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SPEECH BY DR. DIEGO LUIS MOLINARI, CHAIRMAN OF
THE DELEGATION OF ARGENTINA, DELIVERED AT THE
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My first words must be an expression of thanks to the Cuban people and Government for the splendid and cordial reception they have given to the International Conference on Trade and Employment. I have listened most carefully to the speeches made from this platform on general considerations regarding the Charter that we have to study and approve, and I confess that I feel somewhat subdued; for the wealth of knowledge and of ideas displayed in all these speeches reduces my capabilities to such small proportions that I fear I shall not be able to perform the task now before me as well as I should wish. So it is in all modesty that on behalf of the Argentine Delegation I now speak on the Charter in general terms.

I cannot repeat the arguments adduced by the many magnificent speakers we have heard, because in some respects they have exhausted the subject and I do not wish to be redundant either in general or in particular considerations. But if I find it necessary to offer this magnificent international assembly a view of the world as the Argentine Delegation sees it, and the present attitude of the Argentine Republic to the principal problems of the Economic and Social Organization of the world and of our own country, I have nevertheless taken the eloquent statements of the Delegate of Uruguay, which complete the cycle started by the

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Delegate of Colombia, very much to heart and I see that we must indeed keep abreast of the world events confronting us, if we are not to ~~our~~ unduly when we come to consider the special case of the Charter that we have to study and approve. Whence have we come and whither are we going? What has been the past and what will be the future? It has already been said that our generation has witnessed two cruel world wars and it has fallen to my lot on both occasions, owing to the public responsibility I bore at the wish of my fellow-countrymen, to be a participant in, and a witness to, the enormous human sacrifices and their consequences.

We have come here in the full conviction that we face the possibility of a third world war. It is no use trying to ignore the obvious. We should ponder deeply, with a profound sense of civic and personal responsibility, on our attitude to the problems that have to be solved here. In the first war, as in this one, the multitudes unanimously proclaimed their faith in the great ideals formulated in his day by Wilson and in our own primarily by Roosevelt. It was on 6 January 1941 that the President of the United States of North America, of unforgettable memory, spoke his famous words concerning the Four Freedoms; the third of these is freedom from want, which in current parlance means the conclusion of economic agreements assuring all nations of a peaceful and secure life for their peoples in whatever part of the world. And the more humanity, amid its cruel sacrifices, saw how the foundation of civilization were being undermined, the more firmly established did these principles and this ideal of resistance to evil become. In August 1941, the Atlantid Charter defined still more precisely the goal we all had to reach. With what happiness and rejoicing did the hopeful multitudes take arms

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in the belief that they would achieve a world of peace, love and co-operation. Point 4 of the Atlantic Charter states that : "They will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity".

The fifth point states that : "They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security". Finally, the seventh point states that : "Such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance". And while suffering humanity contemplated the approaching end, the principles recalled to-day on this platform were approved in the San Francisco Charter of 26 June 1945. That was but yesterday. It was resolved to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The whole process which is to-day culminating in the Havana Conference is the result of past events that I shall presently describe.

The Draft Charter before us, which pursues this ideal policy and clear purpose, includes these words : "(2) To foster and assist industrial and general economic development, particularly of those countries which are still in the early stages of industrial development, and to encourage the international flow of capital for productive investment. (3) To further the enjoyment by all countries, on equal terms, of access to the

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markets, products and productive facilities, which are needed for their economic prosperity and development". In this passage I stress particularly a phrase which does not appear in the speech on the Four Freedoms, or in the Atlantic or San Francisco Charters. I emphasize the presence of this new principle which brings us face to face with reality.

The ideal has not faded, but the reality appears with shining clarity and there is no concealing it.

As we see it, this Havana Draft Charter says that we must encourage the international flow of capital for productive investment. We are thus confronted with capitalism. Is this a Charter for planning the economy of peace or a Charter for the establishment of a prewar economy? That is the first serious question for us Argentines. There is no doubt at all about the attitude of our people, and of our Government; the well-known speech recently delivered by our President General J.J. Peron, advocating a campaign of peace and spiritual disarmament throughout the world, defines our position. Our desire is for an economy of peace, harmony and co-operation between the nations, not an economy that will open the door to a new war. The facts are as they are and not as we might wish to disguise or conceal them. The world of to-day, which is apparently divided into two irreconcilable groups, offers us three alternative types of economic system to which to conform: the Capitalist system, based on individualism; the Totalitarian system based on economic dictatorship; and the Socialist system based on the harmonious working of principles which do not appear to be contradictory. There is no country that really applies any one of these systems one hundred per cent, but it is plain that if this clause of the

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Charter were applied, the line of advance proposed would be toward individual capitalism; and for us Argentines this is impossible, because we consider economics and society as an integral whole, because we know our responsibilities as a people towards the world and towards the masses who toil, suffer and hope. We believe that economic government and political government should not be separate and in different hands, but that in the integral concept of democracy, economic and political government are the functions of one and the same power. That is the fundamental concept of the Revolution of 4 June 1943, which guides the movement now in progress in my country; there is no human force to-day that can turn us from this policy, except a world disaster extending to my country, and we will not renounce economic control of the life of our people and our nation. This is in accordance with the freely expressed will of the citizens of my country who are represented by a government which nothing and nobody can overthrow except by force.

What have been the practical results of this revolution? In the first place, we have nationalized the control of currency, credit and exchange. The Central Bank, a sui generis private institution by virtue of a well-known decision of the former Supreme Court of Argentina, is now a Central Bank of the nation, that is to say of the Argentine people. Currency, credit and exchange are controlled and directed as a function of the national economy. We shall not abandon this policy. We have safeguarded the whole transport system by the creation of a merchant navy, the acquisition of the railways owned by foreign corporations and the creation of an air fleet; and to this we have linked up the system

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of freights and insurance. We have assumed responsibility for marketing all the products of Argentina as a function of the national economy and we shall take collective control of all general elements of our economy, such as power. Banking is, as I have said, a national concern. The nationalization of the banks in which, for instance, Australia is now engaged, is an accomplished fact in my country; for it is obvious that currency and credit are essential and primary factors in economics and trade. It is futile to speak of progressive economics if there is no currency control. What sort of picture does the world currency situation present?

Between 1875 and 1914, the peoples of the world succeeded by constant efforts in unifying the monetary system. The war of 1914 disrupted that unity, which was not subsequently re-established. The war of 1939 found the world in a state of penury and unrest owing to circumstances which I need not analyze now, but which will certainly have to be analyzed at a world monetary conference. The entire world is living under the dollar sign. Owing to a dislocation, which I will not analyze here, most of the world's available gold is now in a fortress in the United States of America; that is a most serious problem. It is useless to discuss international trade if money is not given the necessary flexibility to fulfil, by its intrinsic and extrinsic value, the functions it should fulfil in the exchange of goods and services. the world's gold to be concentrated in the hands of
It is impossible for nearly all of/a single power without trade being retarded and the nations suffering while humanity hopes for better times. Argentine economy shows no deficits, as will presently be seen, and our dollar shortage is of no great importance; but this is not the case in all countries of the world

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This problem must be dealt with somehow, if not by practical measures at this Conference, at least by a vote recommending the calling of a World Monetary Conference.

During the war, the generous assistance given by the United States through "Lend Lease" sustained the efforts of nearly all the peoples of the world who were fighting for freedom and democracy. With the exception of Argentina, there is no country in this continent which did not share in "Lend Lease" aid. We are not concerned in it, but this was not the kind of aid the nations required for the time when peace was established. A starting point and a goal had to be provided in advance if we were not to find ourselves, when peace came, in the same position as in 1918.

Foreseeing this situation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America concluded a pact of mutual assistance in February 1942. The Information Department of the British Embassy at Buenos Aires in its news bulletin of 7 November 1947 - only a few days ago - disclosed, in an article on the Havana Conference, the event which was the starting point of this conference. Our knowledge is confined to this publication issued by the British Embassy in our country. The proposal was the first step towards the removal of trade barriers and the establishment of an expanding world economy. The concept of this new economy was formulated for the first time in the pact of mutual assistance concluded between Great Britain and the United States in February 1942, in which both parties undertook to work for the expansion of production by the application of international and domestic measures appropriate to a policy of full employment and the exchange of consumer goods, and also for the elimination of all

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forms of discrimination in international trade and the reduction of customs tariffs and other trade barriers. For almost four years the plan was kept in reserve until, in December 1945, Great Britain and the United States announced their intention of organizing a Conference on Trade and Employment.

This was the starting point : the pact of mutual assistance between the two great industrial nations of the world, But time flies and life goes on; no one can foretell what may happen in the world in 24 hours time. The ideal economic policy was one thing, practical implementation was another and the problems that have arisen are awakening the countries that bear the responsibility at this hour in the history of civilization, to the need for world economic reconstruction, That is the reason for the two plans that are in force and in course of execution : the Marshall Plan, referred to by the representative of France, and the Molotov Plan. One is based on an economy of the monetary type and the other on a natural or barter economy. No one can remain indifferent to this universal project of reconstruction; let each assume the responsibility devolving upon him throughout the stages that have to be completed before the final goal is reached. While the Marshall and Molotov Plans are being put into effect, the Argentine Republic has produced, within the confines of its modest resources and limited opportunities, a plan known as the Peron Plan. Under the present economic system of Argentina, the international financial and economic oligarchs do not, and will not, play any part in our economy; international prices, which are mere quotations chalked on a board, can no longer be controlled by the oligarchs and by the agreements of international financial and economic conferences. This has given

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rise to two arguments against the Peron Plan and its execution. First, that we are speculating on the hunger of the peoples, and secondly that we are exploiting our productive classes.

As regards the exploitation of our productive classes, this is a mistaken assertion by a few persons in very high positions, for never the workers in town and country had a higher standard of living. Never before have the industrialists made such rich profits as they do now, under an economic system that does not eliminate private enterprise but reduces it to its just and proper place within the nation. The fact is that international prices are no longer under the control of the oligarchs, as far as Argentine products are concerned. The oligarchs control the prices of cotton, wool, meat, cereals and metals, giving them stockmarket prices, whereas we fix an economic price because we follow an established formula - the economy of peoples co-operating on a reciprocal basis of equality of treatment. If the delegates will remember that phrase, all the rest will be self-explanatory. We have helped the nations in accordance with the Gospel precept that the left hand should not know what the right is doing, and now that we are accused of exploiting their hunger we wish to give a few figures so that delegates may form a perfectly clear judgement on our position. The Republic of Argentina has made the following gifts without compensation of any kind : Fifty thousand tons of wheat to Finland ; twenty thousand to Norway in 1940; fifty-one thousand to Greece; one hundred thousand to France in 1944; five thousand tons of meat to France in 1944; five million pesos worth of food, clothing, medical and miscellaneous supplies to the Holy See in 1944; one hundred and fifty thousand tons of wheat to the Pool in 1944. In 1945 we gave one hundred thousand tons of wheat to

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Italy; forty thousand to Norway; five thousand quintals to the Red Cross; three hundred and fifty pesos for individual relief of French prisoners in Luxembourg; more than half a million tons of wheat and five thousand tons of meat, worth three hundred and twelve million pesos, for children's relief which, added to the value of the other aid given, amounts to a total of three hundred and eighteen million pesos, or nearly ninety-five million dollars. We will give more if we can, and we are prepared to give everything that Argentina possesses if a time comes when the freedom of the oppressed people of this world is at stake.

There is a difference between the prices paid to the farmer and those quoted by banking houses on the international market. That is true. The fact is that previously this difference in price went to the international financial oligarchy, whereas it now reaches the Argentine people in the form of relief and loans for reconstruction, as we shall presently see. Never again in my country will the oligarchy take the product of the sweat of the toiling masses for its own.

How have we contributed to reconstruction through the Peron plan? I am not speaking of promises but of facts, of what has actually been accomplished and performed. In the first place, we have a universal concept. We adapt ourselves to the fine words and the beautiful ideal which I recalled a moment ago. The Argentine people have a generous spirit of which no-one can deprive them, because it is of the essence of their being. We do not lay out our surpluses as capital for productive investment beyond our frontiers, but as part of a policy of economic co-operation between the peoples; the facts to which I shall now refer confirm this statement. Up to the present, Argentina has granted credits amounting to one thousand one hundred and fifty-one

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million dollars. Do not forget, Gentlemen, that we are a nation of sixteen million inhabitants; not the largest, not the richest, not the strongest, but one among the brotherhood of nations. Our strength is in the hand that guides the plough, our eyes on the sun and on the land, that welcomes the seed to yield a rich harvest. I give these figures to show you what kind of people we are: To Belgium, a credit of one hundred and ten million pesos granted by the Central Bank on reciprocal current account at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest for one year, subject to tacit renewal. I cannot forget what Irigoyen said about Belgium in 1929: in Argentine financial language, the term "tacit renewal" means that Belgium will pay when and how she can. To Spain, three hundred and fifty million pesos on current account; loans of four hundred millions through the IAPI (Argentine Institute for the Promotion of Trade) which, as will be seen, are magic initials. The credits to Spain were at $2\text{-}3/4$ per cent on current account and at $3\text{-}3/4$ per cent for a period of three years, which may be prolonged until 31 October 1951. The loan was for twenty-five years. To Chile, through IAPI, under an agreement concluded but not yet ratified, one hundred millions at $3\text{-}1/2$ per cent on current account for a period of three years; three hundred million at 4 percent for fifty years; a loan of three hundred millions at $3\text{-}3/4$ per cent for twenty-five years. To Bolivia, fifty millions on current account at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent over a period of three years; one hundred millions at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; a loan of six hundred millions at $3\text{-}3/4$ per cent; a twenty-five year loan of fifty millions at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. To Finland seventy-five millions on current account at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for five years, rising to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent as from the fifth year until the loan is redeemed. To France, six hundred millions on current account at between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 per cent for a period of three years, which may be prolonged until 31 December 1951. To Czechoslovakia, twenty millions on current account through the Central Bank at 3 per cent for one

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year. To Rumania, whose absence from this Conference we cannot understand, on hundred and ten millions on current account at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for three years. To Italy, three hundred and fifty millions on current account and a loan of three hundred and fifty millions at $2\frac{3}{4}$ and $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent respectively.

This is what we have done for world reconstruction. For us there are not two worlds; we have a spirit of universality that reaches upward, for our gaze is directed towards heaven and not towards the lands of others. In view of the world currency shortage, all these loans, with a few exceptions, have been made in the currency of the country concerned, not in dollars. I am speaking to people who understand this better than I do. We shall be unable to reconstruct the world without the basis of ^agenerous economic system of international co-operation. We look round us and we believe that if the nations arise in the desire to be free and voluntarily give what they can, we shall banish the spectre of war forever. The whole world will live in peace and brotherhood. What I have heard here has filled me with dismay, for it seems to be a chorus of lamentations rather than a song of hope. Argentina did not have the honour to be present at London or at Geneva, and I am going to admit the truth. When we received the invitation to this Conference we hesitated, because if it is to produce the world's Charter of trade and employment, it represents humanity's greatest hope at this moment. We had to attend; we could not be absent. But our presence here does not imply that we accept the Charter as an accomplished fact. Its origin, drafting and character make this impossible, because the Charter is a legal instrument for the establishment of a universal economic system and we, as representatives of sovereign States, do not constitute a world parliament, but an assembly of individuals negotiating on equal terms, with their respective governments and peoples behind them.

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It would be useless to adopt without question a Charter that would not be accepted by our parliaments or by those who sent us here. We have to adapt the idealistic hopes of all the nations to present realities. We are not here to impose a point of view but to reconcile it with reality. But we must remain on firm ground. Anyone who goes further will be accomplishing something that may be perfect from the academic point of view, but will be useless from the point of view of his country. Is this a world assembly or is it not? Essentially it is. The absence of such countries as Spain makes itself felt, the absence of such countries as Russia is to be deplored, for we believe that it is still possible to establish harmonious relations between the peoples of the earth; and we Argentines are ready to make any material or moral sacrifice in order to establish lasting peace in the world, for without peace there is no economic system, no wealth, no trade there is only blood, sweat and tears.

In dealing with basic economic factors, the Charter, in its English and French text, makes use of a difficult terminology. Officially, the only language I know is Spanish, so allow me to make a suggestion at this point. Mr. President, we would avoid a great deal of trouble if Spanish were used, once and for all, as it ought to be used in this Conference on Employment (prolonged applause). Why make use of difficult terminology? The English text says "primary commodities" while the French text, translated literally, says "basic products". What are these products or commodities? Are they agricultural products, cattle products, general products or what? We do not understand each other. A short time ago I read an excellent book in which a whole chapter was devoted to explaining the meaning of the terms employed and how they should be defined in order to be understood. In the mouth of a hungry man, bread is an essential product, but how is
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bread produced? Without wheat there is no bread, but in order to have wheat the plough and the harvester are required. Everything is included in the logical sequence of the production cycle. The idea must be broadened and the terms must be settled; and if the international oligarchs try to fix the price of wheat without fixing the price of a plough, we must fix it economically because the price of wheat depends on the technical process employed and on the cost of that process, which consequently governs the price of bread.

The social position of the peoples of the world has been presented here with great eloquence. I shall not revert to this matter. But is it possible for one moment to suppose that we can talk of employment without mentioning the rights of the workers? At this very moment, the United Nations is trying to draw up a charter of universal human rights, but what, in point of fact, are the rights of the worker? It is useless to talk in particular of workers employed in one single field - that of export - when we should be considering the workers' statute in all its implications. Thus, on 9 July 1927, when after more than a century of political independence, the economic independence of my country was proclaimed at Tucuman, General Feron drew up the Fundamental Statute of Workers' Rights, which we propose should be embodied in the Trade and Employment Charter.

As for the productive investment of capital, let us turn back to our previous review. If we had not had a commercial organization like the IAPI - those magic initials - none of these loans would have been possible because the profit would have gone to the international octopuses. Instead of economic relations with a country granting loans, knowing that it may perhaps only

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recover them late, in part, or not at all, we should have seen the hand of Shylock clutching the heart of the world's hungry multitudes. It has been possible for IAPI to find productive investments for the capital it has accumulated, because we are redeeming all our external debt. We are acquiring the railways and the telephone system; we are building our merchant fleet; we are constructing great dams to provide power from "white coal"; we are building roads, schools and hospitals and supplying bread for hungry mouths throughout the world.

The chapter on economic development sets a task of extraordinary importance. We ourselves make no mistake about the economic facts of the world. There are subordinate economies of the agricultural, cattle-raising and mining type. There are the subordinate economies of countries whose industries are only beginning and do not produce capital goods. Then, above all these, there is the free economy of countries with great production industries and rich in capital goods. That is the situation.

Argentina is no longer the land of milk and honey it was a century ago. Since 1942, the earnings of our industries have been greater than the combined earnings of our agriculture and cattle-raising. 1942 was the critical year, but we are still economically subordinate because we do not produce capital goods. We are all represented at this Conference : the plantation-type countries living under the colonial system, the countries with an agricultural, cattle-raising or mining economy, those with incipient industries and those with large-scale industries. I give this explanation in order to point out the social effects of this economic structure. We are advancing towards an

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all-embracing democracy which is gradually being consolidated throughout the world. No revolution was greater or more far-reaching than the revolution of 1789 whose programme is still not completed because, side by side with this clamorous revolt, there was the great economic and industrial revolution. We saw the tragedy of democracy in the political field and of financial, economic and social oligarchy. For Argentina, June 1943 meant recovery and liberation and we entered fully into this universal movement that marches ever triumphantly onward to the goal of our ideals. We have nothing to add to the Four Freedoms or to the Atlantic Charter, except to give our blood, if that be needed, to establish the rule of liberty and law. It is because this Conference can have no universal legal standing unless the right to vote is specifically accorded to all those attending it, that I stated and now formally repeat our reservation. (And I ask our most competent and obliging interpreters to translate this literally).

International trade has its capitalist oligarchies and tin, copper, nitrates, meat, wool, cotton, etc., fall under their sway; all are dependent on the oligarchy and we have not come here to ensure the profits of traders, but to establish the freedom of the peoples. There are national institutions like ours, doing work similar to that of IMPI, which cannot be wiped out, because it would involve wiping out the credits already granted and destroying our modest contribution to world reconstruction. We have no external debt, nor do we wish to have one, and as our economy shows no deficit the lack of dollars does not mean disequilibrium, but quite the contrary. Sometimes I prefer not to have money in order not to buy. In one of the most debated ^{Articles} of the Charter we see how this system works. It is the article on

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most-favoured-nation treatment. I have not brought with me a map I had, demonstrating the effects of this article geographically, but this is briefly what it showed : In the first place, all the colonial systems are excluded from the provisions of this article--so much for the Atlantic Charter! Customs unions formed, or in process of formation, preferential systems, countries with common economic or historical interests, economic zones, currency areas and neighbouring countries are all excluded. Of course, the delegate of Chile knows that the frontier between our countries is a boundary set by God, not in order to separate us but in order to mark out for us a region of common responsibilities, and that in this case he has our full support. Under the terms of this article, it would seem that the geographical scope is reduced to such narrow limits that, Heaven help me, I have sometimes imagined that the only country affected by the article is the Argentine Republic. We shall have to speak in plain, every-day language. We are ready to sacrifice everything we can humanly sacrifice, because we want an economy based on co-operation between the peoples and equality of treatment, because we wish the most industrious to be entitled to the full product of their labour, since we respect the work of the individual within the framework of a social economic structure and not as part of an economy governed by domestic or foreign oligarchs.

It is because we want this that we are here, and because we want to create an organization that is really international, one in which each country has a vote, as is the right of the sovereign nations of the world. We are not concerned here with great or small nations, with powerful or weak ones, but with parts of the world that God entrusted to each nation, there to achieve the

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happiness of its people, not to contrive their oppression. There is a magic of numbers, like the magic of initials that I mentioned and in this case the magic of numbers tells us that in this organization all should be democratically equal. There cannot be permanent members, as the delegate of Uruguay has so eloquently shown, and I associate myself with his point of view.

We shall give our loyal and extensive co-operation and in the committees we shall consider the various proposals in detail, because we want an effective organization to emerge from this Conference; not a capitalist organization, but one which meets the needs of the peoples and realizes the supreme ideal of mankind. For, let us not forget, Gentlemen, that there can be no free men in a nation enslaved.

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