Mike Pompeo

Credentials

- BS, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. (1986). [1]

Background

Michael Richard “Mike” Pompeo was the U.S. Representative for Kansas's 4th congressional district from 2011 until he was confirmed as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency on January 23, 2017. Pompeo has been described as “the Koch brothers’ point man in the House,” with Koch Industries his single largest campaign contributor. Notably, Koch Industries headquarters in Wichita is in Pompeo's home district. He is a member of the Tea Party Movement and the Republican National Committee. [2]

President Trump announced on March 13, 2018 that he planned to nominate Pompeo to replace Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State, The Washington Post first reported. Pompeo would be replaced at the CIA by Gina Haspel, who would be the first woman to lead the agency. [3], [4]

“One of the very first serious books I read when I was growing up was Atlas Shrugged,” Pompeo told John Gizzi for a profile in Human Events. Pompeo studied mechanical engineering at the U.S. Military Academy at
West Point, where he had been appointed by his family's congressman Robert K. Dornan. “[T]hat should give you an idea of where I’m coming from politically if ‘B-1 Bob’ chose me for West Point,” Pompeo said. [5]

After graduating in 1986, Pompeo served for five years on active duty (the minimum required in the military post academy). He served primarily in Germany and earned the rank of Captain. After serving as a cavalry officer, he entered Harvard Law School in 1991, where he was one of several editors on its law review. He graduated with a law degree and went on to work as an Associate for the D.C. law firm Williams & Connolly for just over two years, focusing on tax law and working on a major case involving an amendment to the Arkansas Constitution imposing term limits. [6], [5], [7], [8], [9], [10]

Pompeo was first elected to the 112th Congress on November 2, 2010. During his time in Congress, Pompeo served on the Energy and Commerce, House Intelligence, and House Select Benghazi committees, among others. [11]

Pompeo has advocated for mass surveillance by the National Security Agency (NSA), pushing for access to a cache of metadata to track the communications of potential terrorists. He has also become known for his views that waterboarding isn't torture, that Guantanamo Bay should remain open, and that climate change is unsettled science. [12], [13]

E&E News reported that many of Pompeo's views “are in sync with the Kochs,” including his push to expand domestic drilling, and opposition of environmental regulations and renewable energy. He has a 4% lifetime score with the League of Conservation Voters. [8], [14]

In addition to significant financial support from Koch Industries, Pompeo has received endorsements from the executives of Wichita's largest aircraft companies, and the anti-abortion group Kansans for Life. [15]

**Koch Ties**

**Law**

While working as an Associate for Williams & Connolly in 1994, Pompeo was involved in a major case involving proposed amendments to the Arkansas constitution imposing term limits. That amendment was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court for violating the qualifications for elected representatives set by the U.S. Constitution, in U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton (1995). [10], [16]

Williams & Connolly had taken on U.S. Term Limits as a client in 1992, SourceWatch reported. U.S. Term Limits later admitted to the press that it had used promotional material, mailing lists, and other materials from a campaign committee funded by the Koch brothers to push for term limits. It refused to divulge how much major donors were funding the multi-state campaign, while Koch's spokesperson claimed Koch Industries had “absolutely no direct participation in the California effort.” [17], [10]

It refused to divulge who or what was funding the multi-state amendment campaign; and the Kochs’ spokesperson issued a narrow denial, claiming that the Kochs “have absolutely no direct participation” in any particular state amendment. (Subsequently, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee investigated the role of the Kochs in using pass-through organizations to hide their role in the 1996 elections via the Triad group, a fact that was confirmed after the investigation was shut down.) [10], [18]
It is unclear if Pompeo knew of the relationship between U.S. Term Limits and the Kochs. In mid-2016, as a third-term Congressman Pompeo signed the latest pledge of U.S. Term Limits, to vote for a constitutional amendment to limit congressional service to three terms. Pompeo won his election for a fourth term in Congress in November 2016. [19]

Business

In 1997, Pompeo and three of his fellow West Point alumni went on to create Thayer Holdings, L.C. Ulrich Brechbuhl joined Thayer from Mitt Romney's venture capital firm Bain & Co., Brian Bulatao would work as COO of the firm, and Michael Stradinger was in charge of mergers and acquisitions (while a co-founder, he now omits it from his LinkedIn resume). Brechbuhl publicly took credit for raising more than $90 million in capital for Thayer during his three years at the firm with initial capital drawn from Koch Venture Capital, a division of Koch Industries, as well as Cadinal Investment Co. and Bain & Co. Thayer Holdings was created “to buy medium-sized companies.” One of its initial acquisitions was Aero Machine, an airplane parts company, in Wichita. [20], [21], [22], [23], [24], [25]

According to a 1998 article in the Wichita Business Journal, “The company's capital base is drawn in part from Wichita's Koch Venture Capital, a division of Koch Industries Inc.” Pompeo later claimed that Koch's investment was less than two percent of the total, although detailed records are not publicly available. It is unclear precisely what the relationship between Koch Industries and Thayer was, given a lack of independent documentation. [26], [27]

With the purchase of Aero, Pompeo filed incorporation documents in Kansas for a new entity called Thayer Aerospace that would be managed by Thayer Holdings and Aero. The filings with the Kansas Secretary of State for that corporation and related ones—Thayer Aerospace Consolidated and Thayer Aerospace Manufacturing—do not disclose that any shares were issued for them or acquisitions: Aero Machine, Precision Profiling, B & B Machines—in Wichita—and Advanced Tool & Die in St. Louis. But, Thayer Aerospace Plating listed authority to issue 10,000 shares; shareholders are not disclosed. Pompeo finally incorporated Kansas-based Thayer Aerospace in 1998, where he would serve as CEO for more than 10 years. [7], [8]

Business entities on file at the Kansas Business Center include the following (see related documentation below): [28]

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Kansas Business ID Number</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<th>Company Name</th>
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<td>WITHDRAWN</td>
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<tr>
<td>THAYER AEROSPACE PLATING, INC.</td>
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<tr>
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THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, INC 2004 12 Annual Report

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, INC 2005 12 Annual Report

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, INC 2006 12 Annual Report
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THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, INC 2007 12 Annual Report

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, INC 2008 04 Withdrawal

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, L L C 1998 09 Foreign Application

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, L L C 1999 12 Annual Report

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, L L C 1999 12 Change of RO or RA

THAYER AEROSPACE CONSOLIDATED, L L C 2000 12 Reinstatement

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There is no public record of the amounts or lengths of the investments of Koch or the other venture capital firms in Thayer. There is no public financial reporting for Thayer, which told the press that it had revenue of about $65 million in 2000 (its expenses or debts were not disclosed). [23]

However, in 2010, when Pompeo was confronted during the primary election with an ad claiming he ran a small machine shop out of business due to paying contracts late or reduced amounts, Pompeo denied it. He told reporters that though Thayer briefly struggled after 9/11, “We fought through it. We worked with our business partners, we worked with our shareholders, we worked with our lenders…” [29]

Highland Capital Management LP purchased Thayer Aerospace, renamed Nex-Tech, in April 2007. Bill McKenna had taken over as president and CEO of the company in 2006, replacing Pompeo who became president of international affairs for Sentry International Inc. [30]

According to press: the “new owners and restructured financing are helping Nex-Tech Aerospace rebuild a reputation damaged by an era of missed deliveries and slow supplier payments.” The new owners noted that Pompeo had “utilized asset-based financing for operating expenses and capital expenditures—borrowing against inventory and receivables” but that Nex-Tech had prudently “converted to a traditional financing package with a $10 million revolving loan.” [30]

In 2005, after selling off his interests in Thayer, Pompeo founded Sentry International, an oil field services company that maintained a partnership with Koch Industries' Brazilian distributor, GTF Representacoes & Consultoria. [31], [32]
Flint Hills Center & George Pearson

For four years, Pompeo was a trustee and board member of the Flint Hills Center for Public Policy, which eventually became the Kansas Policy Institute. Pompeo was listed on the website in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, while public tax forms list him in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. [27], [33]

Flint Hills Center (first known as the Kansas Public Policy Institute) was co-founded by George Pearson, one of Charles Koch’s closest and oldest advisors, to help push Koch’s agenda in Kansas and nationally, including attempts to fight the growth of renewable energy. [34], [35], [36]

According to his profile at the Kansas Policy Institute, Pearson “worked for nearly three decades for the Koch family as manager of various Koch Foundations and for Koch Industries in various corporate positions including Director of Public Affairs.” He also worked with other major think tanks including the Cato Institute, where he was one of the group’s original shareholders. He also worked with the Koch-financed Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) at George Mason University (GMU), and is also a former member of the John Birch Society in Wichita. Pearson is also a long-time board member of the Atlas Network. [37], [38]

Pompeo personally thanked Pearson in a KPI tribute video, where he said “I learned an awful lot from you” during their time working together. [39]

Politics

In 2010, the Koch advocacy group Americans for Prosperity (AFP) was among groups that funded attacks against Pompeo’s opponent in the primary and helped him to secure the Republican nomination. Every year since, Pompeo was the number one recipient of funding from Koch Industries. [40]

Koch Industries is his top lifetime campaign contributor at $365,500 of career donations, according to OpenSecrets. Top contributors listed below: [41]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributor</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>PACs</th>
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<td>Koch Industries</td>
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<td>Textron Inc</td>
<td>$72,310</td>
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<td>Mull Drilling</td>
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<td>Club for Growth</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCoy Petroleum</td>
<td>$52,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emprise Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritchie Exploration</td>
<td>$43,954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exelon Corp</td>
<td>$43,000</td>
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<td>USAA</td>
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<td>Cox Enterprises</td>
<td>$37,300</td>
<td>$16,300$21,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After his election, Pompeo brought on former Koch Industries lobbyist Mark Chenoweth as his chief of staff. Jane Mayer wrote in her book *Dark Money:* “Within weeks, Pompeo was championing two of Koch Industries’ legislative priorities—opposition to Obama’s plans to create a public EPA registry of greenhouse gas polluters and a digital database of consumer complaints about unsafe products.” [42]

In 2007, Pompeo ran to become the Chairman of the Kansas Republican Party, but lost that bid to Kris Kobach. In 2008, Pompeo won his bid to become an RNC Committeeman, serving alongside Kobach as one of 168 members of the RNC. [43], [44]

**Stance on Climate Change**

**January 12, 2017**

During his confirmation hearing for the position of CIA director, Pompeo refused to acknowledge NASA’s endorsement of the scientific consensus on climate change, *The Independent* reported. [45]

During the hearing, he said he’d “prefer not to get into the details of climate change and science.” When asked by Democratic Senator Kamala Harris whether he “had any reason to doubt” scientific findings on climate change, Pompeo responded:

“I, frankly, as the director of CIA, would prefer today not to get into the details of the climate debate and science. It seems my role is going to be so different and unique to that. It is going to be to work alongside warriors keeping Americans safe and so I stand by the things I’ve said previously with respect to that issue. […]” [45]

**December 2015**

“Kansans and Americans shouldn't be forced to shoulder the costly burden of President Obama's careless attempt to secure his legacy,” Pompeo said of the Paris climate accord, *E&E News* reported. “Congress must also do all in our power to fight against this damaging climate change proposal and pursue policies that support American energy, create new jobs, and power our economy.” [8]
November 30, 2015

Pompeo released a statement ahead of President Barack Obama's trip to the United Nations summit on climate change in Paris: [46]

“The President has his priorities dangerously wrong. He is now headed to Paris to bow down to radical environmentalists, all the while refusing to stand up to radical Islamists. In this city that has suffered an enormous tragedy at the hands of jihadists, our President stands ready to handcuff the global economy instead of the barbarians that seek to kill Americans, our allies, and others all over the world.

” […] President Obama has called climate change the biggest national security threat of our lifetime, but he is horribly wrong. His unwillingness to acknowledge the true threat posed by Islamic extremism will get Americans killed. His perverse fixation on achieving his economically harmful environmental agenda instead of defeating the true threats facing the world shows just how out of sync his priorities are with Kansans and the American people.”

June 25, 2013

Pompeo spoke about climate change when he appeared on Washington Journal: [47]

“There are scientists who think lots of different things about climate change. There's some who think we're warming, there's some who think we're cooling, there's some who think that the last 16 years have shown a pretty stable climate environment,” Pompeo said. [47]

February 8, 2009

Americans for Prosperity congratulated Pompeo for signing it's “No Climate Tax” pledge.” See the original signed copy below: [48], [49]
Pompeo on Torture

Pompeo has defended the use of waterboarding, saying it wasn’t torture. After the release of the 2014 Senate torture report, Pompeo said “These men and women are not torturers, they are patriots. The programs being used were within the law, within the constitution.” Pompeo has supported keeping open Guantanamo Bay, and has focused on the threat of “radical Islamic terrorism.” [50], [51], [13]

Key Quotes

October 2014

In a visit to Kansas State University, Pompeo talked about gay marriage: [52]

“I don’t agree with (same-sex marriage). I think marriage ought to continue to be between one man and one woman. So do most Kansans, for what it matters. I think when it was on the ballot (the state constitutional ban on same-sex marriage), 70 percent (voted in favor of the ban). There was overwhelming support for it in the state of Kansas.”

“I think as you look back at civilization, look back at history, you find the strength of these families having a father and a mother is the ideal condition for childbearing,” Pompeo said. “Doesn’t mean there aren’t great families with single parents, great young men and women raised without either parent. If you’re asking for what is ideal, I think it’s being raised by a man and a woman.”

2014

Speaking to a Wichita church group, Pompeo depicted the war against terrorism as a war between radical Muslims and the Christian faith: [53]

Mike Pompeo: “threat to America” caused by “people who deeply believe that Islam is the way” from The Intercept on Vimeo.

“This threat to America is from people who deeply believe that Islam is the way and the light, and the only answer. And so as we think about what U.S. Policy needs to be... how we will begin to combat this, we need to recognize that these folks believe that it is religiously driven for them to wipe Christians from the face of the Earth.”

“[…] [I]t is absolutely a minority within the Muslim faith, but these folks are serious, and they abhor Christians, and will continue to press against us until we make sure that we pray and stand and fight and make sure that we know that Jesus Christ as our savior is truly the only solution for our world.” [53]

March 1, 2012

In a guest column for Americans for Prosperity, Kansas, Pompeo discussed how his proposed legislation “would get rid of every single tax credit related to energy — ending tax favoritism that today goes to wind and solar, algae and electric vehicles and tax credits that go to the oil and gas industry as well.” Pompeo went on to target wind power: [54]
“One example of a tax earmark that should be eliminated is the Production Tax Credit (PTC) that goes to the wind industry,” Pompeo wrote. “The PTC has existed for the past 20 years, but it has not succeeded yet in making unsubsidized wind competitive. Politicians who pretend that a few more years of the PTC will make wind competitive could be right, but that is not a responsible bet to make with taxpayer dollars.”

**November 26, 2011**

Pompeo wrote with bill co-sponsor Re. Raul R. Labrador to promote legislation that would end tax breaks for wind, solar, electric vehicles, biofuels, nuclear and fossil fuels: [55]

“Having dozens of energy handouts leads companies to spend resources lobbying Washington rather than tinkering in their garages and labs. Indeed, we are counting on one of these alternatives to succeed. We just know that we have no idea, nor do any of our peers in Congress, which one consumers ultimately will demand. The winner must be determined the old-fashioned way: through hard work, innovation, American moxie and superior skills engaged in competition,” Pompeo and Labrador wrote in *The Washington Times*.

**June 2, 2011**

*National Journal* asked Pompeo about whether he was influenced by Koch Industries, as they are his largest donor, to which Pompeo replied that Koch is “amazing.” View the original article here [56], [57]

NJ: “How do you respond to critics who say you’re being influenced by Koch Industries, given its owners’ contributions to your campaign?”

POMPEO: “What do you think? I’d say [I’ve been] a small-government guy for an awful long time, and I’ll be a small-government guy when the good Lord calls me home. Koch Industries is an amazing business that has succeeded by building a product that customers love dearly. The folks who run Koch are very clear. They would love to have government just get out of the way and allow companies to compete, whether in their particular sectors or other sectors. They are true believers in small government.”

**May 14, 2010**

Speaking on AM 1070 Morning News radio, Pompeo said his first reaction to the BP Oil Spill was the “fervent hope that Congress doesn’t overreact” and curtail dangerous offshore drilling.” (Note that the original video is no longer available online). [58]

**Key Deeds**

**April 10, 2018**

Over 200 environmental groups called for Pompeo’s nomination to be rejected, citing his “extreme anti-environment, anti-consumer safety agenda” and denial of climate change. The letter was organized by the Food & Water Watch and signed by groups including 350.org, Greenpeace, Progressive Democrats of America, and Public Citizen. [59], [60]

“At a time when many of our military and diplomatic leaders are citing climate chaos as the greatest threat to global peace and stability, it’s downright absurd to consider placing Mike Pompeo, a belligerent climate denier, at the helm of the State Department. For the sake of our planet and future generations, the Senate must reject Pompeo’s nomination out of hand,” said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch. [59]

March 13, 2018

Trump announced that he planned to nominate Mike Pompeo as the new secretary of state to represent the US following his firing of Rex Tillerson. [61]

“I’ve worked with Mike Pompeo now for quite some time – tremendous energy, tremendous intellect, we’re always on the same wavelength,” Trump told reporters. “The relationship has been very good and that’s what I need as secretary of state.” Trump said he would be a “truly great secretary of state.” [61]

Several environmental groups criticized Trump's choice of Pompeo, pointing to Pompeo's past skepticism of climate change: [62]

“In this position, (Pompeo) could prove to be dangerous to our national security and the safety of our planet,” said Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club. [62]

May Boeve, executive director for 350.org, also issued a statement: [62]

“We’ve gone from Exxon’s CEO to the Koch Brothers’ most loyal lapdog,” she said. [62]

“Tillerson was basically hands-off on the issue (of climate change),” said Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists. “It is not clear it is going to be any more of a priority for Pompeo.” [62]

January 23, 2017

President-elect Donald Trump nominated Pompeo to head the CIA on November 18, 2016. The Senate confirmed the nomination on January 23, 2017. [63]

February 11, 2016

Pompeo called for Edward Snowden's execution, speaking with Washington Journal. [64]

“He should be brought back from Russia and given due process and I think the proper outcome would be that he would be given a death sentence for having put friends of mine, friends of yours, who serve in the military today at enormous risk because of the information he stole and then released to foreign powers,” Pompeo said. [64]

In September 2016, Pompeo signed a letter urging President Obama not to pardon Snowden, who he described as “serial exaggerator and fabricator.” He also released a press release calling for “prison rather than pardon for Edward Snowden.” [65], [66]

February 26, 2014

Pompeo issued a public statement defending Koch Industries, Charles, and David Koch: [67]

“Yet opponents of the House’s effort to hold the IRS accountable have doubled down and continued to attack two private citizens, Charles and David Koch, as deserving of such government abuse. Senator Reid’s attacks today from the Senate floor are reprehensible. This cannot be tolerated – not for these two great men or for any individual who disagrees with those in power.
“The Kochs’ Wichita-based company employs close to 60,000 people in manufacturing jobs. These predominantly middle-class employees live in nearly all 50 states and are a benefit to the communities they work and live in. They are good people and good neighbors, my neighbors, and deserve protection under the law that is equal to those lawmakers who seek to marginalize them.

“The jobs created by this company are a far greater benefit to the middle class than any wasteful Washington program. We should be taking lessons from hardworking Americans in the private sector instead of continuing to play politics with people’s lives.”

June 2013

Speaking on the House floor, Pompeo said that Muslim leaders not denouncing acts of terrorism in the name of Islam are “potentially complicit” in attacks. The Council on American-Islamic Relations sent a letter to Pompeo, describing his remarks as “false and irresponsible.” [68], [69]

August 28, 2009

Pompeo spoke at a large Tea Party rally organized by Americans for Prosperity, Lee Fang reported at ThinkProgress. [70]

Affiliations

- Williams & Connolly — Former Associate. [15]
- Thayer Aerospace — Founder and former CEO. [11]
- Sentry International — Former President. [11]
- Republican National Committee (RNC) — Served on the RNC. [15]

Social Media

- Mike Pompeo does not appear to be active on Twitter. There does appear to be a parody account (“the Officially Unofficial Twitter Account of Michael Pompeo”) at @RealMikePompeo. [27]
- There are several unverified accounts for Mike Pompeo on Facebook.
- Mike Pompeo (unverified) on LinkedIn. See alternate profile (also unverified).

Publications

Pompeo is listed as co-author of The Benghazi Committee: Proposed Additional Views, published June 28, 2016. According to the book description, the authors offer “additional views to set the record straight” including that “The administration misled the public about the events in Benghazi.” [71]

Resources


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37. “Board of Trustees & Officers,” *Kansas Policy Institute*. Archived March 14, 2018. Archive.is URL: https://archive.is/Bgmr0


44. “Mike Pompeo (R),” *The Wall Street Journal*. Archived March 16, 2018. Archive.is URL: https://archive.is/HCxVK


https://www.desmogblog.com/mike-pompeo


60. “Organizational Sign-on Letter: Reject Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State” (PDF), Food and Water Watch, April 10, 2018.


**Other Resources**

- “*Mike Pompeo*,” Wikipedia.
- “*Mike Pompeo*,” LittleSis.
- “Trump’s CIA pick Mike Pompeo is a Tea Party war hawk who was bankrolled by the Koch brothers,” *RawStory*, November 18, 2016.

**Related Posts**

- [Koch Brothers Behind Push To Dismantle EPA](https://www.desmogblog.com/mike-pompeo)

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