Negative Counterplan: Abolish U.S. Food Aid

By "Coach Vance" Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.***

There may be any number of reasonably good Affirmative plans to reform food aid and some of them may be hard to beat. But there's a possible alternate Negative strategy that could provide another path to victory: A counterplan to simply abolish (not reform) US foreign food aid.  
Food aid has so many problems and failures that we should give up on reforming it and simply abolish it. NEG will argue that the Counterplan is untopical because the resolution requires reform, which the NEG insists is impossible, and we abolish instead. And the Counterplan will be mutually exclusive to any Food Aid "reform" plan because you can't reform and abolish at the same time.  
Pick during the round which arguments you want to run in the 1NC and 2NC but be sure to read the Counterplan text in 1NC. The Counterplan Non-Topicality material is available for you if needed as backup evidence in case there is some debate about you possibly running a “topical counterplan,” since we will argue that “abolish” is different from the resolutional requirement of “reform,” and therefore keeps the Negative on safe non-topical ground. The Negative’s position is that the framers of the resolution intentionally left “abolish” out of the wording of the resolution in order to require Affirmatives to reform and leave the option of abolish open as Negative counterplan material.

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NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Failing for millenia

Peter Duffy 2010 (journalist) 31 Aug 2010 "Lessons From Haiti: How Food Aid Can Harm" https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/08/lessons-from-haiti-how-food-aid-can-harm/62252/

Helping distressed people is tough. We've been failing for millennia.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. Famine is a declining world problem, and what remains can’t be solved

Modern famines are less severe than past generations and mostly confined to the Horn of Africa

Sophie Chou 2017 (journalist) Public Radio International 27 Mar 2017 “Drought doesn't cause famine. People do.” <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-27/drought-doesnt-cause-famine-people-do>

Modern famines are different from those the world faced 60 to 70 years ago. In the past, with less warning and less international support, more people died from hunger. In the early and mid-20th century, famines killed millions in Europe and Asia, in areas with much larger populations than areas which suffer from food insecurity today.  
**END QUOTE. Chou goes on in the same context to conclude QUOTE:**  
These days, famines cause death by the thousands, and are mostly confined to the Horn of Africa. Improvements in transportation and communications infrastructure have been successful in eliminating large-scale famines in virtually all other parts of the world.

Corruption, mismanagement and bad governance are mainly to blame for famine in the Horn of Africa

Helle Jeppesen 2011. (journalist) Instability to blame for famine in Horn of Africa, aid groups say, DEUTSCHE WELLE <https://www.dw.com/en/instability-to-blame-for-famine-in-horn-of-africa-aid-groups-say/a-15254232>

Crop failure, droughts and floods are not the only causes of hunger. Corruption, mismanagement and bad governance are mainly to blame for catastrophes such as the current famine in the Horn of Africa.

2. Recipients lie to get free stuff

Ethiopia Study: People lie about their situation to get more food aid

*Aschale Dagnachew Siyoum, Dorothea Hilhorst and Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen 2012. (Siyoum is an Assistant Professor of Food Security and Rural Livelihoods at Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia. Hilhorst is a Professor of Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction in Disaster Studies at Wageningen University, The Netherlands. van Uffelen is the Coordinator of the LEAFS Research Program in Disaster Studies at Wageningen University, The Netherlands) 27 Nov 2012* Food aid and dependency syndrome in Ethiopia: Local perceptions, JOURNAL OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1754>

As discussed earlier, in the study area, people were provided with food aid irrespective of households’ food insecurity status in the 1980s and 1990s. This seems to have created a dependency attitude for some households. This is reflected by the fact that some interviewed households believed that they should be eligible for transfers even if they were not chronically food-insecure by local standards. In this regard, some households in the study area tried to portray themselves as chronically food-insecure and by doing so expected to have access to food aid transfers. Especially in one of the villages, during a focus group discussion, there seemed to be a general unwillingness to use the term “better-off” among community representatives. There was also a tendency to exaggerate the problem when it comes to food-gap related questions especially for non-beneficiary households.

3. Needs exaggerated

NGO's and media like to exaggerate food issues

BBC news 2006. (journalist Henri Astier) 1 Feb 2006 "Can aid do more harm than good?" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm>

"I think NGOs and rich country media do have an incentive to paint too simplistic and bleak a picture, as was the case in Niger's food crisis," Professor William Easterly of New York University told the BBC News website. What Niger experienced in 2005 was not a sudden catastrophe, but chronic malnutrition that makes people vulnerable to rises in food prices. Glib talk of famine backed by pictures of starving children may help NGOs raise funds, but it does nothing to address these basic problems, says Mr Easterly.   
Boom and bust  
Tony Vaux, a former official with Oxfam, agrees. Once an emergency is identified, he says, the NGOs' public relations machine takes over and "there is a terrible temptation to look around for the very worst stories".

INHERENCY – "Even if" food aid were a good thing, other actors can provide it

1. Middle East: Rich "Gulf States" (e.g. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain) can do it

LOS ANGELES TIMES 2017 (journalist Ann Simmons) 21 Sept 2017 "[The U.N. World Food Program is seeing substantial funding, but it's still not enough to meet global needs](http://www.latimes.com/world/la-un-general-assembly-live-updates-the-u-n-world-food-program-is-seeing-1506017112-htmlstory.html#nt=card)" <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-un-general-assembly-live-updates-the-u-n-world-food-program-is-seeing-1506017112-htmlstory.html> (brackets added)

“The gulf states with all of their wealth should be funding the humanitarian crisis in their region of the world: Syria, Iraq, Yemen," [World Food Program Executive Director David] Beasley said, noting that the U.S. and Britain were among the largest donors helping Syrians, whose country remains devastated by civil war. “It’s absolutely inexcusable.”

2. World Food Program

WFP has $3.2 billion, of which the US donates $1.7 billion

LOS ANGELES TIMES 2017 (journalist Ann Simmons) 21 Sept 2017 "[The U.N. World Food Program is seeing substantial funding, but it's still not enough to meet global needs](http://www.latimes.com/world/la-un-general-assembly-live-updates-the-u-n-world-food-program-is-seeing-1506017112-htmlstory.html#nt=card)" <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-un-general-assembly-live-updates-the-u-n-world-food-program-is-seeing-1506017112-htmlstory.html> (brackets added)

Beasley, a Republican and former South Carolina governor who was nominated by President Trump to head the world's largest food agency, said his first objective in assuming the position in April “was to protect U.S. funding and other major donor funding at a time period where we were facing the worst humanitarian crisis.” Of the WFP's $3.2 billion in funding, $1.7 billion is from the United States, Beasley said. Also, of note was that funding for the WFP was passed with bipartisan support from legislators, he said.

SOLVENCY FAILURES OF FOOD AID

1. Arrives too late

By the time you get the relief effort up & running, the crisis is over

BBC news 2006. (journalist Henri Astier) 1 Feb 2006 "Can aid do more harm than good?" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm> (brackets added)

One problem with dramatic appeals, [New York University Professor] Mr Easterly notes, is that they do not give you a big bang for your aid buck. "The payoff is disappointingly low," he says. Getting the relief effort up and running takes time, and when the food arrives it is often too late - or the crisis has eased on its own, as appears to be the case in Niger.

2. Can’t solve, because lack of food isn’t the root cause of famine

Agricultural production alone doesn’t cause famine, there is always some man-made cause

Sophie Chou 2017 (journalist) Public Radio International 27 Mar 2017 “Drought doesn't cause famine. People do.” <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-27/drought-doesnt-cause-famine-people-do> (“exphasizes” is a typo in the original, it should be “emphasizes”)

“Those people will suffer, their children will be malnourished, they will likely be displaced, lose their livelihoods, and some people will no doubt die as a result of this crisis,” says Dan Maxwell, a food security professor and director of the [Feinstein International Center](http://fic.tufts.edu/) at Tufts University. Maxwell exphasizes that modern-day famines are rarely caused by a lack of food. “There has never been a case that agricultural production causes famine alone,” he says. “It only causes a famine if someone lets it cause a famine.”

Human behavior causes famine, not lack of food

Sophie Chou 2017 (journalist) Public Radio International 27 Mar 2017 “Drought doesn't cause famine. People do.” <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-27/drought-doesnt-cause-famine-people-do>

Maxwell says there’s a common misconception among the public that overpopulation and lack of resources are the main drivers behind food insecurity. (It’s a theory that was put forth by Thomas Malthus nearly two centuries ago.) In other words, that people starve because there's not enough food. But Emily Farr, [Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods](http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/humanitarian/food-security-vulnerable-livelihoods) team leader at Oxfam, says that's not the underlying problem. “We are talking about situations that are caused by human behavior,” she says.

DISADVANTAGES OF FOOD AID

1. Free food destroys local farms

Arrival of free food from outside destroys local farmers who can't compete with food priced at zero. But without farms, how will they ever feed themselves again? Example: Haiti

Peter Duffy 2010 (journalist) 31 Aug 2010 "Lessons From Haiti: How Food Aid Can Harm" <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/08/lessons-from-haiti-how-food-aid-can-harm/62252/>

Often in the news lately has been the harm that U.S. deliveries have done to the Haitian rice industry over the past few decades. On March 10, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bill Clinton apologized for his administration's role in exporting cheap U.S. rice to Haiti, undercutting local growers. According to a study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Haitian farmers provided 47 percent of the country's rice in 1988. By the 2008, the figure had dropped to 15 percent. And in a [recent report](http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2010/06/15/127860878/tuesday-podcast-tk) on NPR's Planet Money, reporters described how bags of American rice are still being sold in Haitian markets. "It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked," said Clinton, who may play a greater role in the future of Haiti than any figure since Toussaint L'Ouverture. (He is U.N. Special Envoy and co-chair of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, which is deciding how billions in recovery money will be spent.) "It was a mistake," he added. "I have to live every day with the consequences of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people, because of what I did. Nobody else."

Makes things worse long term: Food aid destroys local efforts to grow food

Tate Munro & Lorenz Wild 2016. (*Tate Munro is a regional resilience adviser and Lorenz Wild is a senior economic technical adviser for*[Mercy Corps](https://www.mercycorps.org.uk/)*, a group doing charitable agricultural assistance in poor countries.*) As drought hits Ethiopia again, food aid risks breaking resilience. 10 Mar 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/mar/10/drought-ethiopia-food-aid-resilience>

The failure of direct food aid  
Our experience in Ethiopia – and more than 40 other countries facing the world’s toughest challenges – shows that massive direct food aid programmes often fail. Direct food aid – importing emergency food rations on a large scale – overrides local efforts to produce and distribute food and tends to damage local and national resilience rather than support it.

2. Replaces or retards economic development

Countries get addicted to food aid. Ethiopia built their economy around it and Sudan waits for handouts while malnutrition rates don't improve

Alex Renton 2007 (journalist) 26 May 2007 " Does food aid do more harm than good?" THE GUARDIAN <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2007/may/27/in1987iwasworking>

There are wider issues though than the mere problem of the US using the developing world as a way of getting rid of its surplus maize, wheat and rice. Food aid addiction is a buzz word among some of the aid agencies - Ethiopia is the example most often used. There, like stitches left in a wound, the emergency treatment of food aid delivered in the Eighties has become key to the country's economic infrastructure. Year in, year out, good crop or bad, five million Ethiopians need feeding and the country is beaten only by North Korea as the largest consumer of food donations. There are developing world nutritionists who believe that food aid has no long-term effect on the feeding of the vulnerable - malnutrition rates in southern Sudan, where an entire generation has grown up on the hand-outs of the rich world, have not improved in 20 years.

3. Undermines effective governance

Local governments are neutralized because foreigners with their aid are running everything

Harriet Sergeant 2018. (Research Fellow of the Centre for Policy Studies) THE SPECTATOR 17 Feb 2018 Does aid do more harm than good? <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2018/02/does-aid-do-more-harm-than-good/>

Aid does little to promote peace, security, trade and good governance. If anything, it hinders effective government. The cascade of aid money permits government to abdicate its responsibility to fund health care, education and infrastructure. It promotes a disconnect between a government and its citizens. When foreign donors cover 40 per cent of the operating budgets of countries such as Kenya and Uganda, why would leaders listen to their citizens? Schmoozing foreign donors comes first. As Moyo says, ‘Long, long lines of people have stood in the sun to vote for a president who is effectively impotent because of foreign donors or because glamour aid [in the form of Bob Geldof or Bono] has decided to speak on behalf of a continent.’

Impact: Less food / More hunger. Food aid enables bad government policies that end up denying more people food

BBC news 2006. (journalist Henri Astier) 1 Feb 2006 "Can aid do more harm than good?" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm>

James Shikwati, who heads the Inter Region Economic Network, a Kenyan NGO, says drought aid to his country in the 1990s "killed production" in many areas and increased dependency. Aid can also encourage misguided policies. Mr Shikwati says this has been the case in Ethiopia, where farmers are not allowed to own land. Instead of introducing reforms, he notes, the government appeals for aid. When donors respond, Mr Shikwati says, "they are subsidising a government policy that makes it difficult for people to be productive".

4. Fuels violent conflicts

Violence gets worse when we send food aid

Prof. Nathan Nunn & Dr. Nancy Qian 2012. (Nunn – Prof. of Economics, Harvard Univ. Qian – PhD; professor, Dept. of Economics, Yale Univ. ) Aiding Conflict: The Impact of U.S. Food Aid on Civil War 2 March 2012 <https://www.economics.northwestern.edu/docs/events/nemmers/2010/nunn.pdf>

The estimates imply that increasing U.S. food aid by 1,000 metric tons (MT) increases the incidence of civil conflict by 0.38 percentage-points. For a hypothetical country that receives the sample mean of U.S. food aid - approximately 27,600 MT - and experiences the mean incidence of conflict - 17.6 percent, the estimates imply that increasing food aid by ten percent increases the incidence of conflict by approximately 1.14 percentage-points. This increase is equal to six percent of the mean of conflict. To better understand how food aid can affect conflict, we undertake two additional tests. First, we examine which types of conflict are most impacted by U.S. food aid by also estimating the impact of food aid on the incidence of large-scale armed conflicts, defined as conflicts involving 1,000 or more combat deaths. We find that the effect of U.S. food aid is much smaller for large-scale conflicts than for the baseline measure, which includes all forms of civil conflict, both small and large. This finding is is consistent with descriptive accounts of humanitarian aid being appropriated by small-scale rebel groups or refugee warriors to fund their military activities.

Qian & Nunn Study: 10% increase in food aid = 1.14% increase in likelihood of civil war

Joshua Keating 2012. (writer & editor for F.P. magazine) 18 June 2012 FOREIGN POLICY " Please, Don’t Send Food" <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/please-dont-send-food/>

Looking at a sample of developing countries between 1972 and 2006, economists Nancy Qian of Yale University and Nathan Nunn of Harvard University found a direct correlation between U.S. food aid and civil conflict. For every 10 percent increase in the amount of food aid delivered, they discovered, the likelihood of violent civil conflict rises by 1.14 percentage points.

Food aid gets stolen and used by rebels to fuel their violent activities

Joshua Keating 2012. (writer & editor for F.P. magazine) 18 June 2012 FOREIGN POLICY " Please, Don’t Send Food" <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/please-dont-send-food/>

The results confirm anecdotal reports that food aid during conflicts is often stolen by armed groups, essentially making international donors part of the rebel logistics effort. According to some estimates, as much as 80 percent of the food aid shipments to Somalia in the early 1990s was looted or stolen. In her book [The Crisis Caravan](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0312610580/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=fopo-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0312610580), journalist Linda Polman reported how Hutu rebels who fled Rwanda after the 1994 genocide appropriated aid given out in refugee camps in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo, further fueling conflict in the region. Polman also estimated that Nigeria’s 1967-1970 Biafran war — one of the first African humanitarian crises to get global media attention — may have lasted 12 to 16 months longer than it otherwise would have because of the international aid seized by rebel groups.

5. Enables evil dictators

Dictators use food aid to bolster their own power. Impact: injustice & violence

Patrick Tyrrell 2018. (research coordinator in the Heritage Foundation's Center for International Trade & Economics) Foreign Aid Is Not the Answer to Global Poverty. Look to Freedom. 2 March 2018 <https://www.heritage.org/international-economies/commentary/foreign-aid-not-the-answer-global-poverty-look-freedom>

Strongmen who disregard property rights or the rule of law to remain in power have been rewarded with billions of dollars in foreign aid from rich countries for decades. Despots and dictators have often used this aid to solidify their grips on power, such as by withholding food aid from groups that do not support them. These strongmen and dictators often take credit for bringing foreign aid to their countries while depriving their country’s people of the economic freedom they would need to end the dependence on foreign aid. William Easterly, in his book “[The Tyranny of Experts](https://www.amazon.com/Tyranny-Experts-Economists-Dictators-Forgotten/dp/0465089739/),” explains how this has occurred at different times since the beginning of the 20th century, producing violent consequences in countries like China, Columbia, Ethiopia, and Sudan, among others. This injustice continues in places where foreign aid is disseminated without regard to the rule of law and economic freedom.

6. White Savior Complex

Link: Zambia. They refused US food aid … and survived just fine. It proves the arrogance of Westerners who think that without whites, Africans would all be dead

BBC news 2006. (journalist Henri Astier) 1 Feb 2006 "Can aid do more harm than good?" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm>

Take the case of Zambia, which at the time banned aid because it worried about genetically-modified US maize. Donors were aghast. "Leaders who refuse to let their people have food, should be put in the dock for the most serious crimes against humanity," the US ambassador to Zambia said. But then something strange happened: nothing. Cutting off supplies did not trigger famine. The UN World Food Programme point out that it would be wrong to conclude that Zambia was better off left alone: the country did receive non-GM food aid from Europe, which helped alleviate local shortages. But at the very least, it seems clear that Zambia did not need a massive food influx to avert catastrophe. "NGOs flatter themselves into thinking that they save lives," says former Zambian Agriculture Minister Guy Scott, who finds it "arrogant of the West to think that without whites, without pop stars, Africans would all be dead".

Impact: Blocks Real Solutions. In addition to being wrong for its own sake, this "White Savior Complex" undermines Africans making progress toward their own solutions

Prof. Kathryn Mathers 2014 (visiting assistant professor in the Department of International Comparative Studies at Duke University) Op-Ed: Why Won’t White Savior Complex Go Away?23 July 2014 <http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/07/22/why-wont-white-savior-complex-go-away>

One of the most intrinsic characteristics of the white savior complex is its ability to ingrain and spread the notion that Westerners are the solution to African problems. This requires portraying the latter as helpless and endlessly recirculating images only of abandonment and violence, or innocence and primitivism. Another trait of the white savior complex is that unlike the imperial, top-down "white man's burden," it takes place in a virtual space shared by the savior and the people being saved and in a world in which the goals, personalities, and projects of white saviors can be immediately beamed out, commented on, "liked," or retweeted into the worlds of Africans themselves. This can undermine the work of Africans in their own communities. Africans are, after all, actively mobilizing new technologies and social media to shape their own worlds and engage directly with the ways that others represent them. So why, even in these shared spaces, do narratives in which Africans are just the backdrop to American saviors' stories still persist?

Impact: Racism. Mindset that Africa needs to be saved and cannot save itself is a form of racism

*Hyoyoung Minna Kim 2017. (Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Africa who resigned upon realizing the detrimental aspects of her work) 23 Aug 2017* Open Letter from a Peace Corp Volunteer <http://www.cihablog.com/open-letter-peace-corp-volunteer/>

This itch to serve abroad is anticipated, given the messages about communities already flooded with foreign aid, like Africa: primitive, diseased, and impoverished. As a result, on varying levels of consciousness, many US citizens believe (subconsciously or consciously) that Africa and other “developing” communities around the world 1) need to be saved and 2) cannot save itself. In other words, there is a ubiquitous ideology that members of “developing” communities are fundamentally inferior and are inherently incapable of “achieving” what “developed” communities have – also regarded as a form of racism.

7. Distracts from real solutions

AFF uses emotional plea to "sell" voters (like the Judge in this round) on their plan, but this prevents long-term solutions, creates despair, and distracts us from real solutions like establishing fair international institutions

Lorenz Lauer 2017 (PhD candidate at Universidad del País Vasco) Doctoral thesis, "Public Perception, Justification and Motivation of Development Aid – The Feasibility of Peter Singer's Culture of Giving" <https://addi.ehu.es/bitstream/handle/10810/23847/TESIS_LAUER_LORENZ.pdf?sequence=1>

In the case that development aid is not financed by INGOs, but by governments, the politicians involved must see how they can “sell” this engagement best to their voters and how they can convince the media that their support of developing countries corresponds to national interests. The charitable nature of development aid (instead of a political or rational basis) is a major problem and may prevent long-term solutions. Olson (2000, 2ff.) notes that in a vicious circle, the persistence of poverty and the lack of perceived outcomes lead to passivity and despair of the donors. Basing development aid on public opinion carries the risk of short-sighted campaigns that are oriented on thrill and spectacle rather than long-term results. Therefore, manipulable public opinion should carry less weight in the distribution of aid. If you want to obtain results that are effective and sustainable, you have to rely on evaluation, reflection, and rationality. Political action towards the creation of fair international institutions is even more important.

COUNTERPLAN

Negative offers the following COUNTERPLAN implemented by Congress and the President:

1. Congress votes to abolish all US food aid reformed by the Affirmative plan.

2. Counterplan takes effect the same day as the date of the Affirmative plan

3. All Negative speeches may clarify

To summarize, we're maintaining the Negative position in today's debate by denying the resolution. The word in the resolution we deny is the word "reform." We believe the food aid the Affirmative is reforming should be abolished, not reformed. Our counterplan is exclusive to the Affirmative plan because you can't do both our plan and theirs at the same time. And we urge a Negative ballot on the basis of achieving net benefits over their plan.

COUNTERPLAN ADVOCACY

Advocacy: President of Haiti said stop food aid, it causes more harm than good

Peter Duffy 2010 (journalist) 31 Aug 2010 "Lessons From Haiti: How Food Aid Can Harm" <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/08/lessons-from-haiti-how-food-aid-can-harm/62252/>

Haitian President René Préval, an agronomist, is so mindful of the harm caused by free food that he was already calling for an end to it in March, a decision that was not universally applauded in his hungry country. The U.N.'s World Food Programme (WFP), a major distributor of U.S. food aid, began phasing out its large-scale distributions in May under orders from the Préval government.

COUNTERPLAN NON-TOPICALITY

1. Abolish is not Reform.

We’re not arguing that the AFF plan isn’t topical, we really don’t care about that. We’re simply arguing that our Counterplan isn’t topical, so that you, the Judge, know that you have a clear choice between affirming and denying the resolution. A Negative ballot will deny the resolution because we don’t believe US foreign food aid should be reformed. It should be abolished instead.

Definition of Abolish

Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2018 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abolish>

**“**to do away with **:**put an end to”

Definition of Reform

Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2018 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reform>

**“**to put or change into an improved form or condition”

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