



DrumBeat: May 27, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 27, 2009 - 10:15am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[John Michael Greer A guide for the perplexed](#)

...Schumacher stressed the central role of energy among primary goods. He argued that energy cannot be treated as one commodity among many; rather, it is the gateway resource that allows all other resources to be accessed. Given enough energy, shortages of any other resource can be made good one way or another; if energy runs short, though, abundant supplies of other resources won't make up the difference, because energy is needed to bring those resources into the realm of secondary goods and make them available for human needs. Thus the amount of energy available per person puts an upper limit on the level of economic development possible in a society, though other forms of development – social, intellectual, spiritual – can still be pursued in a setting where hard limits on energy restrict economic life.

Third, Schumacher stressed the importance of a variable left out of most economic analyses – the cost per worker of establishing and maintaining a workplace. Only the abundant capital, ample energy supplies, and established infrastructure of the world's industrial nations, he argued, made it functional for businesses in those nations to concentrate on replacing human labor with technology. In the nonindustrial world, where the most urgent economic task was not the production of specialty goods for global markets but the provision of paid employment and basic necessities to the local population, attempts at industrialization far more often than not proved to be costly mistakes.

[Exxon Mobil Says Transition From Oil Is Century Away](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Exxon Mobil Corp., the world's largest refiner, said the transition away from oil-derived fuels is probably 100 years away.

Petroleum-based fuels including gasoline and diesel, as well as hydrocarbons such as coal and natural gas, will remain the dominant sources of energy for factories, offices, homes and cars for decades because there are no viable alternatives, Chief Executive Officer Rex Tillerson told reporters today after Exxon Mobil's annual shareholders meeting in Dallas.

[EIA global outlook sees more use of unconventional fuel sources](#)

Unconventional sources including biofuels could provide nearly half of the growth in global liquid fuel supplies during 2006-30, the US Energy Information Administration said on May 27 in its latest International Energy Outlook.

The forecast's base reference case, which does not assume any changes from current policies, said worldwide demand for liquids and other forms of petroleum could rise from 85 million b/d in 2006 to 91 million b/d in 2015 and to 107 million b/d in 2030.

[Ed Milliband Visits the Transition Network Conference as a 'Keynote Listener'](#)

Ed Milliband, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, visited the Transition Network conference on Friday afternoon as a 'Keynote Listener', which all went very well. He was meant to only stay for half an hour, but ended up staying nearly an hour and a half.

[China mulls more private role in oil, etc](#)

China says it may encourage private investment in state-controlled industries such as railways, oil and power generation in an effort to boost the efficiency of the world's third-largest economy.

[Energy: The Achilles Heel of the Resource Pyramid](#)

When economists say that we have far larger mineral resources today than ever before, they are usually referring to a model known as the resource pyramid. What they often fail to mention is that cheap, abundant energy is the key input into this model and that without it much of our presumed abundance would vanish.

['Offshoots of recovery' for oil seen](#)

VIENNA (Reuters) -- The global economy has strengthened enough to cope with oil at \$75-\$80 a barrel and that level will be hit soon as fuel demand picks up, Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said on Wednesday.

Oil has already climbed from a low of \$32.40 last December to six-month highs well above \$60 a barrel this week.

"The price rise is a function of optimism better things are coming in the future," Naimi told reporters in Vienna.

"We see offshoots of recovery," he added. "There are a lot of positives in what I say because I am seeing a recovery."

[Pemex Asks Finance Ministry for Extra \\$1.5 Billion](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil company, asked the Finance Ministry for an extra 20 billion pesos (\$1.5 billion) in funding because of the peso's slump.

The currency's decline led to a "distortion" in Pemex's budget, Carlos Morales, Pemex's director for exploration and production, said today in Mexico City. The company may finalize an agreement with the government within days, he said.

[UAE upstream oil and gas investment to hit \\$55bn](#)

The UAE has accounted for the highest increase in upstream oil and gas investments in the Middle East, raising expenditure by 30 per cent from Dh154 billion (\$41.9 billion) to Dh202 billion (\$55 billion) in 2009, said a recent report.

[GM moves step closer to bankruptcy](#)

Company announces that few bondholders were interested in a plan to swap debt for stock. New ownership stakes take shape: U.S. to get nearly 70%.

[Michigan's Hybrid Economy: Automakers Push a Gas Tax](#)

"It was strange because they were so hot; for a while there couldn't give a big car away and everybody's rushing to the small cars and then just as quickly about when the price of gas came down again, we saw a complete reversal. Like a light switch that's how fast it cut off."

It's been like that all over the country. Dealers who last year had waiting lists for hybrids and small cars suddenly have a lot of extra inventory. Sales of hybrids are way down from last April, mostly because gas costs about half what it did last year.

[Auto Tech: Tesla Motors](#)

Tesla is the only company that builds highway-capable electric cars, and only electric cars. Based in California's Silicon Valley, they are building the Tesla Roadster, which is currently on sale in the United States and will be available in Canada in the fall of 2009. The Tesla Roadster price starts at \$140,000, which may seem high, but for a limited production supercar those prices are often near the bottom of the price range.

[Slash energy costs by 30%](#)

This time of year, you may find yourself having an internal debate at the thermostat: stay cool or save money? If you're tired of sweating high summer cooling costs - and winter heat bills besides - these techie tools can help. Used in concert, they may save you 30% annually on energy bills, says Zeke Hausfather of Climate Culture, an online community focusing on energy consumption. And that, as you'll see below, adds up to cool cash.

[US steelworkers form unlikely alliance as renewables reinvigorate rustbelt](#)

It may seem like a stretch to call Jack Bernat, who spends his off-duty hours collecting and lovingly restoring muscle cars of the 1980s, an environmentalist.

But then trace back a working life spent chasing after the vanishing jobs in Pennsylvania's steel industry. In his 35 years in the workforce, Bernat endured lay-offs and shut-downs, scrambled for part-time and temporary work, and took jobs far from home.

Now the former steelworker is hoping he has at last found a job with a future, putting the finishing touches to the giant fibreglass blades for wind turbines produced by the Spanish firm, Gamesa.

[Racing the clock: Rapid climate change forces scientists to evaluate extreme conservation strategies](#)

Scientists are, for the first time, objectively evaluating ways to help species adapt to rapid climate change and other environmental threats via strategies that were considered too radical for serious consideration as recently as five or 10 years ago. Among these radical strategies currently being considered is so-called "managed relocation." Managed relocation, which is also known as "assisted migration," involves manually moving species into more accommodating habitats where they are not currently found.

...So why is managed relocation, a once-taboo and potentially harmful strategy, now being seriously considered? "Because," says Hellmann, "it is becomingly overwhelmingly evident that climate change is a reality; and it is fast and large. Consequences will arise within decades, not centuries." So action seems much more important now than it did even five or 10 years ago when atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases were lower. Now, we are committed to greater degrees of climate change."

[Why Obama Should Take Notes from Cuba on a Green Energy Revolution](#)

Cuba has successfully greened its energy sector over the last few years, and is now exporting its energy revolution.

[CNBC To Broadcast Live Special "CNBC REPORTS: BREAKING THE OIL ADDICTION":
Tonight, Wednesday, May 27th From 8PM-9PM ET](#)

CNBC, First in Business Worldwide, will broadcast a live special, "CNBC Reports: Breaking the Oil Addiction," reported by CNBC's Melissa Francis, Sharon Epperson, Phil LeBeau, Jane Wells and NBC's Janet Shamlian tonight, Wednesday, May 27th at 8PM ET.

CNBC anchors, reporters and experts will give viewers the latest developments on the OPEC meeting, what rising/falling oil prices mean for the future of alternative and traditional energies and the companies that produce them, new energy vs. old energy, and the impact on Detroit's automaking industry.

CNBC will have reporters around the globe to cover this topic from all angles.

[Live discussion: Jeff Rubin on peak oil and the economy](#)

Join us live on Thursday, May 28 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. ET as former CIBC chief economist Jeff Rubin takes your questions on oil and the economy.

...Join the discussion live on Thursday, or leave your questions for Jeff below and the Your Voice team will make sure they get answered.

[Skyrocketing oil prices could bring jobs home](#)

Canadians could be paying \$2 for a litre of gasoline after oil rises as high as US\$200 a barrel during the next economic cycle, says a Canadian author.

Former CIBC chief economist Jeff Rubin argues in his book, "Why Your World Is About To Get A Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization," that while oil has been cheaper during the current recession, it's not going to be that way for long.

[Oil Demand](#)

On May 20th 2009, the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress held a sparsely-attended hearing on the implications of rising world oil demand for the U.S. economy. JEC chair Representative Carolyn Maloney (D) delivered an opening statement, James D Hamilton, economics professor at UCSD and founder of Econbrowser spoke, followed by Daniel Yergin, author of The Prize and Co-Founder and Chairman of Cambridge

Energy Research Associates.

The initial statements weren't that interesting. Hamilton cautioned that demand could well drive up prices again, while Yergin advised that our strategic future lies with Canada's "oil sands." But they seemed to agree on a lot more than they did before the economy tanked.

[Incoming Shell CEO cuts thousands of jobs](#)

AMSTERDAM - Royal Dutch Shell PLC on Wednesday unveiled a major overhaul of its businesses and management that will affect thousands of jobs, part of a shake up ordered by the incoming chief executive.

[Saras Workers Hold Strike to Protest Fatal Accident](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saras SpA workers at the Sarroch refinery in Sardinia began an eight-hour strike, following the death of three workers yesterday in an accident.

About 3,000 workers walked out at 6 a.m. local time, a spokesman for the FILCEM-CGIL union said today in Rome by telephone. The spokesman declined to be identified by name.

[Indonesia to double palm oil production by 2020](#)

JAKARTA - Indonesia aims to more than double its crude palm oil output to 40 million tonnes by 2020 through increased yields and more plantations, officials said Wednesday.

Average oil palm plantation yields would increase from 3.5 tonnes to 4.5 tonnes a hectare while land under plantation would expand from 7.9 million hectares (19.5 million acres) to about 10 million, they said.

[Research suggests we are genetically programmed to care about climate change](#)

Dr Sozou said: "This analysis shows that the social discount rate is generally lower than the private discount rate. An individual's valuation of a future benefit to herself is governed by the probability that she will still be alive in future. But she may value future benefits to her community over a timescale considerably longer than her own lifespan.

'Evolution is driven by competition. Caring about the future of your community makes evolutionary sense to the extent that future members of your community are likely to

be your relatives.'

[US: Carbon pollution to grow by 40 percent.](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. government forecast says that without mandatory limits on greenhouse gases, the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide flowing into the atmosphere will increase by nearly 40 percent by 2030.

[Canada - Greenhouse-gas estimates off by half: commissioner](#)

OTTAWA — Canada's environment commissioner says the Conservative government's estimated cuts to greenhouse gases are off by at least half.

A large portion of the government's anticipated cuts to greenhouse gases won't actually occur, Scott Vaughan told a parliamentary committee on Tuesday.

[France wants regulated oil prices: Sarkozy](#)

ABU DHABI (Reuters) - France wants oil producers and consumers to agree to price regulation in an effort to safeguard buyers from market volatility and protect energy investments, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said on Tuesday.

During an official visit to the capital of the United Arab Emirates, Sarkozy said France and the UAE might soon make a joint initiative on the issue.

"Why don't producer countries and consumers agree on general price guidelines to give to the market ... a price range which would guarantee investments (in producer countries) over the long term but which would not overwhelm consumer economies," he said in a speech.

[China on borrowed time over fuel price rise](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China must raise gasoline and diesel prices within days or risk more political lobbying and speculative fuel hoarding that would further erode the credibility of a landmark pricing reform launched just months ago.

The government faces a dilemma: raise fuel prices, rewarding speculators at the cost of hard-pressed farmers and industries; or leave them unchanged, betraying its pledge to make fuel prices more transparent and let them fluctuate more freely.

Only a sharp fall in crude oil prices -- hovering near six-month highs at around \$60 a barrel -- would relieve pressure for a price change and get officials off the hook.

[Venezuela's economy reels as oil income is cut in half](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela — Prices for home appliances have skyrocketed, pharmacies are reporting shortages of drugs and General Motors is planning to stop car production here next month, as measures by the Venezuelan government to conserve dollars ripple through the weakening economy.

"Today, there's no milk, no rice, no beans, no chicken, no meat, no butter and no cooking oil," Francisco Quintero said as he shopped at a government store that sells subsidized staples for the poor.

[Cuba sounds summer energy alarm, plans blackouts](#)

HAVANA (AP) — Cubans are in for an especially hot summer under an energy saving plan that could shut off air conditioners at work and require Saturday-morning blackouts at home, according to an unpublished government directive obtained by The Associated Press.

The plan, signed by new Economics Minister Marino Murillo and circulating Tuesday among government offices and state companies, also calls for large-scale vacations for government workers but doesn't say if they will be paid. The measures are necessary, it says, to conserve petroleum used to generate electricity during the Caribbean nation's sweltering summer months.

[Oil Rises Above \\$63 on Saudi Comments, Gasoline Supply Forecast](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil rose to a six-month high above \$63 a barrel after the Saudi minister said fuel demand has started to recover.

Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi told reporters in Vienna for this week's OPEC meeting that there are signs of increasing demand in Asia. In the U.S., a report tomorrow is forecast to show gasoline supplies fell a fifth week amid growing optimism the worst of the recession is over.

[Oil price rise warnings gather pace: IMF, Saudi Arabia, IEA join in](#)

The warnings are not new, but they're getting louder. Ever since oil prices began their plummet from July's peak, concerns about investment in ever more difficult oil sources have been growing.

[Monetary folly oils oil gains](#)

Oil prices are again up and running. Are they heading up to the July 2008 level of US\$147 per barrel, or even higher? Will higher oil prices again squash world economic growth?

[Merrill: Oil prices could pose risk to economic recovery](#)

However, a very fast increase in oil prices in the coming months could soon put the embryonic economic recovery at risk. In turn, an excessive rally in oil could put an end to the raging bull market in risky assets. Is there a near-term inflexion point in oil prices? Our economists believe that a jump in oil prices to the \$70-80/bbl range could start to pose some meaningful risks to economic growth in OECD countries. Meanwhile, our economists see the risks to growth in the \$90-100/bbl range for EMs.

[Chinese hoarders 'are causing oil price boom'](#)

THE big rally in the oil price in recent weeks is down to Chinese stockpiling, a leading energy industry analyst has claimed.

Oil industry experts Bernstein Research say they have been spying on the world's third-largest economy and have concluded China is actively hoarding supplies.

[Looming oil shock means globalization's end: author](#)

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (Reuters) - Triple-digit oil prices are once again around the corner and will sound the death knell for globalization, an audacious but sometimes prescient Canadian economist predicts in a new book.

Jeff Rubin, who until two months ago was the chief economist and strategist at investment bank CIBC World Markets, argues that the days of cheap oil are over, making the global economy unsustainable and turning back the clock on the way we live.

[Transneft to start work on new Baltic oil pipeline](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia plans next month to start construction of an oil link to the Baltic Sea, its oil pipeline monopoly said, launching a project that will allow Moscow to bypass Belarus in exporting 1 million barrels daily.

[Gazprom eyes role in Iran-Pakistan pipeline](#)

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom is keen to participate in a pipeline to carry Iranian gas to Pakistan, the Kommersant daily reported on Wednesday, citing company and government officials.

"We are ready to join the project as soon as we receive an offer," Russia's deputy energy minister Anatoly Yankovsky told the daily.

[Bishop to Queen 4: Recapturing Iran on the Grand Chessboard](#)

One of the potentially more daring and unique foreign policy mandates of the Obama Administration involves a pivotal shift in U.S./Iran relations (or lack thereof). The core reasons for said shift are not limited to America's political interests in the Middle East. More so, they entail intricate long-term geostrategic considerations vis-à-vis Central and South Asian energy politics. The biggest open secret in international affairs involves the race for a wider determination of who will prevail in the "New Great Game" for Eurasian energy resources, pipeline access routes and the necessary alliances for solidifying them.* Considering rising global energy stakes, Iran's oil and gas positioning, as well as how 30 plus years of US sanctions and frozen relations have garnered little for Washington, it is clear that the US needs Iran more than the other way around. In essence, for the US and its closest allies, Iran increasingly appears to be the "queen piece" on the global energy chessboard.

[Names of three '08 hurricanes retired; new names selected](#)

In preparation for the 2009 hurricane season, the WMO is ready with its list of names for Atlantic storms this year.

[Toyota Aims to Sell 25,000 Lexus Hybrids a Year to Stem Slump](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Toyota Motor Corp.'s Lexus unit, struggling with the worst slump of its 20-year history, aims to sell 25,000 new luxury hybrid Lexus sedans a year in hopes the fuel-efficient model can revive demand for the brand.

The HS250h, the seventh gasoline-electric auto in Toyota's U.S. lineup, should get 35 miles (56 kilometers) per gallon of gasoline in combined city and highway driving when it goes on sale in late August, Greg Thome, a Lexus spokesman, said yesterday. Toyota hasn't announced pricing yet.

[Chrysler submits \\$448 million electric car plan](#)

DETROIT (Reuters) - U.S. automaker Chrysler LLC said on Tuesday it submitted proposals totaling \$448 million to the U.S. Department of Energy to research and develop electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid models.

[Hydrogen Highway Promoted in San Diego](#)

A road trip to show the viability of hydrogen fuel cell cars took off from Chula Vista this morning. KPBS Environment Reporter Ed Joyce says the nine-day tour to Canada is intended to promote zero-emission vehicles.

[GE eyes \\$1.5 billion in clean-tech research by 2010](#)

BOSTON (Reuters) - General Electric Co aims to boost its investment in clean-tech research and development to \$1.5 billion a year by 2010, the largest U.S. conglomerate said on Wednesday in its annual "Ecomagination" report.

The maker of products ranging from electricity-producing wind turbines to energy-efficient compact-fluorescent lights, wants to grow green-business revenues to what it called a "stretch" target of \$25 billion next year, up from \$17 billion in 2008 and \$6 billion in 2004.

[Concentrated solar power could generate 'quarter of world's energy'](#)

Solar power stations that concentrate sunlight could generate up to one-quarter of the world's electricity needs by 2050, according to a study by environmental and solar industry groups. The technology, best suited to the desert regions of the world, could also create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and save millions of tonnes of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere.

[Neste Oil Builds Europe's Largest Renewable Diesel Plant in the Netherlands](#)

ROTTERDAM, the Netherlands -- Neste Oil today laid the foundation stone for its renewable diesel plant in the Port of Rotterdam. Upon completion, the plant will be the largest renewable diesel plant in Europe with an annual production capacity of 800,000 metric tonnes. The investment cost of the plant is estimated to be €670 million, and it will create over 100 jobs.

[Watermelons Tapped For Ethanol](#)

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) studies in Lane, Okla., have shown that simple sugars in watermelon juice can be made into ethanol. In 2007, growers harvested four billion pounds of watermelon for fresh and cut-fruit markets. Around 800 million pounds--or 20 percent of the total--were left in fields because of external blemishes or deformities.

[Indonesia biofuel industry seeks higher subsidies](#)

JAKARTA (Reuters) - Indonesian biofuel producers want authorities to allocate higher subsidies next year, in line with a surge in crude oil prices, the chairman of the industry association said on Wednesday.

Indonesia's palm-based biodiesel firms, which have mostly stopped operations, have said they are awaiting for a new price formula and government subsidies in order to survive after being hit by rebounding palm oil prices.

['Bottle top' technology could slash aviation emissions by a fifth](#)

A team of British researchers reckon they have hit on a way of cutting airline fuel bills by up to a fifth by harnessing the same principle that applies when you blow across the top of a bottle to make a sound.

Speaking to BusinessGreen.com, Dr Duncan Lockerby, from the University of Warwick, who is leading the project, explained that placing tens or even hundreds of thousands of tiny holes in the surface of a plane's wing should dramatically reduce mid-flight drag, cutting fuel bills and carbon emissions by up to 20 per cent in the process.

[Dear Grads, Help Save Us!:](#) *Armed with an Arts degree, you can be a hero*

Heavily subsidized roads, low taxes on fuel and lax energy-efficiency standards drove decades of economic growth in Canada and the United States. But those same decisions look stupidly short-sighted when you factor in the climate change impact, the health and social costs of people spending dozens of hours each week alone in their cars, and the absurd lack of fit between our sprawling cities and the reduced ecological footprints now required by both climate change and peak oil.

Arts graduates have the tools to do things differently. We teach you about history, sociology, philosophy, psychology, literature and so much more because human experience—the collective memory of generations—provides a depth and wealth of knowledge and insight that guards against blinkered and short-term thinking.

Thanks to people like you, even the worst crises can be overcome.

[Survivalism In The Suburbs](#)

When considering physical preparation I think the best insurance is a three month supply of food and a 72 hour kit.

The kit should be extremely portable such as a backpack which may be quickly taken in

the automobile should there be a need to evacuate. The food storage is a great hedge against inflation, insurance that you can eat which is not subject to counter-party risk, protection against potential supply chain disruptions such as the recent swine flu advertising campaign, and relatively cheap. Food storage is a form of savings and procuring a three month supply of food may cost only a few hundred FRN\$.

[Share your backyard](#)

The CEED Centre is now a partner in the Sharing Backyards website linking landless people with those who have spare planting space.

“So many people have backyards or other planting space that goes unused” said Maria Raynolds, president of the society. “We want to match up the green thumb people in apartments with those that have a few square feet in their backyards that can be used to grow food.”

[Food fighters: Taking control of our food supply, from the kitchen garden to the community](#)

Detroit Holly White says what started her gardening was stark staring *fear*. After getting rattled by theories about "peak oil" — with its scenarios of a future where fuel prices soar so out of control that people can't afford to eat — she wanted to find a way to make a change.

"I got sort of freaked out," she says, now relaxing in the comfortable condo apartment she shares with her husband in a smartly refurbished old building near Cass and Canfield. "After freaking out, I figured the easiest thing to do was to take control over the food I was eating — to concentrate on food to ease my mind.

"But then I tasted my first fresh tomato and the flavor blew me away."

[Where's the Beef?: Ghent Goes Vegetarian](#)

The Belgian city of Ghent which collectively decided to try vegetarianism for one week.

[Recession May Create CO₂-Credit Oversupply, Bank Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The global recession may lead to an oversupply of greenhouse-gas credits through 2012, the World Bank said in a report that outlines potential threats to carbon investments made by RWE AG and Royal Dutch Shell Plc.

[Help for poor countries at Paris climate talks](#)

PARIS – The world's biggest polluters made progress on a global deal to finance efforts to fight global warming and help poor countries cope with it, the French hosts of climate talks said Tuesday.

[World Health Organization Says Health Sector Can Lead the Fight Against Climate Change](#)

The health sector can play a leadership role in reducing the magnitude and consequences of global warming by reducing its climate footprint. These efforts, some of which are already underway, can greatly reduce the serious health threats posed by global warming and set an example for other sectors. That is the message of a discussion paper just issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Care Without Harm.

[China Believes Climate Risk Tops Credit Crisis, Hu Aide Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China, the world's second-biggest energy consumer, views global warming as more serious than the world financial crisis, President Hu Jintao's special representative on climate change wrote in an editorial.

[Billionaire club in bid to curb overpopulation](#)

SOME of America's leading billionaires have met secretly to consider how their wealth could be used to slow the growth of the world's population and speed up improvements in health and education.

The philanthropists who attended a summit convened on the initiative of Bill Gates, the Microsoft co-founder, discussed joining forces to overcome political and religious obstacles to change.

Described as the Good Club by one insider it included David Rockefeller Jr, the patriarch of America's wealthiest dynasty, Warren Buffett and George Soros, the financiers, Michael Bloomberg, the mayor of New York, and the media moguls Ted Turner and Oprah Winfrey.



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