JAPANESE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF WAR
The cooperative operation of the Army and Navy to occupy Guam

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The paper provides a brief history of Japanese military operations to occupy Guam from January 1941 to January 1942, written from Japanese perspective. It provides extensive quotes of hitherto untranslated Japanese military documents.

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As part of the overall military strategy in the event of war with the United States, Japan had to seize a number of US-owned islands in Micronesia, such as Guam and Wake. This translation chronicles the military planning before and during the capture of Guam, leading up to the establishment of a Japanese civilian government on the island.¹

THE IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS’ PREPARATION TO OCCUPY GUAM

The Agreement of the High Commands of the Army and Navy Regarding the Offensive Operation on Guam

In the fall of 1941 the Imperial Headquarters’ preparation for the operation against the United States, England, and the Netherlands was making good progress. The high commands of the Army and Navy completed their operation plans by the end of October.

The agreement by the Army and Navy high commands regarding the operations to occupy Guam as well as the Bismarck Archipelago was made on January 6, 1941. The following is the summary of the agreement:

‘Preparation to Occupy Guam’

The Imperial Headquarters of the Army High Command
The Imperial Headquarters of the Navy High Command

1. The purpose of the operations
The purpose is to ward off threats by the enemy to insular areas in the South Pacific by occupying the main areas of Guam and the Bismarck Archipelago.

2. The course of the operations
The Army and Navy are expected cooperatively to occupy Guam at the beginning of the war and then acquire the air bases in Rabaul at the first opportunity.

3. The start of the operations

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The attack on Guam will start after the confirmation of our first attack on US military aircraft.

4. The main instructions for the operations
   i) At the beginning of the war, Naval Air Groups proceeding from the island of Saipan are expected to destroy enemy vessels, defense facilities, etc.
   ii) The Navy is expected to escort the Army to Guam, and to assist the Army in landing on the island successfully.
   iii) The Army, with its main force, after landing on the island, must occupy Apra Harbor, then capture Agana with a unit, and then mop up any remnants of the enemy on the island.
   iv) The Army, after completing the mopping up operation, is expected to hand over the responsibility of defending the island to the Navy, and, under naval convoy, to move to the Truk Islands, where the Army needs to prepare for operations directed against the Bismarck Archipelago.
   v) First the Navy must start aerial reconnaissance of the Bismarck Archipelago, and then execute necessary attacks as occasion demands.
   vi) The Army and Navy together will capture Rabaul, and occupy the air bases there when the condition of the military force under naval convoy is up to the task. Moreover, the Navy is expected to capture the air bases in Kavieng as soon as possible.
   vii) Soon after capturing Rabaul, conditions permitting, the Army, giving over the responsibility for the defense of the city to the Navy, is expected to concentrate troops under naval convoy in the vicinity of the island of Palau.

5. Places of Assembly:
   (1) Guam Operations—Bonin Islands
   (2) Bismarck Operations—Truk Islands

6. The participating military forces
   The Army—the South Seas Detached Force (The main force is the 55th Division Third Infantry Battalion).
   The Navy—the Fourth Fleet’s troops as core.

7. Relationship of command: The Army and Navy must cooperate.

14. Names of the operations and maps:
   (1) The Guam Operation—G Operation.
   (2) The Bismarck Operation—R Operation.

The Organization of the South Seas Detached Force
Imperial Headquarters made an official announcement of the wartime ranking for the troops in the South Seas Detached Force, as shown below, on November 6th. On November 8th, they summoned the commander of the force, Major General Tomitaro Horii, and gave him the following commands: his detachment is to go to the Bonin Islands, and carry out preparations for occupying Guam. They also gave him the primary instructions regarding the operations, and the above-mentioned agreement, that is, “The Agreement by the Army and Navy High Commands regarding the Guam and Bismarck Operations,” as well as Imperial Army Headquarters' Order Number 558 (hereafter IAHO No. 558).

Imperial Naval Headquarters' Orders for Operations
On November 5, 1941, Imperial Naval Headquarters, by means of Imperial Naval Headquarters' Order Number 1 (hereafter INHO No. 1), also ordered the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet to prepare for operations against the USA, England, and the Netherlands:

1. The Imperial Realm decided to complete preparations for all necessary operations early in December, considering that the realm was not able to avoid war against [our enemies] for the sake of our survival and self-defense.

2. The commander-in-chief is expected to execute the necessary preparations for the operations.

Imperial Naval Headquarters gave him instructions regarding the operations (Imperial Naval Headquarters' Instruction Number 1; INHI No. 1), too, although the author cites here only excerpted instructions relating to the operations on the island of Guam. It was generally assumed that Imperial Headquarters would decide the start-up date of operations.
Summary of the Guam Operations of the Nanyoo Troops (Core of the Fourth Fleet)

Based on the above-mentioned INHO No. 1, and INHI No. 1, the Combined Fleet issued an order, named ‘Combined Fleet Secret Order Number 1,’ on November 5th. The following are the main points in the summary of the operations, the quarters for the armed forces, and the responsibilities of the Nanyoo troops.

The First Step of the Operations

The Nanyoo Troop Commander, Commander-in-Chief of the Fourth Fleet

The Fourth Fleet [the Sixth Torpedo Squadron (minus a destroyer flotilla), two patrol boats, Base No. 5 Troops (minus a part of the troop)]

The Sixth Squadron: the second Regiment of the First Combined Signal Corps (note [translators' note: author's note missing])

The Wake Occupation Force: The Sixth Torpedo Squadron (minus a destroyer flotilla), two patrol boats, and a company of special land combat troops

The Guam Occupation Force: Base No. 5 Troops (minus a small force), the 23rd Destroyer Flotilla, Oboro Supply Corps, and 21 transports

The main missions:

i) defense and patrolling in the assigned areas
ii) capturing Guam and Wake
iii) obstructing enemy use of air bases in Holland
iv) capturing Rabaul at the best opportunity

Summary of operations

1. It is expected not only that Wake Island and the island of Guam be occupied as soon as possible, but also that the assigned areas be defended and patrolled, and movements of the American and English fleets be prepared for.

2. In terms of the first article for operations against American fleets, the Sixth Fleet is to join the main force in the specified place, and to participate in covering the task force's withdrawal. Seaplanes are to set out for Wake Island as soon as possible, and to conduct necessary patrols there.

3. In terms of the second article for operations against American fleets, it is expected that the Nanyoo troops cooperate with the task force and occupy Rabaul, as well as the other areas intended for occupation.

The places to wait: the areas in the South Seas, and, in part, Chichijima.

The Second Step of the Operations

It is planned to defend Rabaul after its occupation as it is one of the important places among the occupied areas.

Nanyoo troops, the Fourth Fleet, the Sixth Squadron, the Second Regiment of the First Combined Signal Corps, the 11th Air Squadron

1) strengthen defense preparations for patrolling in the area of the South Seas, secure defenses of occupied strategic places
2) capture strategic places in the areas of the Bismarck Archipelago, the British territory of New Guinea.

Preparation for the Operation by the Invasion Troops

Preparation for the Operation by the South Seas Detached Force

Following the instructions from Imperial Headquarters, the commander of the South Seas Detached Force, as soon as he received the IAHO regarding preparations for occupying Guam, discussed the details of his troops' plans with the Fourth Fleet Commander-in-Chief at Naval Air Force Headquarters in Iwakuni. The two reached an accord satisfying the Army's major requests as the result of the commander's straightforward presentation of the Army's concerns. Consequently, the following operational instructions were decided upon.

The South Seas Detached Force, cooperating with the escort fleet for G(uam)-operations (abbreviated below as “escort fleet”), was expected to occupy enemy military facilities on Orote Peninsula, as well as on Mt. Tenjo and Mt. Chachao, with their main force. Furthermore, with a strong force, the troops prepared to capture not only enemy military bases in Apra Harbor, but also the city of Akashi [Agana, Ed.]. The landing spots were decided. It was agreed that the final decision for the landing spots would be made by 10 o'clock on the day before the actual landing.
On November 17, Commander Horii invited the following key officers to the Marugame Headquarters of his detachment: Colonel Kususe—the commander of 144th Infantry Regiment—with the Commanders of the battalions in the regiment, and Major Mitsunori Ikezoe of regimental headquarters. At this meeting, Commander Horii revealed to them for the first time the operational plans for capturing Guam, and bid them to study the plans.

On November 20th, Commander Horii made the following orders, and sent them to each unit in the detachment. The actual orders were sealed up, and handed to the soldiers at the time of their boarding; they were allowed to remove the seals after their departure from Japanese harbors.

Horii Operational Order A Number 7
Orders to South Seas Detached Force, 9:00 a.m., November 20th
Marugame Detachment Headquarters
1. The maps and the topographical air photos show strategic places for soldiers whose special purpose is to reconnoiter enemy movements on Guam.
2. The task of the detachment is to capture Guam. To accomplish this task, its main force must capture enemy naval bases at Apra Harbor; and one part of the detachment, Agana.
3. The Kususe Troops and the Tsukamoto Detachment are to act as stipulated in separate attachment 7.
4.-11. (omitted by the author)
12. I myself will act as follows: I will
   i) be aboard the Yokohama-maru, from the time of boarding (according to plan, on the evening of the day before departure) until the end of assembly at the specified place;
   ii) be on the Warship Tsugaru from the end of assembly until the first landing;
   iii) land on the beach at the landing spot for the main force of the Kususe Troops, using the Warship Tsugaru with troops for the second landing;
   iv) advance to the city of Agat, and open a command post;
   v) although my movements after this will be scheduled separately, advance swiftly to Sumay.

South Seas Detached Force Commander
Tomitaro Horii

The Operational Preparations by the Navy Troops
The Base 5 Troop Commander Rear Admiral Atsushi Kasuga (appointed as of August 11, 1941) issued Secret Order for G-Occupation Troops Number 1 from the Warship Tsugaru on November 21. On the 26th of the month, he moved the commander's flag to the warship, and went to Hahajima by the 30th of the month in order to begin assembling the soldiers.

The Departure of the Assault Troops and the Air Attack before Landing

Implementation of the Orders to Capture Guam
On December 1, as events unfolded, Imperial Headquarters issued the following orders and instructions.

LAHO No. 570 (December 1, 1941)
1. The Imperial Realm decided to fight against the USA, England, and the Netherlands. The southern troops are to start the attack on December 10th, to capture important places in the Philippines, British Malaya, and Dutch Indonesia, as soon as possible.
2. The South Seas Detached Force, cooperating with the Navy, is to capture G (author's note: Guam) soon after December X.
3. The South Seas Detached Force is to put into action the above orders before December X, and is to attack enemy aircraft when it repeatedly reconnoiters our ships.
4. As for other detailed instructions, the Chief of the General Staff is to hand these down.

LAHI No. 1029 (December 1, 1941)
To execute the operations in accordance with IAHO No. 570, the following instructions are given.
In terms of the ‘Main Instructions for the Detachment’s Operations’ and ‘Agreement by the Army and Navy regarding G and R Operations,’ which the South Seas Detached Force is to act in accordance with, the instructions are the same as stipulated in IAHI No. 992.3

On December 2nd, the South Seas Detached Force Commander received an encoded order (referred to as ‘Tobi Order’) that Guam is to be captured and that day X was to be December 8th. On that day, he then issued the following orders to his troops.

Horii Operational Order A No. 17 (IAHO No. 570)

South Seas Detached Force Order. At 22:00, December 2nd
Hahajima, Bonin Islands, Yokohama-maru
1. The Imperial Realm decided to fight against the USA, England, and the Netherlands. The southern troops are to start the attack on December 8th, to capture important places in the Philippines, British Malaya, and Dutch Indonesia, as soon as possible. Thus, the first air attack is to be conducted against the USA.

2. The South Seas Detached Force is to capture the island of Guam, in cooperation with the Fourth Fleet. The landing date is to be December 10th, unless a subsequent order is issued.

3. All troops are to take actions in accordance with the already-delivered Horii Operational Order A No. 7.

4. I will board the Warship Tsugaru at 17:00 tomorrow, the 3rd.

Detachment Commander, Tomitaro Horii

The Departure of Troops for the Occupation
At 9:00 a.m. on November 4, 1941, the transports protected by escort fleets left the island of Hahajima for the front, in close formation, to capture Guam. They sailed along the route east of the Mariana Islands to maintain the secrecy of the plan, and also due to the possibility of US submarine attacks on troops headed to capture the Philippines. On the 8th, the troops proceeded with greater caution, having been informed by a Navy report via ship radio of the following: the situation after the first attack against the USA and England, the Imperial edict declaring war against the USA and England, and the frequent sightings of enemy submarines. On the 9th, starting in the morning, there blew a wind with a velocity greater than 10 meters/second, causing rough seas. Therefore, the detachment commander could not readily decide whether or not he should let the troops land on the east beach. Toward evening, however, the wind subsided. Then the detachment commander finally decided to carry out the landing at 16:00 as planned.

On the 8th of the month, at night, the Japanese Land Combat Unit Commander landed five Saipanese spies at Aga Point (in the south of the island) and Tumon Bay.4

Air Attack before the Landing
The Base 5 Troop commander ordered air-attacks on Guam to be conducted by the 18th Air Unit commandant from the seaplane-carrier Seigawa-maru at 5:00 a.m. on December 8th. They attacked the island of Guam on the morning of the 8th with about 54 reconnoitering seaplanes from the Seigawa-maru and the 18th Air Unit. Mainly bombing US vessels, powder magazines, telegraph stations, and landing spots, they sank the Patrol Boat USS Penguin and destroyed important US military facilities there.

Meanwhile, the US armed forces on the island of Guam received, on December 8th at 5:45 a.m., the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor from the Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Hart. The Japanese people on Guam were immediately imprisoned, and the island defense guard gathered at the plaza headquarters in the city of Agana. The Marines, except for sentries around the island, took up their fighting positions at the field encampments by the rifle ranges on Orote Peninsula.

THE OPERATION FOR LANDING ON GUAM
Our vessels completed preparations for landing, and left for their anchorage. Around 23:00, on the 9th, our troops recognized the silhouette of the island against a moonlit horizon. Using a spyglass, they saw the landing shore and the line of the breakwater at the base of the island, but no light was to be seen. Since midnight of the 8th, the sea had become calm,
but there still blew a stiff northwest wind. The moonlight shining on their faces, the soldiers became ever more persuaded of certain victory.

The vessels sailed to their anchorage around 0:00 on the 10th, and started dropping the landing boats. Then each unit started to land around 2:30. Just how they landed and how they fought after their landing will be described in the following.

**Landing and Fighting (by the main force of the Kususe Troops) in the Areas of Merizo and Umatac**

With a northeast wind of 3 m and the sea a little rougher, but without any major problems, they dropped landing boats, transferred from their ship and proceeded, aided by the light of the moon. The vessels entered their anchorage at 1:00 a.m. and completed the lowering of the landing craft by 1:55 a.m. with the landing itself starting at 2:45 a.m.

The shore revealed a stretch of reef, but the beach was relatively flat, and at the edge of the water the sea was calm. Therefore, the landing was accomplished without any difficulties; the troops of the first vessel arrived at the beach at 4:25 without any bloodshed. There were neither American soldiers nor residents around the landing beach.

**Landing and Fighting (by Horie Battalion) in the Area of Talofofo**

On the 9th, the strong morning wind subsided somewhat, but the velocity of the northeast wind was still 10-12 m, and the height of the sea was about 2 m (2-3 m near the beach). The troops entered the anchorage at 0:00 on the 10th, started to drop their landing craft into the sea with great difficulty at 1:00, and finished transferring ship. They then began their landing around 2:25 guided by Navy Special Agent Okano, the former captain of the Mariana-maru. First, the group of small boats attempted to enter Ylig Bay (since Talofofo Bay was the best inlet on the east coast, and US forces might offer a strong defense there, they planned Ylig Bay as the first landing site). However, since they found the sea too rough to enter, they decided to enter from Talofofo Bay. Even though they were washed with their boats onto the beach due to the high waves.

In this landing, three large landing boats were damaged upon being dropped into the sea, and one smaller landing boat was also damaged on reaching the beach; those four boats, becoming useless, soon sank.

The number of ships deployable for the second and subsequent landings became ever fewer. After the first troops landed on the beach at 3:45, only the minimum number of forces required for mountain combat was able to land by 15:00.

In the vicinity of Talofofo Bay, the troops did not sense any enemy presence, and so started to advance. But the road they were advancing along was entangled and steep. On such a road, and by such severe heat, it turned out to be extremely difficult for the troops to make headway. Especially difficult was the mountain trail between the upper reach of the Togucha River and Mt. Tenjo which was only wide enough for single-file marching.

**Landing and Fighting by Navy Land Combat Troops (and Tsukamoto Detachment) around Tumon**

With the northeast wind at a velocity of about 4-5 m, and by moonlight, the motorized landing boats were visible to the naked eye at about 300 m out to sea; and it was not difficult to transfer into the small landing craft, nor was the sea difficult to navigate.

The ships entered anchorage at 0:00, completed the lowering of their landing boats at 0:30, and started to land troops at 2:15.

The shore was surrounded by a coral reef while the beach appeared as a belt forested with palm trees. Both Amantes Point and Ypao Point formed cliffs. The ships attempted to find a way to go inside the coral reef, but failed. Consequently, they were compelled to land around Amantes Point, where the coral reef was shallow, and they carried out their landing there on the coral reef at 3:10.

The Navy Land Combat Troops (approximately 400 strong) planned to land after Tsukamoto Battalion; but the second landing party, learning of the bad condition of the beach in Tumon Bay, landed near “Stone Bamboo” in
Agana Bay about the same time as the first landing by Tsukamoto Battalion. Immediately after the landing, they occupied Guam’s Government House, encountering one minor resistance on their way to the facility. The time was 5:20.5

**THE OCCUPATION OF GUAM**

**Mopping-Up Operation on Guam**

The Base 5 Troop Commander Rear Admiral Kasuga left his warship together with his staff at 10:00, and moved the commander’s flag to Sumay. At 14:00 he reported by telegram how the successful landing on Guam had been accomplished, as follows:

1. The invasion troops for Guam assisted the South Seas Detachment Force, started landing on the island at 5:00 on the 10th. The land combat troops carried out a mopping-up operation, attacked important places situated all around Apra Harbor, and captured every one of those places. So far, our side has incurred no loss. The enemy seems to have lost its fighting spirit due to our fierce aerial attacks in the past few days.

2. In Apra Harbor, we completed clearing the sea today, on the 10th, so we can anchor our ships in the harbor. We bombed and destroyed one oil tank, batteries, and powder magazines; the oil tank was ablaze for three days.

3. The results of the battle: We captured one tanker of about 3,000 tons in Apra Harbor. Inside the harbor troops dispatched from a warship captured 30 enemy prisoners: a Marine major and his subordinates.

4. On the 8th the submarine spotted by friendly spies watching the waters to the south of Rota was lost even though our airplanes and vessels later attempted to locate it. Detachment Headquarters entered Agana in the evening of the same day (i.e., the 10th), and stationed itself in the former Government House.

   At 22:00, on the 10th, in the city the South Seas Detachment Force Commander handed down orders regarding mopping up the remaining enemy, policing the interior of the island, and so. In the following two days, the 11th and 12th, they finished mopping up the island.

**Horii Operational Order A No. 21**

Summary of the order for the South Seas Detachment Force

1. As for our landing this morning, the detachment met with complete success its combat goals, obtaining, in battle, results better than expected although some enemy soldiers still remain at large.

2. After tomorrow, the 11th, the detachment is to mop up the remaining enemy, is to get ready to defend the island, and then is to begin training its troops. Regarding the allocation of troops, Horii Operational Order A No. 7 is to be rescinded.

3. The infantry is immediately to engage itself in the mopping-up operation. A small part of the infantry is to be in charge of policing Tumon Bay.

4. A cavalry (30 non-commissioned officers led by a commissioned officer from Tsukamoto Infantry Battalion) is to be deployed at Elementary School No. 1, is to assume responsibility for internning prisoners as well as exercising surveillance over them.

5. The mountain artillery, engineer, and logistics units are to engage in training exercises.

As for the formation and strength of the enemy troops defending Guam, we ascertained a military force of 215 including the commander of an important port (and the Governor-General), Captain McMillin; a Marine force of 153 including Lieutenant Colonel McNulty; and a local island force of 282. Most of them were taken prisoner. The number of casualties among the US troops was approximately 50. The main booty was 723 rifles, 7 heavy machine guns, 17 light machine guns, 70 pistols, 2 cannon, 139 vehicles, and many other items such as tools and materials, munitions, and fuel. In addition, the Navy captured the USS Barnes as well as nine other military vessels.

After the landing it was disclosed that the defense troops on the island lost their fighting spirit because of our air assaults from the 8th onwards. The American defense troops had already destroyed radio-controlled weapons, fuel tanks, construction machinery, and automobile. since they predicted that Japanese troops would land on the 9th.
Public Announcement of the Occupation of Guam
The Navy section of Imperial Headquarters made a public announcement about the occupation of Guam at 12:15 a.m., December 11th, as follows:

Our land combat troops of the Imperial Realm attacked important places situated all around Apra Harbor on the island of Guam before dawn on the 10th, and completely occupied these areas. In this operation, the land combat troops seized one 3,000-ton oil tanker, and took prisoner 30 US Marines including a major. We did not incur any losses.

Subsequently, on the same day at 4:30 p.m., the Army section of Imperial Headquarters also issued a communique to the public via the newspapers:

The combat results of Army troops landing on Guam are as follows:
1. We have 350 prisoners and many items of booty. As prisoners we have taken Governor-General of Guam McMillin, the commander of an important port, and many other officers including Lieutenant Governor-General Giles.
2. The main force of the army has occupied Agana, the capital of Guam, and is now engaged in mopping up resistance on the island.
3. We incurred no loss. In addition, we delivered 25 Japanese nationals from captivity. (author’s note: actually, 35).

On December 13th, the US Navy acknowledged the Japanese occupation of the island of Guam, and made a public announcement that there were 400 sailors and 155 Marine stationed on the island.

Establishment of Civilian Government on Guam
On January 20, 1942, the Department of Civilian Government was established on Guam. And the Navy Land Combat Troop Commander who had defended the island since the occupation, Commander Hiroshi Hayashi, was the first to assume directorship of the department.

Most of the 20,000-30,000 islanders were Chamorros, relatively highly civilized, with many of them being loyal to the United States. In the beginning it was difficult to carry out pacification work which, it seems, in time gradually improved. A US commentator made the following observation about Guamanians:
Chamorros on the island of Guam were subject to various pressures by Japanese troops intending to occupy the island forever. However, the Chamorros providing food protected a small number of American seamen who fled into the mountains by. They have kept faith with America to an extent that thoroughly moves our hearts.

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ENDNOTES
2 One of the Bonin Islands.
3 The drafts of IAHI and IAHO had been released in advance in Marugame on November 19th. The official announcement was made by telegram using cable addresses in order to prevent errors or misdelivery.
4 In The Rising Sun in the Pacific, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, US Captain Morison wrote about this as follows:
   On the evening of the 8th, a canoe landed several Saipanese around Ritidian Point. They were sent to the island prior to the enemy’s (Japanese armed forces) landing, in order to work for the enemy as interpreters when they landed.
On the following day when they were arrested and interrogated, these fellows provided our authorities with the information that the enemy would land near the beach east of Agana. This was regarded as a cunning plan to lure our Marines out of their fighting positions. However, the information turned out to be perfectly correct in terms of the landing place, although the landing date in the information was found to be incorrect.
5 Morison’s History of United States Naval Operations in World War II describes the process of surrender as follows:
   After a 20-minute fight (i.e., at 5:45; Japanese time, 4:45) the Governor of Guam received a report of another landing of enemy troops and decided to surrender, sensing that a longer resistance would be suicidal, and would make the lot of the natives worse.
   A car horn sounded three times, signaling the end of the fighting. A Japanese voice shouted, “Send your commander here.” The naval commander, Commander D. T. Giles, negotiated by means of gesture with the commander of the landing forces, Commander Hiroshi Hayashi, and together they returned to the governor’s house. In the house, Captain McMillin signed the provisions for surrender after obtaining assurances about respecting the civil rights of the natives, and treating prisoners in accordance with the law and regulations of war.

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