taiwan in British museums.

**Answering member: John Glen | Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport**

DCMS has had no discussions with the Taiwanese authorities about the display of artworks from the National Palace Museum, Taipei at British museums.

### **Taiwan: World Health Organisation**

**19 Jul 2017 | 4281**

**Asked by: Nigel Evans**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the World Health Organisation to enable Taiwan to regain observer status.

**Answering member: Mark Field | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The British Government was disappointed that Taiwan was not permitted to observe the World Health Assembly this year. We will continue to make the UK position clear: we support Taiwanese participation in international organisations where there is precedent for involvement, where Taiwan can contribute to the global good, and where there is no pre-requisite of nationhood for participation. Given the global reach and often rapid spread of global health emergencies it is of particular importance that all relevant administrations be invited to engage in the World Health Assembly, to ensure that discussions on Global Health Security can benefit from their valuable experience and expertise.

### **Taiwan: World Health Organisation**

**03 Jul 2017 | HL129**

**Asked by: Lord Steel of Aikwood**

Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to take steps to retain Taiwan's place at future assemblies of the World Health Organisation.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The British Government was disappointed that Taiwan was not permitted to observe the World Health Assembly this year. We will continue to make the UK position clear ie, that we support Taiwanese

participation in international organisations where there is precedent for involvement, where Taiwan can contribute to the global good, and where there is no pre-requisite of nationhood for participation. Given the global reach and often rapid spread of global health emergencies it is of particular importance that all relevant administrations be invited to engage in the World Health Assembly to ensure that discussions on Global Health Security can benefit from their experience and expertise.

## Taiwan

09 Feb 2017 | 621 cc629-630

### Asked by: Simon Danczuk

What plans his Department has to increase trade with Taiwan.

### Answered by: Greg Hands | Department for International Trade

Building on my visit to Taiwan in September, we will continue to work with the Taiwanese authorities to address market access issues and to further increase our trade in this important market. The UK and Taiwan share a strongly favourable outlook on free trade and enjoy a robust trade partnership. Bilateral trade reached £5.9 billion in 2014, up 8% compared with 2010.

### Asked by: Simon Danczuk

I am pleased that the Minister met the Taiwanese President in September. I hope he shares my belief that as Britain reaches out to secure more trade deals, we keep in sight our foreign policy values. Does the Minister agree that increased trade with Taiwan and the UK is a win for both our economies and our liberal democratic values?

### Answered by: Greg Hands | Department for International Trade

I very much agree with the hon. Gentleman. The UK and Taiwan share so many commitments, including the importance of environmental protection and the importance of a free society. We also have very strong shared values of free trade, open markets and an openness to foreign investment. I had very productive talks with President Tsai in September. She is a big friend of the United Kingdom, not least because of her time as an undergraduate at the London School of Economics.

### Asked by: Jake Berry

I know the Minister will be aware that back in 2008 Taiwan was granted Commonwealth Nations Research Society membership. As such, it will be looking to the Commonwealth Trade Ministers meeting in London in March. Will he confirm that trade with the Commonwealth is a top priority for the Government after we leave the European Union? Will he commit to ensuring that during the trade meeting many Members from all sides of the House can be involved to ensure key relationships with Commonwealth parliamentarians?

### Answered by: Greg Hands | Department for International Trade

Yes. In terms of both trade with Taiwan and the Commonwealth, the Department remains extremely supportive of Members being involved. In relation to the Commonwealth Trade Ministers meeting, I very much hope the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will be involved in those discussions.

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

With trade deals in place for the likes of Bushmills whiskey and Northern Ireland pork products, will the Minister outline how he intends to use that success for other agri-food business products, such as long-life dairy supplied by Lakeland Dairies to 77 countries across the world?

**Answered by: Greg Hands | Department for International Trade**

When I held talks with the Taiwan authorities in September, agricultural produce was very much at the centre of those talks. We talked about pork and poultry exports, and we made real progress on Scotch whisky. Taiwan is Scotch whisky's third-largest global market and we made important progress on it being certified by Taiwan.

**Asked by: Nigel Evans**

I know a lot of British businesses focus on the China market, for obvious reasons, but when I led a delegation to Taiwan in September, as chairman of the British-Taiwanese all-party group, I witnessed a vibrant economy. Does the Minister agree that if British businesses ignore Taiwan they are missing a trick?

**Answered by: Greg Hands | Department for International Trade**

I totally agree. I think my hon. Friend and I were in Taiwan at roughly the same time back in September. I applaud the work he does for the all-party group. Taiwan has been a longstanding open market for UK goods and services, and we need to ensure that we work hard to remove the few remaining barriers. That was the purpose of the Joint Economic Trade Committee—or JETCO—talks in September. The message from this House should go out loud and clear to British businesses that Taiwan is a very good place for them to do their business.

**Asked by: David Nuttall**

Given that the UK currently receives two thirds of all investment into Europe from Taiwan, does my right hon. Friend see any reason why that will not continue after we leave the EU?

**Answered by: Greg Hands | Department for International Trade**

No.

**Overseas Trade: Taiwan**

**26 Jan 2017 | HL4633**

**Asked by: Lord Steel of Aikwood**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for increasing trade with, and investments in, Taiwan.

**Answering member: Lord Price | Department for International Trade**

The UK enjoys a strong trade and investment relationship with Taiwan. Bilateral trade reached £5.8bn in 2014, a rise of more than 50% on the level five years ago.

Building on the visit to Taiwan in September 2016 by The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister of State for Trade and Investment, we will continue

to work with the Taiwanese authorities to address market access issues and to further increase UK trade with Taiwan as we promote the UK as a place to do business and trade with.

### **Taiwan: Foreign Relations**

**07 Dec 2016 | HL3576**

#### **Asked by: Lord Maginnis of Drumglass**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the warning by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 November that countries should not establish or maintain military ties with Taiwan; and what is their assessment of the impact of this warning on UK–Taiwanese relationships and on the interests of international navigation in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### **Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK does not recognise Taiwan and neither maintains, nor has any plans to establish, military ties with the territory. As such, this announcement will have no impact on our wider, unofficial relationship with Taiwan which includes strong trade, education and cultural links. The UK supports the right of all States, to exercise Freedom of Navigation and Overflight in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

### **China: Taiwan**

**29 Nov 2016 | 54088**

#### **Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on that country's relationship with Taiwan.

#### **Answering member: Alok Sharma | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I discussed Taiwan with Assistant Minister Liu Haixing on 15 August 2016 during my visit to Beijing. British and Chinese officials also regularly exchange views on this topic. We reiterate that the UK's position on Taiwan remains unchanged and that issues should be settled by the people on both sides of the Strait.

### **Taiwan: Earthquakes**

**16 Feb 2016 | 26269**

#### **Asked by: Andrew Rosindell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assistance the UK is providing to Taiwan since the recent earthquake in that country; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Through The British Office in Taipei we have worked closely with the Taiwanese authorities to establish whether any British Nationals were affected by this tragic earthquake. The Taiwanese authorities have responded swiftly and effectively to the earthquake. Taiwan is not a recipient of UK aid, which is targeted at the poorest, and those least able to cope with such disasters.

The Foreign Secretary and I have passed our thoughts and condolences to the people of Taiwan and all those affected.

**Taiwan: Politics and Government**  
**03 Feb 2016 | HL5201**

**Asked by: Lord Rogan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Democratic Progressive Party's chairwoman, Tsai Ing-Wen, being elected President of Taiwan.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), set out in his Statement of 16 January that the Government congratulates the people of Taiwan on the conduct of their elections, and Dr Tsai Ing-wen and the Democratic Progressive Party for having won their support. Our policy on Taiwan has not changed.

**Taiwan: Foreign Relations**  
**03 Nov 2015 | 13416**

**Asked by: Andrew Rosindell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to promote the UK's ties with Taiwan; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Hugo Swire | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK continues to enjoy a strong relationship with Taiwan in the fields of trade, investment, education and culture. A number of ministerial visits were made during the last Parliament which developed this relationship. We are looking to develop our commercial and cultural ties further, for instance in the fields of green energy and financial services.

## 5. UK Government and Parliament E-petition

### Recognise Taiwan as a country

**Date closed: 18 July 2016 | 22,146 signatures**

Due to the One China policy the United Kingdom doesn't recognise the Government of the Republic of China and all diplomatic relations between the two countries take place on an unofficial basis.

It's time to change this. Taiwan is an independant country. Taiwan maintains the Taipei Representative Office in the U.K. in London with a branch office in Edinburgh while the United Kingdom maintains the British Office Taipei in Taipei. This is ridiculous and must change.

Taiwan is a country, but China states that Taiwan is just another part of China. The consequence is that the USA, UK and most countries in the world don't want to upset China, therefore do not recognise Taiwan as a country.

### **Government response: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK believes that the Taiwan issue should be resolved through dialogue, in line with the views of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The long standing position of Her Majesty's Government is that we do not recognise Taiwan as a state. The 1972 Joint Communique between the United Kingdom and China set out that: 'The UK acknowledges the Chinese position that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China and recognises the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China'.

The United Kingdom believes that the Taiwan issue should be resolved through dialogue, in line with the views of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Recent years have seen a substantial increase in transport, tourism and trade links across the Strait, which have contributed to peace and stability. We hope that this trend will continue.

The United Kingdom and Taiwan have a strong but unofficial relationship, based on dynamic commercial, educational and cultural ties and facilitated by The British Office, Taipei, and the Taipei Representative Office in London. This relationship delivers significant benefits to both the UK and Taiwan and has featured a wide range of exchanges and visits, for example on environmental, judicial and educational issues.

We encourage British companies to take advantage of Taiwan's thriving economy, favourable business environment and close trade and investment links with the wider region. Taiwan is the UK's 6th largest

market in the Asia Pacific region. Two-way trade reached a historic high of £5.8bn in 2014 with the total value of exports of UK goods and services to Taiwan standing at £1.96bn. UK exports to Taiwan grew by 2.3% in 2014.

The United Kingdom and Taiwan also enjoy a constructive relationship in a range of multilateral organisations for which statehood is not a requirement, such as the WTO, and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development.

## 6. UK-Taiwan trade

In 2015, the UK exported £1.8 billion worth of goods and services to Taiwan and imported £3.5 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of £1.7 billion. The UK has run a trade deficit with Taiwan in each of the last 10 years, the largest being £2.6 billion in 2012. British exports to Taiwan peaked at £2.1 billion in 2010; UK imports from Taiwan peaked at £4.2 billion in 2012.

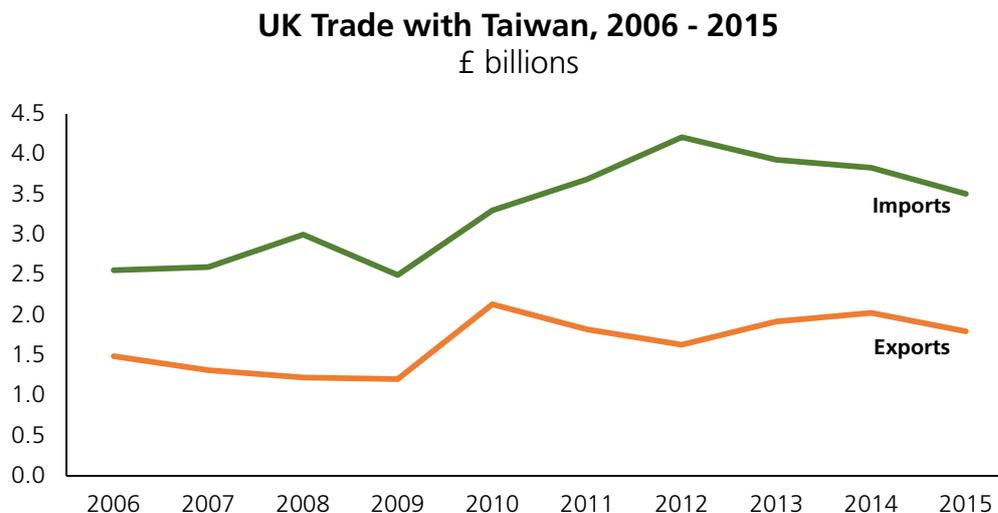
UK exports to Taiwan represented 0.4% of all UK exports and 0.7% of UK imports in 2015.

Overall, Taiwan was the UK's 39<sup>th</sup> largest export market and 28<sup>th</sup> largest source of imports in 2015.

**UK trade in goods and services between UK and Taiwan, 2006-15 (£ billions)**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Exports	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.8
Imports	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.5	3.3	3.7	4.2	3.9	3.8	3.5
Balance	-1.1	-1.3	-1.8	-1.3	-1.2	-1.9	-2.6	-2.0	-1.8	-1.7

Source: ONS, Pink Book



### Trade in goods

In 2016, the UK's single largest export to Taiwan was beverages, valued at £188.5 million; this represented 17% of all UK goods exports to Taiwan. The vast majority of this total was made up of whisky sales, which totalled £176.9 million, representing 16% of all UK goods exports to Taiwan.

Other British exports to Taiwan included road vehicles, valued at £135.0 million (12% of goods exports), medicinal and pharmaceutical products, valued at £128.4 million (11% of goods exports) and power generating machinery and equipment, valued at £78.6 million (7% of goods exports).

In 2016, the UK's largest import from Taiwan was telecoms equipment and appliances, valued at £555.9 million, representing 18% of all UK imports from Taiwan, followed by office machines, valued at £383.6 million (12% of goods imports), road vehicles, valued at £348.9 million (11% of goods exports), miscellaneous manufactured articles, valued at £326.2 million (11% of goods exports) and electrical machinery and appliances, valued at £235.5 million (8% of all goods exports).

## 7. Further reading

[East Asia](#), Seventh Report of Session 2005–06, Foreign Affairs Committee, HC 860–I, 13 August 2006

[British Office Taipei](#), Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Taiwan and the UK](#), Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Taipei Representative Office in the UK](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan)

[British Council: Taiwan](#)

[The British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei](#)

[British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group](#)

[British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group \[Website\]](#)

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