The Delray Democrat

November 2021

It's Not a Failed Presidency It's a Failed Democracy . . . and a Failing Planet

Michael K. Cantwell

If you get your information from the corporate media, you'll be surprised to learn that Joe Biden's record in office has been one of singular achievements, notwithstanding recent setbacks.

His presidency would be deemed a success even if he hadn't been inaugurated during a once-in-a-century pandemic and the greatest economic meltdown since the Great Depression, and even if he had not been forced to work with razor-thin majorities in Congress.

The media loved him at first, celebrating his accomplishments within his first 100 days, chief among them the enormously successful rollout of the COVID vaccination program, passage of the American Rescue Plan, and the rejoining of the Paris Agreement.

Biden nearly quadrupled the vaccination rate (from 777,000 to 3 million a day) by invoking the Defense Production Act, brokering a deal

between Merck & Johnson & Johnson, and setting up federally run vaccination centers across the country.

As a result, in the first 100 days in office, 148 million Americans received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine and 106 million were fully vaccinated; and 83% of Americans over 65 received at least one dose, with 70% being fully vaccinated.

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan not only provided stimulus payments to all Americans earning under \$200,000 and extended unemployment benefits, but also restructured and expanded the child care credit in order to cut child poverty in half. By increasing subsidies for the Affordable Care Act, it helped provide insurance for a record 31 million Americans.

In addition to returning the United States to the Paris Agreement, Biden used his executive powers to revoke the

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Upcoming DCDB Meetings (7:00 PM)

November 11 DEC Vice-Chair Mindy Koch: How We Win in 2022

Big Pharma Spends More on Marketing than R&D

	R&D	Mkg
Abbvie	21%	22%
Eli Lilly	25%	28%
Glaxo	21%	52%
Novartis	27%	42%
Pfizer	17%	28%

We Are Not Fighting to Save Our Democracy; We Are Struggling to Get it Back

Rob Resnick

To those who think we are fighting to maintain our democracy, think again. We lost it and are fighting to get it back. The 2016 election was not the beginning, but rather the signature moment. The country knew exactly who Trump was – he told and showed it repeatedly to anyone who paid the slightest attention. He was dangerously inexperienced in governance, woefully uninformed about policy and process, had a demonstrated anti-democracy agenda, and of course serious character flaws including a lifetime of lying, cheating, and assaultive conduct. None of that mattered to millions of his voters because he was elected to dismantle government and open the door to an era of extremism. Pandora's box remains open.

Similarly, Democrats by any measure should have won control of the Senate that year which in hindsight could have been pivotal to preventing some of the Trump abuses that ensued. The same issues with the electorate that led to Trump winning allowed Republicans to keep the Senate. Over decades, there developed a type of American authoritarianism that lived in the soft underbelly of society. They were angry and frustrated at their perceived loss of status and opportunity. They believed that violence and revolution were needed to save "their country." And of course, there was an abundance of racists and extremists in the mix, many in the form of militias. During the 2016 campaign, Trump referred to them

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permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, block drilling at Alaska's Artic National Wildlife Refuge, and stop issuing new leases for oil and gas exploration on public land. By executive action, he also expanded food assistance, extended the federal moratorium on evictions, and continued the suspension of federal student loan payments and interest charges.

Those are just the highlights. And last but not least, there was a collective sigh as a sense of normality settled over the nation after four years of chaos, cruelty, and incompetence.

Biden Hasn't Failed; Our Democracy Has

From the moment Biden was inaugurated, we knew Joe Manchin would be a problem; what we didn't know was that Krysten Sinema's narcissism would be eclipsed only by Trump's. Together they have thwarted the clear will of the American people, 61% of whom support passage of the American Families Plan at its originally budgeted cost of \$3.5 trillion:

\$3.5 trillion American Families Plan		
	For	Against
Total	61%	30%
Democrat	89%	6%
Independent	60%	28%
Republican	30%	58%

Source: Navigator.

Manchin insisted on cutting provisions designed to combat climate change, the preeminent threat to our civilization and planet. Sinema refused to support raising taxes to pay for the bill even though, once again, the overwhelming majority of Americans are in favor of raising taxes on the wealthy and corporations:

Measure	For	Against
Increase capital gains on wealthy	72%	20%
Limit deductions for wealthy business owners	71%	21%
Raise income tax on top 2%	71%	23%
Increase IRS funding to catch tax cheats	68%	24%
Raise taxes on large corporations	65%	28%

Source: Vox/Data for Progress

Moreover, the <u>voters of West Virginia</u> also support enactment of the American Families plan by a 54-41 margin. But Manchin is far from alone in believing that his constituents are the corporations and wealthy donors who contribute to his campaign and *not* the people who actually live in his state.

House Democrats Kurt Schrader, Scott Peters, and Kathleen Rice voted against allowing government to negotiate drug prices even though that is supported by Americans by more than a 5:1 margin. Big Pharm was Peter's biggest and Schrader's second biggest contributor.

	vernment Be A ptiate Drug Pri	
	For	Against
Total	83%	16%
Democrat	92%	6%
Independent	85%	15%
Republican	76%	23%

Source: KFF

Schrader <u>called</u> for the decoupling of the American Families Plan from the bipartisan infrastructure bill:

Let's pass that infrastructure package right now, and don't get your hopes up that we're going to spend trillions more of our kids' and grandkids' money that we don't really have at this point.

I imagine his kids and grandkids would remember him more fondly if he showed some concern about leaving them a dying planet.

Joe Biden has been doing a superb job in trying circumstances but it's times like these that one misses LBJ. He would have taken Joe Manchin into his office and told him to vote for his bill or West Virginia wouldn't get another dime from the federal government while he was president. He would have eaten and spit out Schrader and Sinema: "listen up, you little shits, get with the plan or find another job."

Our Failing Planet

The American Families Plan is our democracy's and our planet's last chance. Pass it and Democrats will be seen to have listened to, and acted on behalf of, the American people, and we will hold Congress next year. Fail to pass it and we will cede control of Congress in 2022 and the White House in 2024. And that is game over for our democracy and planet.

Trump Has Been Defeated, but Trumpism Is Alive and Ill

Rabbi Barry Silver

It's been a while since I felt morally compelled to write about the disgraced loser ex-President who staged an unsuccessful coup against America, but while Trump has been defeated, the plague of Trumpism is alive and ill. Spawning lies about the election and climate change, Trumpism threatens to end life as we know it as his Republicult lemmings attack democracy and cause our children's future to go up in smoke in forest fires in California, Australia, the Amazon and around the world. We must never mute ourselves to such toxic madness.

The Republicans have transformed themselves from a political party into a cult, which has cost them the White House, both houses of Congress and their souls, which they sold to the devil in 2016. However, even in defeat, Trump's "psycho"fants still rally around this cancer upon the body politic, which has metastasized among Trump's armies of the absurd, battalions of the brainwashed and divisions of the deluded who support voter suppression and trample upon the right of women to control their own body. These policies deny the right of Jews and others to follow their own religious dictates rather than legislative fiat. Trumpists want government off our backs and into our bedrooms.

As a result, people across the south are unable to access life-saving medical care because the hospital beds and morgues are filled with vaccine deniers and victims of "mask" confusion. Trumpists are afflicted with the fatal virus of ignorance, intolerance and arrogance, yet refuse to accept the vaccine of reason, which is free, effective and available to all. Trumpist candidates emulate their disgraced leader and vie with each other for who is the most boorish, seditious and unhinged.

Lest you consider me biased, read what fellow Republicans said about "the Don" before cultish "group think" took over and people were free to speak their minds.

I mean this is a guy that's taken Trump airlines bankrupt. Trump vodka, nobody wanted it. Trump mortgage, was a disaster. Trump University was a fraud. Has spent a career of sticking it to working people...I believe Donald Trump as our nominee is going to shatter and fracture the Republican Party and the conservative movement...The most vulgar person to ever aspire to the presidency... We're on the verge of having someone take over the conservative movement who is a con artist

Marco Rubio

Utterly amoral. This man is a pathological liar. He doesn't know the difference between truth and lies. He lies practically every word that comes out of his mouth. A narcissist at a level that I don't think this country has ever seen. A serial philanderer.

Ted Cruz

You know how you make America great again? Tell Donald Trump to go to hell. He's a race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot. He doesn't represent my party. He doesn't represent the values that the men and women who wear the uniform are fighting for. Lindsey Graham

Republican Congressman Anthony Gonzalez recently called Trump a cancer on the Republican Party and announced he will not seek re-election due to fear of violence from Trumpist vigilantes.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who fled totalitarianism said it best, "Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself; it is more universal, more contagious, more dangerous. A silent justification, it makes possible an evil erupting as an exception, becoming the rule, and in turn being accepted."

Most people don't have experience deprogramming cult followers, where the admirable trait of tolerance no longer applies. Tolerating evil is immoral and cultists must be told in no uncertain terms that they are deluded and have lost their grip on reality to get them to snap out of it and rejoin the real world. Sadly, most liberals are too politically correct to apply such tough love and firmness under the false notion that all views, even the vilest, are worthy of "respect" and all religious opinions, even if lethal, are sacrosanct. This is a recipe for disaster as a lie can travel half way around the world before the truth can put on its jogging shoes; all that's necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.

We must not be guilty of the sin of silence. Rather, let us seek an intervention for Trumpist friends and loved ones to save them, America and our children's future from disaster and begin a new era where science, kindness and reason prevail.

Rabbi Barry Silver welcomes your opinion and can be reached at barryboca@aol.com

2022 Membership

Char Lane

We're coming to the end of 2021 and it's time to renew your membership or, if not yet a member, to consider joining our Club. Membership is on a calendar year basis and the dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, our meetings, other working supplies and signage for our sign waving events. Our meetings are on the second Thursday of each month, currently via zoom but we're hoping to be able to resume live meetings in the near future.

Our goal is to educate people as to why they should vote Democratic and use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal, especially in these times of outrageous changes to voting laws. We're optimistic that we can help to turn Florida BLUE by electing a Democratic governor and a Democratic U.S. Senator in 2022. It will be a very busy year for us and we'll need your help in our sign-waving, phone calling, postcard writing, canvassing and participating in other projects.

Visit our website at www.demclubofdelray.org, our newsletter website at www.thedelraydemocrat.com, our Facebook group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620 and peruse our meeting videos at https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620 and peruse our meeting videos at https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620 and peruse our meeting videos at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSKbVrZSWAjNnX2BFJry0PuOXS09J5GiI

We're looking forward to you being a member of our Club in 2022.

Worth Quoting

"I'm for capital punishment. You've got to execute people — how else are they going to learn?" Mort Sahl

"Public relief is a sacred debt. Society owes maintenance to unfortunate citizens." Paragraph 21 of the 1793

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen—the ultimate statement of the ideals of the French Revolution.

"One major difference between the GOP and Dems is that [Republicans] leverage their right flank to gain policy concessions and generate enthusiasm, while Dems lock their left flank in the basement [because] they think that will make Republicans be nicer to them." Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

"Better the occasional faults of a government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference." FDR

Man is a foolish thing, a foolish thing: His house still burns; and yet he still doth sing. Man is but grass, He knows it, fill the glass. Miserie, George Herbert (1633)

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Takeaway from Virginia

Michael K. Cantwell

The number one takeaway from Glenn Youngkin's election as governor is that racism is alive and well in Virginia.

Donald Trump threw away the dog whistles wielded by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan and began using a bullhorn. It was effective until it wasn't.

So Glenn Youngkin threw away the bullhorn and picked up the dog whistle, as Ron DeSantis is attempting to do in Florida. Anyone who thinks that Critical Race Theory is being taught in public schools is an ignoramus, and anyone who opposes the teaching of America's history of slavery and genocide is a racist. Period.

Of course, there is no shortage of ignoramuses and racists in America. And McAuliffe's comment that "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach" played right into their hands.

But that wasn't the only reason that he lost. Community leaders complained of voter cynicism and apathy among Democrats, but McAuliffe received over 200,000 more votes than Ralph Northam in 2017, so the problem was that there was more enthusiasm (or perhaps I should say calculated and programmed malevolence) among Republicans.

An enthusiasm gap is expected in off-year elections when your party is in power, and as the media never tires of reminding us, a President's party almost loses in first-term midterms.

They don't talk about the most spectacular exception, when, in FDR's first midterm, Democrats gained 9 seats in the Senate, giving them a supermajority, and the Republicans lost 14 seats in the House, reducing them to less than one-quarter of the seats for the first time since founding of the party.

There's a reason that FDR generated such enthusiasm, beyond the fact that he was a consummate politician. It's because Democrats were seen as listening to, and working on behalf of, the

American people. And the problem that we face in 2022 is that Democrats are not seen as listening to, or working on behalf of, the American people.

This is not the fault of Joe Biden or the Democratic Party. It is the fault of a small number of Democrats who no longer care what their de jure constituents (those who live in their districts) want because they are beholden to their de facto constituents (those who fund their campaigns).

I'm talking about Joe Manchin, who doesn't work for or listen to the people of West Virginia, the majority of whom support the American Family Plan in its full \$3.5 trillion original incarnation; he works for the coal companies that have despoiled a once-beautiful state and sickened its people; and he works for his own and his families' economic interests, which are allied with Big Coal.

I'm talking about Kurt Schrader, who receives substantial funding from the pharmaceutical industry. He voted against allowing government to negotiate drug prices, which is favored by the public by 83-16, and then inveighed against the American Family Plan, favored 61-30 in polls, claiming that it would burden "our kids and grandkids" with debt. He's obviously unconcerned that people like him are burdening our kids and grandkids with a ruined planet.

The circular firing squads are lining up again, and the media is loving it, but anyone who thinks that McAuliffe would have won if Congress passed the bipartisan infrastructure bill has not been paying attention and has learned nothing from Virginia.

McAuliffe might well have won if BOTH the bipartisan bill and the American Families Plan had been passed. The former improves roads, but the latter improves lives.

But some politicians are addicted to their corporate contributions and the media is, sadly, wedded to the false but potentially self-fulfilling prophecy of a failed presidency.

Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors

Michael Cantwell, President; Char Lane, Vice-President; Sandra Elaissen-Cantwell, Secretary; David Kulick, Treasurer; Robert Resnick, Parliamentarian, Robert Averack, Mary Fader, Charlie Holbrook, June Neal, and Cheryl Perry, Directors; Patricia O'Hearne and John Ramos, Directors Emeritus.

as "Second Amendment people." Hillary was right, they are deplorable.

MAGA was not just a campaign slogan that would typically disappear after the election and was not just a philosophy that might be replaced in future elections. This was the moment for which the extremists had planned quietly in the shadows for decades and it was their time to take control of the nation. Pundits tend to say that while Trump threatened and weakened our democratic institutions, they ultimately held and survived. Except that is not the case. The 2020 Election was not a repudiation of Trumpism and MAGA's extremist, racist, antidemocracy agenda. President Biden won, ostensibly to restore the nation to a sense of normalcy and competence in governance. His election was in large part a result of Trump's utter failure to even try and deal with the pandemic. But for that, Trump may very well have won and continued his battle to dismantle our democracy.

the ability of the people to vote for their elected representatives. Their supporters rally around fallacious claims of abuse by Democrats and false assertions of the Democratic agenda. The frenzy will allow the Trumpists to blatantly violate the law to keep power because their supporters believe they are saving the nation. But in fact, they are destroying it.

Republicans did extremely well in statewide offices, state legislatures, and even local elections across the nation. They control most redistricting efforts for the House and also for their own state legislative districts. They generated convoluted maps that ensure they can win easily while preventing meaningful challenges by Democrats or other candidates. They are in effect stealing power and usurping the electoral process. Republican strategy also included seeking control of local governments and school boards. This is not to effect good policy, but rather to support their efforts to undermine society and instill chaos even at that level. The violence and threats of violence you see in local meetings across the country are the direct result and the clear intent of the Republican plan to

The January 6 insurrection is not over . . . Republicans continue to lie about the election and inexplicably support the insurrectionists

In place of Trump himself, we have disconcerting and overwhelming majorities of Congressional Republicans and numerous state officials brazenly continuing the anti-democracy movement, even a year after Trump lost reelection. The ongoing dishonesty campaign about the election being stolen is extremely dangerous. Republican officials well know that Trump lost and the election was secure, but that is not their goal. They seek to seize and keep power by creating chaos and confusion, discouraging people from standing up to them, and keeping their supporters energized, albeit illegitimately. In 2020, Republicans won almost every swing or contested seat in the House of Representatives and only lost control of the Senate because VP Harris casts the tiebreaking vote. But for the fluke of two run-off elections in Georgia and Trump's post-election conduct that discouraged Republican voters, Republicans would have kept control.

Republicans intend to create so much mistrust in the election system that enough voters across the country will allow them to enact draconian measures to disenfranchise non-Republican voters and to allow them to actually steal future elections under the guise of protecting against nonexistent fraud. Measures passed in many states now allow elections officials to refuse to certify properly conducted elections because they do not like the result. There are many such new authorities that threaten the sanctity of elections and

use the instability to garner support for, and minimize opposition to, their larger authoritarian plans. Would you have ever believed that what was once the party of Lincoln would preach violence and intimidation between Americans and force to seize power?

The January 6 insurrection is not over. The actual physical attack on the Capitol may have dissipated, but the larger effort persists. Republicans continue the reprehensible campaign of dishonesty about the election as well as their inexplicable support for the insurrectionists who not only violated the sacred halls, viciously attacked and injured dedicated law enforcement officers, but also attempted to harm and kill senior elected officials. This was all because they were desperate to hold on to power and to end American democracy as we know it. It is important to note that this was not a spontaneous event. It had been planned for months by multiple extremist groups and at least strongly encouraged by Trump and other Republican leaders such as Senators Cotton, Hawley, and Cruz, all of whom falsely claim to be Constitutionalists, as well as House members Jordan, Gosar, Greene, and so many others. I do not consider political opponents to be traitors however much we disagree, but this bunch most certainly is.

Their goal was to use this moment to weaken our democracy, overturn the government, and make the Constitution irrelevant. Although they may not have entirely succeeded that day, they more than set the groundwork for a more serious such effort after upcoming elections. Ongoing Republican opposition to and undermining of the Select Committee investigating the insurrection can only be explained measures, you have the right to stay home, not prevent society from beating this disease and preventing death.

The American people from all walks of life must band together to drive these extremists, racists, and authoritarians back into the stone age where they belong

by two things — their support to undermine democracy and their involvement in the effort to overturn the election. In fact, we know that multiple extremist leaders/planners went on personal tours of the Capitol, led by these Republican officials and their staffs, which tours were instrumental to the planning so that the attackers knew where to go once they penetrated the Capitol and where Congressional leaders would be taken for safety during the attack.

Republicans continuing to promote Trump and maintain his extreme agenda are also purging their own party. They completely vilified and weakened Liz Cheney, who has a solidly conservative voting record, because she dared to in support of the Constitution and democracy. These days those are cardinal sins for Republicans. All such "mainstream" Republicans have been or are being purged from the party. They are pressured not to seek reelection (e.g., Adam Kinziger), primaried in favor of extremists wholly unqualified to serve in government at any level, and intimidated by threats of violence against themselves and their families. Many have had to employ private security because of Trump's MAGA terrorists following these officials menacing them in public, at their offices, and in their homes. So there will be no true conservative or independent thinkers in the party, just a hoard of authoritarian extremists determined to undo our democracy.

Many Republican governors have chosen to place partisan politics over public safety, a new low even for them. While there may be room for some disagreement as to how to promote vaccines and implement pandemic safety measures, it is entirely disingenuous to per se oppose any and all efforts to protect the public and fight the pandemic. They push false narratives of freedom. They care more about diminishing President Biden and the successful Democratic pandemic response.

They care only to solidify their extremist base. They shamefully chose politics over their people despite their duty to those people, their states, and the nation. Consequently, we have increased vitriol and violence concerning efforts to defeat the pandemic, far more widespread avoidable illness, hospitalization, and death, and an ongoing pandemic threatening our schools, economy, and other areas of daily life. If you do not want a vaccine or to adhere to public safety

Anti-democracy forces have gotten so powerful that they wielded a successful campaign to win control of local school boards. Whether they have the seats or whether they show up in mass to coerce officials, their aim is to undo our educational system. This is not about parental involvement or liberal teachers. It's an attempt to indoctrinate children in their own extremist, authoritarian views. They want to prevent children from learning age-appropriate history, science, literature, etc., all to the end of controlling the development of their minds and making it easier to manipulate them and future generations. It is about intimidation, not education.

Everything must be a fight against mortal enemies. They must persist to the nth degree to win every issue, lest "enemies of the people" prevail. Ironically, by taking this approach of stealing power, undermining democracy, and vilifying those with whom they disagree, it is the extremists and their Republican allies/enablers who are the real enemy of the state and enemy of the people. Their un-American and anti-democracy conduct suggests nothing less and threatens our existence. They seek to prevent government from functioning by any means. They storm government buildings armed with assault weapons, attempt to kidnap Democratic leaders, assault elected officials and their families, and the perennial Republican obstructionism is so pervasive now as to prevent the US from paying our debts – debts the Republicans created. They want the government to fail so they can replace it with a new authoritarian regime. They want the American people too afraid to even attempt to save the country.

If this seems familiar, that is because it is. Loyalty purges, control of education, promoting violence, hate and division, and destabilizing governmental and democratic institutions is the roadmap authoritarian regimes seizing and keeping power. The American people from all walks of life, liberal to conservative, must band together to drive these extremists, racists, and authoritarians back into the stone age where they belong and preserve our freedom, our democratic institutions, and our values. Then we can go back to a free-spirited debate over policy. Until then, we all stand to lose and lose everything unless we unite against these perilous forces.

What We're Reading

<u>The First Thing We Do, Let's Kill All the Leaf Blowers</u>, *New York Times*: "But the gasoline-powered leaf blower exists in a category of environmental hell all its own, spewing pollutants – carbon monoxide, smogforming nitrous oxides, carcinogenic hydrocarbons – into the atmosphere at a literally breathtaking rate."

Meet Joe Manchin's Appalling Daughter, Liza Featherstone, *The Jacobin*: "In 2007, when Mylan first got the rights to the EpiPen, a two pack cost less than \$100; after [Manchin's daughter] Bresch cut the aforementioned deal with Pfizer, the price increased to more than \$600, with catastrophic results, especially for those who had to pay full price due to lack of adequate insurance coverage. As CNBC reported in 2016, the EpiPen only costs a couple dollars to make — including the drug. Oh, and as a side note, after the price increase, Manchin's wife, Gayle Conelly Manchin, lobbied for federal legislation requiring schools to have EpiPens onsite. The Manchins are truly the worst family in America."

<u>Donald Trump's Truth Social is headed for 'embarrassing' failures, Daily Beast report says</u>, Joshua Zitser, *Insider*: "Former President Donald Trump's upcoming social media network has already had its fair share of problems, including hackers breaking into the site to post a photo of a defecating pig."

<u>Pulled Over: What to Know About Deadly Police Traffic Stops</u>, Michael Levenson, *New York Times*: "Over the last five years, The Times found, the police killed more than 400 drivers or passengers who were not wielding a gun or a knife or under pursuit for a violent crime . . . There are genuine risks, but studies have found that an officer's chances of ending up dead at a vehicle stop are less than 1 in 3.6 million."

<u>Pramila Jayapal Won't Let the Biden Presidency Fail</u>, Michelle Goldberg, *New York Times*: "To Jayapal, passing the reconciliation bill is a political imperative as well as a moral one, because she's convinced that voters will reward Democrats for making their lives materially easier. She shares some of Senator Bernie Sanders's analysis of Trumpism, seeing it at least in part as a result of Democrats abandoning economic populism. Speaking of the Build Back Better agenda, she said, 'I would argue that had Democrats done some of these things 10 years ago, we would have a lot of the working-class voters that are white in Republican districts."

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