

10% survived

Russian casualties falling? War on logistics. Assault forces bloodbath.



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Some Russian ultra-patriots, along with the western press, [would have us believe](#) that Ukraine has been turning the tides of war these past 3 months. But there's an alternative take as well. And would you believe it, Mr Zelensky himself has been putting Ukraine's inevitable victory in doubt.

Today we'll take a look at three topics. First, indications that Ukraine has been suffering higher losses than ever, while Russia has been taking almost 30% fewer losses than in the same period last year (per official Ukrainian statistics).

Second, the drone war on infrastructure. Russia managed to increase its total oil exports the past two weeks despite unprecedented Ukrainian drone strikes on its main ports. And the Iranian war meant that the revenue on these exports doubled.

Finally, Russian strikes on Ukrainian transport logistics and energy have led to ports permanently disabled, major economic losses and an apocalyptic situation at frontline towns.

10% survived

First, a story from the battlefield.

Last week, following the latest [scandal](#) of massive losses in Ukraine's 425th assault regiment, the western-funded liberal nationalist press interviewed commander Oleksandr Shirshin on the topic of the assault forces.

Shirshin knows quite a bit about the assault forces. That's because when he was still commander of a battalion in the 47th mechanized brigade, he was sent by commander-

in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky to invade Russia's Kursk oblast in late 2024. Shirshin was eventually [removed](#) from his post due to his criticism of Syrsky's suicide missions in Kursk and the nearby Belgorod oblast.



The 47th brigade was largely trained in the west, and was meant to show how NATO training trumped Russian orcs. Placed at the tip of the 2023 counteroffensive spear, these hopes were dashed on Russian defensive lines. Shirshin also took [photos](#) reading Timothy Snider books in a trench, meeting the 'historian' in 2023. He received a [master's](#) in 2019 from the Ukrainian Catholic University in the management of NGOs. This is one of the country's most Sorosite educational institutions. Following 2019, he took part in various NGO movements.

Commanders of certain units unflinchingly obeyed Syrsky's bloody demands. These units became [the assault forces](#) — Syrsky's personal guard, as they are often called.

Assault units have total priority in recruitment, something they certainly need given the losses they suffer. Units like the 425th assault regiment [reportedly](#) receive 20 times the amount of new recruits than non-assault units. The number of troops in all the assault units has [grown](#) by 10 times over the last 12 months

And here's what Shirshin had to say about the sorts of losses Ukrainian units were taking in Kursk. For context, by this point Ukrainian troops had been largely forced to flee Kursk, but Syrsky kept on commanding units to conduct assault operations

against Russian positions in order to claim that fighting was still ongoing in Russian territory.

We repeatedly received tasks to send people into the enemy's rear, without having sufficient forces, resources, or logistics. And, well, already at the planning stage it was clear that the task was doomed to fail.

Interviewer: What time was this?

Spring of 2025.

Interviewer: Spring 2025. And what tasks were you given?

Well, for example, sending 10 people 5 kilometers through enemy battle formations into the rear.

You ask: "Okay, and what next? Will someone follow up, clear the area, expand the corridors?" No. From that point, we're supposed to go and, damn it, storm something.

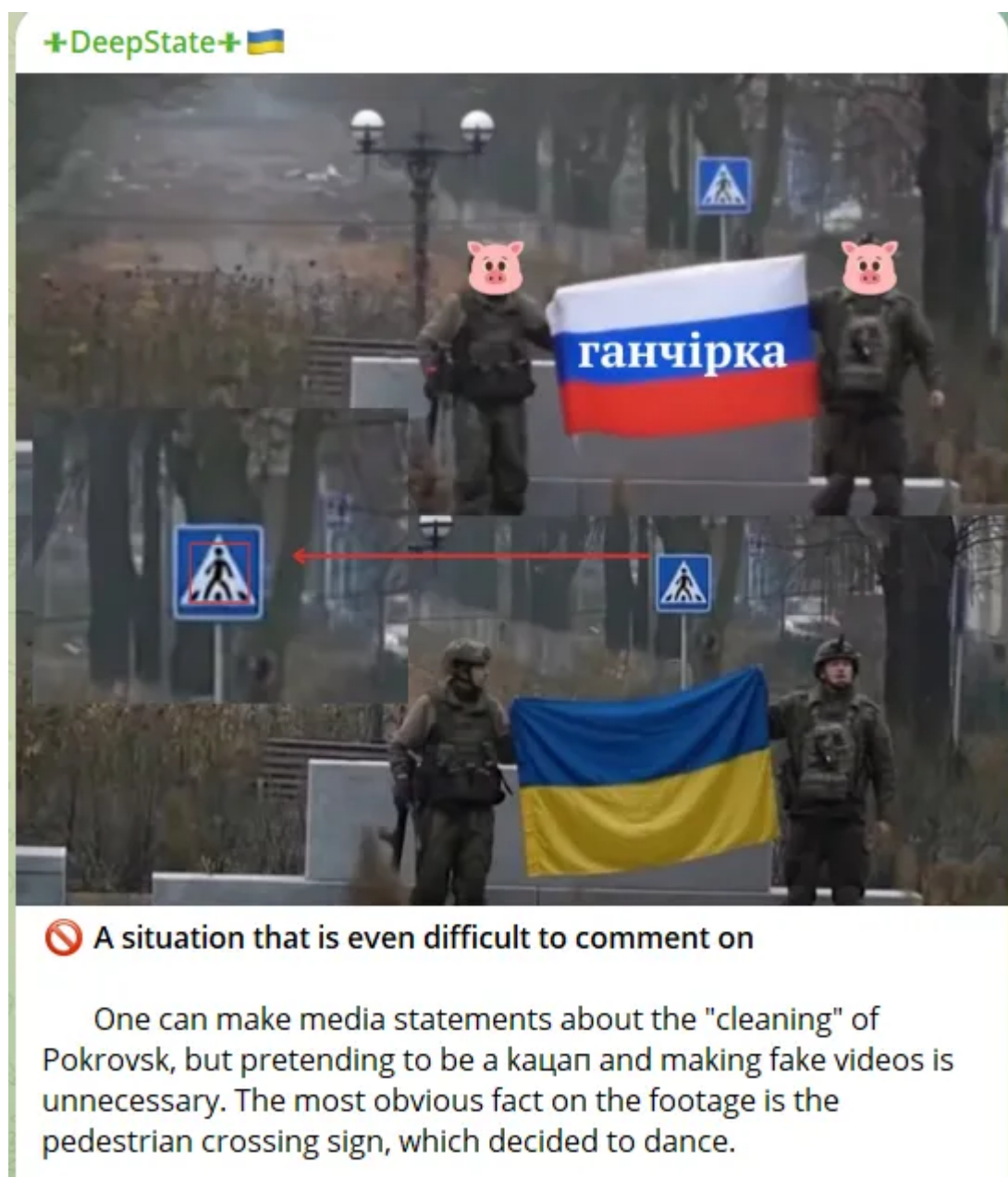
I'll give an example. We were working with the 425th Regiment. Their task was to storm one settlement, then the next. They sent, if I'm not mistaken, four squads. Four squads—that's about 20 people, maybe 18 depending on the count. Roughly five per group. I don't remember exactly. In any case, it's a small group to storm a settlement where at least a battalion was stationed.

At least a battalion. On top of that, this involved moving about five kilometers beyond the line of contact. That can be checked on a map. You pass through all the defensive lines—nothing is cleared behind you.

At minimum, you need to organize support—artillery, mortars, whatever assets you have. You need logistics, medical support, some kind of rotation plan. Many of these elements, which should have been planned, were simply impossible under the kind of task we were given.

I'll note that these sorts of pointless suicide missions are quite characteristic of the assault forces. The [massacre](#) of personnel in the 425th regiment last week is another example — Syrsky wants to claim that fighting is ongoing in the Russian-controlled Pokrovsk, so he sends assault units to try and plant a flag there somewhere. Where

assaults fail, technology helps out, with the 425th assault regiment [publishing](#) an AI-generated video of its forces in the centre of Pokrovsk in late 2025. In November 2025, other Ukrainian soldiers [claimed](#) that a flag-raising stunt in Pokrovsk by the 425th had cost the lives of ‘dozens’ of Ukrainian troops for nothing.



Ukrainian military commentators were [dismayed](#) by the AI adventures of the 425th

Now, back to Shirshin's story of the Kursk bloodbath in the spring of 2025:

Interviewer: So people were being sent somewhere for unclear reasons, with no clear objective and no realistic plan?

The task was: storm that settlement with 15–20 people. And what happened? From those people, maybe one or two came back. I don't know. I'll tell you this: when my

people relieved them—this was under combat conditions—I first had to replace the 425 “Skelya” regiment on positions they had taken without clearing territory behind them. People just walked in across open fields. Pure luck. One time they went in unnoticed, another time two got through unnoticed. The third time, it was discovered. The routes were cut off.

Our people were stuck there. I submitted official reports saying we needed to take measures—expand corridors, secure safe passages, provide additional cover. I laid out everything needed to make the operation successful and to support our people at the front. But we started taking losses.

Our people were trapped there. There were constant assaults from different directions. We couldn’t rotate them or evacuate the wounded. And you say: “We need to pull them out. You can’t keep them there—they’ll die.” There’s no alternative. You need to concentrate firepower to allow them to withdraw from the encirclement.

And what did I get in response? “No—the general said it’s not allowed.” And we continue. I ask: “What’s the goal?” They say: “To secure the settlement.” I say: “Seriously? With four squads, some already wounded or killed?” I ask: “What next? Even if they take half the settlement, the rest is surrounded, 10 km from the front line. Then what?”

The answer: “It’s an order. Orders are not discussed.”

In the end, I planned to withdraw my people because it was impossible to keep them there. I laid out who would provide fire support, how the withdrawal would happen, the sequence. And at one point, people simply broke psychologically and ran. They just ran—and were shot. Shot along the way; some hit tripwires. Nothing had been done to make the task viable.

In the end, one or two survived from that group. After that, I received an order to send in another 10 people. I said: “Are you insane?”

Interviewer: *This was on Russian territory?*

Yes—send another 10 people into the same encirclement, where the others had died or been blown up.

Interviewer: *And that's when you wrote your resignation request?*

That was the last straw. And it wasn't just one such task.

Interviewer: *How many were there?*

Every day. There were many like this.

ШИРШИН: Екскомбат «Маґури» після скандалу з Сирським. Шту

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That was in 2024 and early 2025. Now, the assault units have ballooned, increasing in size by 10 times. More and more, the whole army is become one big assault regiment. Shirshin had this to say about the current methods of work of the assault units:

Interviewer: *How are people sent to positions?*

Not always voluntarily. Often they are sent through deception, often by force.

Interviewer: *Explain to me, as a civilian—how do you send someone by deception?*

You tell them there are no enemies there—and then you lead them straight into the dugout.

Interviewer: *For what purpose?*

To carry out the task assigned by higher command. What else?

I've already described part of it. We worked with the 425th regiment—the same thing. Sending people into encirclement, God knows where, then from that encirclement ordering them to push even deeper, without proper communication or support—just because it's an order, and orders aren't discussed.

That's how they operate. I'll give another example. One of these units came to my positions. They were being shouted at over the radio: 'Not a step back—forward, forward.' And the guys said to mine: 'What are we, idiots? Don't we understand we'll die there?' And they would just throw a grenade, stick out their hands to get wounded.

People were ready to get wounded before even reaching the position—just to avoid carrying out a task they understood made no sense and would get them killed.

Interviewer: And how do they deal with 'refusers'?

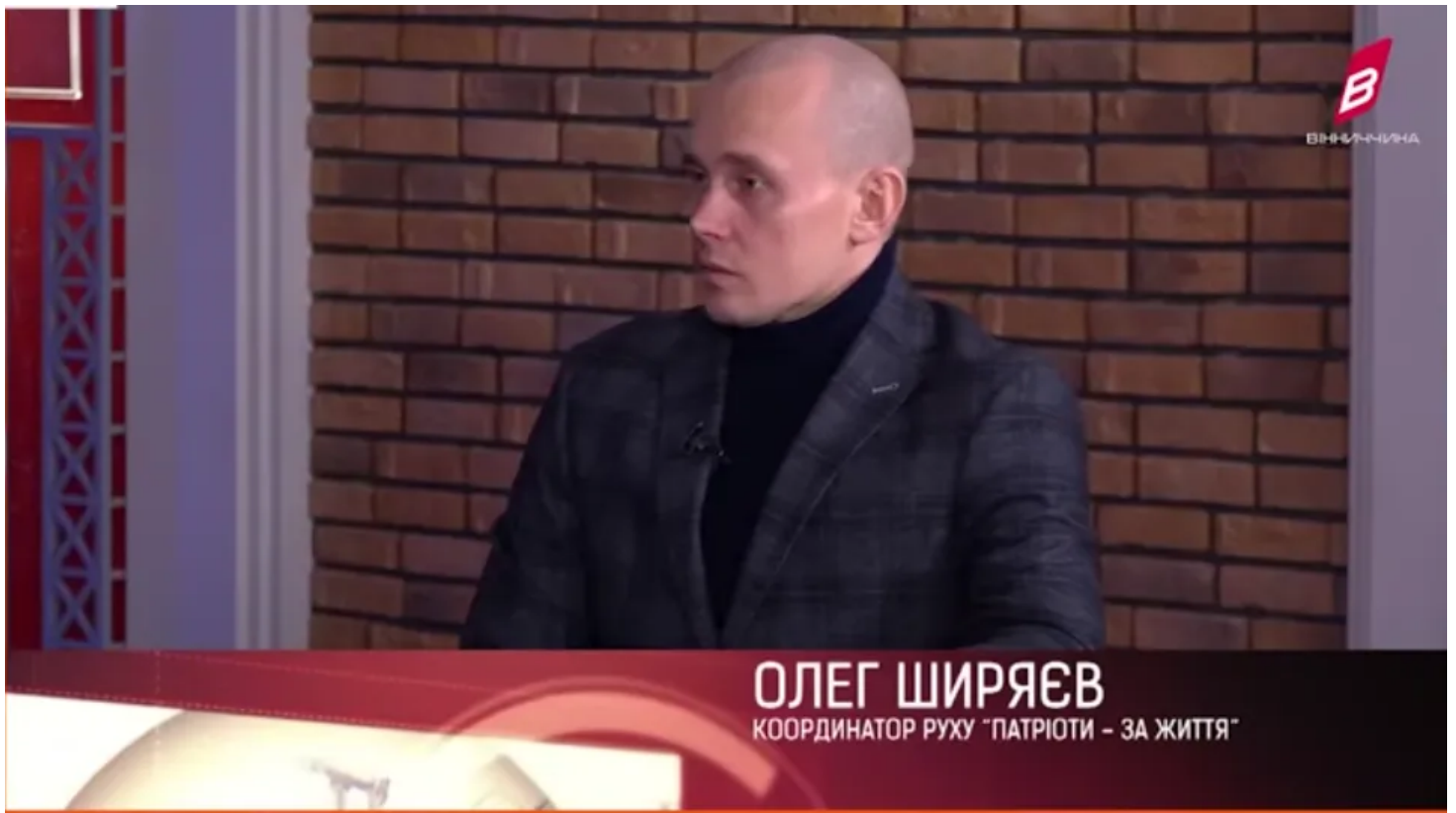
They use force.

Interviewer: Force? You mean they beat them?

Of course. Haven't you seen all the complaints? There are even units whose commanders have had cases opened against them by the State Bureau of Investigation. Look at how many complaints there are from relatives.

Immortal and mortal chameleons

Shirshin also hints at the 'pro-Russian' nature of the assault forces' command, unsurprising given his status as the liberal media's favorite commander. He mentions the fact that the commander of the 225th assault regiment, Oleg Shiryayev, was in 2020 a member of Ilia Kiva's 'Patriots for Life' movement.

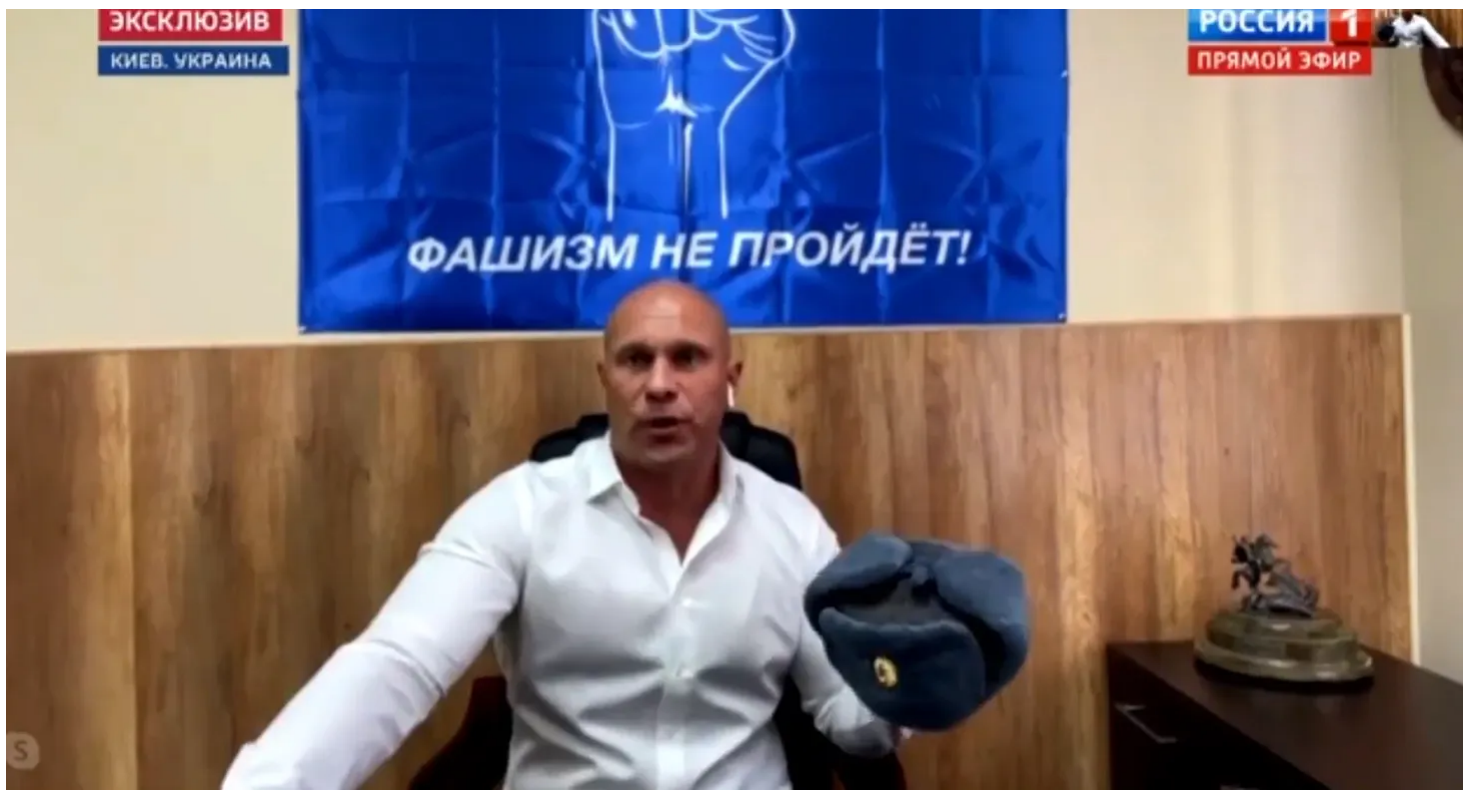


Kiva was a virulent Ukrainian nationalist from 2015 to around 2016 who called to execute pro-Russian traitors and praised Azov, often [appearing](#) for the television as a frontline warrior against the ‘separatist scum’. In 2017, he became a socialist who called for ‘red terror against the oligarchy’, and soon became a fiery anti-fascist, pro-Russian political personality.



Kiva (centre, bald) at a protest by the 'Patriots for Life' movement, May 9 2020

His 'Patriots for Life' movement, founded in 2020, was a sort of half-hearted paramilitary for the 'Opposition Platform for Life' party, which he represented in the Ukrainian parliament. This party was banned in 2022 for being 'pro-Russian' (an [exaggeration](#), but anyway). A number of members of Kiva's 'Patriots' movement were beaten to death in the early days of the war, with Azov triumphantly posted their crushed skulls to telegram.



Kiva telling Russian television that Ukraine is a fascist state, 2021.

Kiva fled to Russia in 2022, and was assassinated by Ukrainian intelligence in 2023. There's certainly no greater insult in nationalist circles than to be called 'Kiva's bro', as Shirshin does for Shiriaev.

Shiryaev, like [other commanders](#) of the assault forces, has a criminal background. He was [arrested](#) in July 2021 for attempting to extort an agricultural enterprise. In August 2021, 60 other members of the 'Patriots for Life' were [arrested](#) for attacking members of the nationalist Azov paramilitary.



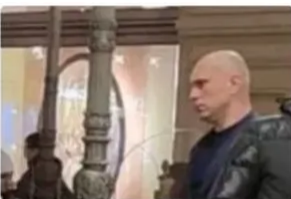
Shiryaev in court, August 2021

MP Mariana Bezuhla shared some more photos of Shiryaev with Kiva:.

Розвідники показали одне з останніх фото ліквідованого Киви

Надія Карбунар

9 грудня, 2023, 17:49 glavcom.ua

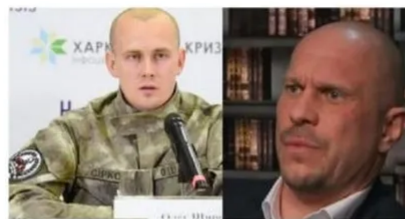


Одне з останніх прижиттєвих фото Іллі Киви
фото: Сергій Іванов/Facebook

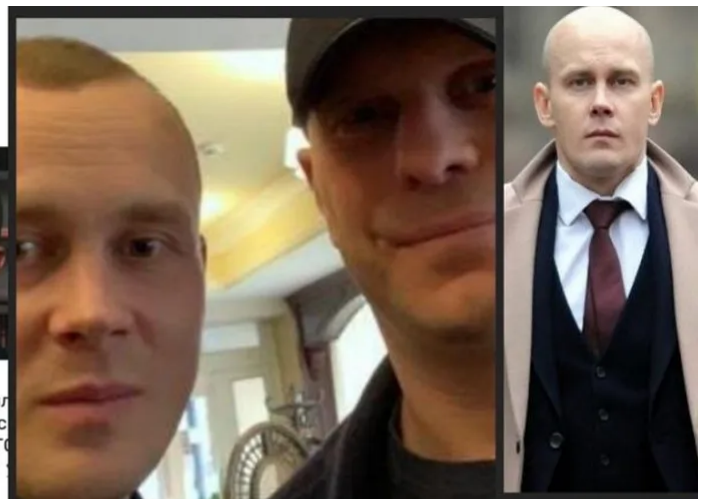
Зрадник відпочивав в елітному російському ресторані «Пушкін»



Депутат ОПЗЖ Ілля Кива і ветеран АТО Олег Ширяєв тепер разом



Куратором організації депутата ОПЗЖ Іллі Киви "Патріоти – за життя!" став ветеран експериментальної роти МВС "Східний корпус" АТО Олег Ширяєв. Про це Ширяєв повідомив у Фейсбучі.



And here you can see commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky with his favorite subordinate, commander [Shiryaev](#):



Shiryaev, like Kiva, is hardly someone of ‘pro-Russian’ views. Like Kiva and any other successful Ukrainian politician, he is merely a political chameleon of the highest degree. His success in this respect is certainly undeniable, having become one of the

most trusted commanders for the commander-in-chief. Currently, Shiryayev's 'regiment' has 15 battalions under its [command](#), making it more the size of a division.



Shiryayev in December 2025 with then-minister of defense, Denys Shmyhal

'Heart problems'

Meanwhile, the other big assault regiment keeps killing its personnel. Not through suicide missions, but simply by beating them to death at the training camps.





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