Building Stability Overseas Strategy

DFID Department for International Development

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Contents

Foreword

The Arab Spring has demonstrated just how uncertain the world can be. The eruption of democracy movements across the Middle East and North Africa may turn out to be the most important development of the early 21st century, providing the international community with an opportunity to support the development of resilient societies and to help bring stability to the region.
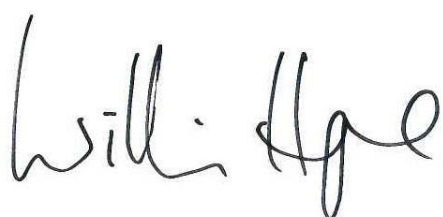
The Arab Spring has also challenged long standing notions of stability. Challenges to oppression, if managed peacefully, can be a rejuvenating force for society, unlocking economic potential and re-enfranchising the disaffected. This strategy is built on the insight that stability can only be achieved when a society has the strong and legitimate institutions it needs to manage tensions peacefully.

It seeks to address the lessons we have learnt from these events and marks the first time that the Government has put in place an integrated cross-government strategy to address conflict issues. By focusing on Early Warning we will improve our ability to anticipate instability and potential triggers for conflict. When crises emerge we will act to deliver rapid crisis prevention and response, improving our ability to take fast, appropriate and effective action to prevent a crisis or stop it escalating or spreading. We will invest in upstream prevention to build strong, legitimate institutions in fragile countries so that they are capable of managing tensions and shocks.
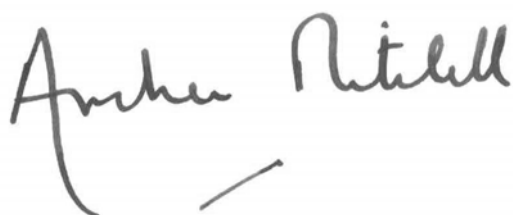
Implementing the strategy will require a consolidated effort, using all our diplomatic, development and defence capabilities as well as drawing on external expertise. Through active expeditionary diplomacy we will build stronger ties with countries we can work with to promote stability. We will seek to work more closely with existing international partners and incorporate this agenda into our developing relationships with the emerging powers. We will use Britain's weight and influence in institutions including the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and the International Financial Institutions.

We have already announced the substantial extra resources which will underpin the strategy. By 2014/15 we will have increased to 30% the proportion of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) that supports fragile and conflict affected states. The resources of the Conflict Pool, jointly operated by the FCO, DFID and MOD, will rise to a total of £1.125 billion over the Spending Review Period. The Arab Partnership initiative will expand to £110 million over the next four years to support political and economic reform in the Middle East and North Africa. Working to address instability and conflict upstream is a sound investment; it is both morally right and in our national interest.

We will share joint responsibility for the implementation of this strategy which delivers on the commitment we made in the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review last year.

William Hague
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Andrew Mitchell
Secretary of State for International Development

Dr Liam Fox
Secretary of State for Defence

Introduction

1.1   When violent conflict breaks out, the costs to the country and the international community are enormous. Lives are lost, people displaced, trade links cut, and organised crime groups or terrorists are given an opportunity to take root, exacerbating instability. The purpose of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) is to address instability and conflict overseas because it is both morally right and in Britain's national interest. We will do this by using all of our diplomatic, development, military and security tools, and drawing on our unique experience, relationships, reputation and values.

1.2   The BSOS focus is on how we can improve the effectiveness of our efforts by strengthening our whole of government approach and refining our prioritisation at a time when resources are being squeezed. The strategy does not aim to catalogue the wide array of conflict-related work that the UK Government already carries out. Nor does it give a comprehensive account of our engagement with international partners and with multilateral organisations that is so critical to achieving success.

1.3   The cost to the international community of managing conflict and its effects once it has broken out are high. It is far more cost-effective to invest in conflict prevention and de-escalation than to pay the costs of responding to violent conflict. This strategy therefore emphasises the importance of early action and upstream conflict prevention.

1.4   Part one of the strategy sets out why stability matters to the UK and then draws on lessons the UK has learned and a growing body of international evidence of what works. We have consulted leading international thinkers and practitioners, bringing together perspectives from academia, the military, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), multilateral institutions, Parliamentarians and our Embassies and networks of staff overseas.

1.5   Part two of the strategy sets out our approach to prioritisation and the action we will take on those fragile and conflict-affected countries where the risks are high, our interests are most at stake and where we know we can have an impact. We need to be realistic about what we can achieve and will improve our performance through three mutually-supporting pillars:

- **Early warning:** improving our ability to anticipate instability and potential triggers for conflict.

- **Rapid crisis prevention and response:** improving our ability to take fast, appropriate and effective action to prevent a crisis or stop it spreading or escalating.

- **Investing in upstream prevention:** helping to build strong, legitimate institutions and robust societies in fragile countries that are capable of managing tensions and shocks so there is a lower likelihood of instability and conflict.

1.6   The BSOS, which the Strategic Defence and Security Review committed the Government to produce, is one of several strategies stemming from the National Security Strategy. In implementing the strategy we will ensure that it is aligned with related strategies, notably the CONTEST Counter Terrorism strategy, the Organised Crime strategy, the Cyber Crime strategy and the Defence Engagement strategy. It will take into account the Government's strategies in areas such as proliferation and arms control, energy security, and climate change and resource competition, which it complements.

What do we mean by "stability"?

The stability we are seeking to support can be characterised in terms of political systems which are representative and legitimate, capable of managing conflict and change peacefully, and societies in which human rights and rule of law are respected, basic needs are met, security established and opportunities for social and economic development are open to all. This type of "structural stability", which is built on the consent of the population, is resilient and flexible in the face of shocks, and can evolve over time as the context changes.

What do we mean by "conflict"?

Conflict is a normal part of human interaction, the natural result when individuals and groups have incompatible needs, interests or beliefs. The challenge we need to address is the *violent* conflict that emerges when these underlying incompatibilities are badly managed.

In stable, resilient societies conflict is managed through numerous formal and informal institutions. For example, elections determine the outcome of political conflict, courts settle legal conflicts, and social norms prevent conflicts between neighbours escalating to violence. These mechanisms channel conflict, avoiding recourse to violence and facilitating positive change. In fragile states, however, they are weak, illegitimate or dysfunctional, so violence – organised and systematic, or individual and chaotic – becomes the primary mechanism to resolve conflict. Such violence undermines the institutions and relationships on which long term-peace and stability depend.

Part One

Why does stability matter to the UK?

2.1   Over 1.5 billion people now live in fragile and conflict-affected states or in countries with very high levels of criminal violence. Conflict deprives millions of their basic rights to life and security and involves significant social costs. Conflict and violence have a particularly negative impact on women, children and young people. Conflict-affected countries are less able to cope with the impact of natural disasters such as droughts or earthquakes.

A catastrophe for the individuals and countries directly involved…

2.2   War has been described as "development in reverse". Vital infrastructure – roads, schools, hospitals, factories – can be destroyed. It is too dangerous for children to go to school, parents to earn a living, or expectant mothers to reach a midwife. The private sector grinds to a halt or is distorted by a war economy. Communities are torn apart and people are left struggling to cope with debilitating insecurity, and often with the psychological trauma inflicted by terror and sexual violence.

2.3   The economic consequences of conflict for poor countries are enormous: it has been estimated that an 'average' civil war costs a developing country the equivalent of 30 years of GDP growth. It can take 14 years for a country to return to its pre-war growth path and 20 years to reach its pre-war trade levels. The impact of organised and violent crime also carry a huge economic cost: Jamaica, for example, could boost annual economic growth per capita by over 5% if it could lower its murder rate to that of Costa Rica. Nine of the ten poorest countries in the world are fragile states. Not a single low income fragile or conflict-affected country has yet achieved a single Millennium Development Goal.

For others in their region...

2.4   The impacts of conflict are rarely contained within a country's borders. Neighbouring countries and wider regions are often destabilised by the flow of small arms and light weapons, mercenary or other armed groups, illicit goods and displaced people that conflicts can produce. The interconnected conflicts in West Africa – in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Senegal – are a good example of this, as is the instability in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The impacts may be long-lasting: the Balkans is still dealing with refugees 15 years after the start of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

Rebel groups are more likely to cross national borders made porous by conflict, often leading government forces to follow suit. Conflict can also have a serious economic effect on surrounding regions, since instability in one country can often depress growth rates in its neighbours.

And a threat to our security and prosperity…

2.5   In our interconnected world, the effect of violence in one region can spread to other more stable areas through refugee flows, terrorist activity, and organised crime groups, all of which can have an impact on our own security. Five countries - all in the midst of conflict - produced 60% of the world's refugees in 2009. Conflict impacts on governance, accountability and the provision by the state of services such as security and justice. Chaos in countries like Yemen and Somalia allows Al Qaida and other terrorist groups to recruit, train and organise, providing a launch pad for attacks on us. Such poorly governed spaces also create platforms from or through which organised crime groups can operate. Around 50-60 tonnes of cocaine annually transit fragile West African states on their way to Europe.

2.6   In the long term, our prosperity and security is intertwined with peaceful development and security across the globe. The cost to the UK of managing conflict that has an impact on our national interests once it has broken out is high; as a matter of last resort we may need to deploy our Armed Forces, with the human and financial costs that entails. Instability and conflict inhibit economic development, damage trade and cause commodity price shocks. Levels of productive economic activity in conflict-affected countries and regions drop: trade levels after major episodes of violence can take 20 years to recover. Political and economic instability discourages or destroys external investment. Pirates, often operating from unstable or conflict-affected states, undermine trade and cost the world economy up to £7.6 billion a year.

Triggers and drivers of instability and conflict

3.1   Internal conflict, terrorism and criminal violence are now the most prevalent forms of instability. While the number of conflicts fell sharply from the end of the Cold War until 2003, the downward trend has now stalled. The conflicts that remain have become more intractable and many countries are caught in a cycle of repeated violence and instability. Ninety percent of conflicts initiated in the first decade of the 21st century were in countries that had already had a civil war.

3.2   Though they have become less common, conflicts between states continue to be a risk. Inter-state conflicts are frozen or dormant in many parts of the world including the South Caucasus, the Middle East, South and South East Asia and Africa. All are potential flash points and could be triggered by instability within an individual state.

Sudden shocks can tip fragile countries into conflict and instability…

3.3   When it is well managed, political tension within society can drive positive change without violent conflict. Violent conflict is closely linked to bad governance, corruption and the lack of broad-based economic development. States that appear outwardly stable may be brittle and have little resilience to shocks. When a country rejects an authoritarian regime, violence is often the result, as we have seen recently in the Middle East and North Africa. Events have shown just how quickly the security situation can deteriorate. But while the onset may be sudden, the resulting conflict can be protracted if not addressed effectively, as shown by experience in the Balkans following the break-up of Yugoslavia or in the Caucasus.

3.4   Sudden shocks such as rapid fuel or food price increases, or an economic collapse, a disputed election result, or a religious or ethnically motivated attack can all trigger violence within states. So can longer term external pressures such as the spill over from a conflict in a neighbouring country, transnational terrorism, and tensions over resources or regional dominance. These may also lead to conflict between states.

Global pressures are increasing the risk of instability and conflict…

3.5   Resource scarcity, population growth and climate change may increase the potential for conflict over disputed land and water. More volatile food and energy prices will also increase the stresses on fragile countries. These pressures are likely to be particularly intense in the arc running from West Africa, across the Sahel, through the Horn of Africa and the Middle East and up into West, South and Central Asia. By 2025 more than 2.8 billion people in 48 countries may face water scarcity.

3.6   At the same time, the threat from external actors such as transnational armed groups and organised crime gangs is increasing. Drug cartels that impact on the UK challenge public authority in Colombia, the Lord's Resistance Army spreads terror in the Great Lakes region of Africa, terrorist groups exploit and exacerbate instability in countries such as Yemen and Somalia, traffickers undermine the rule of law in Jamaica and drug syndicates corrupt the state in Guinea-Bissau.

The importance of legitimate and effective institutions

4.1   Widespread violence is most likely when shocks tear the fabric that holds society together. While some countries are able to manage shocks peacefully and avoid violence, in fragile states the complex web of institutions that provides the basis for trust and confidence – from the police and legal system, to civil society organisations, religious groups, government departments or banks – is too weak or poorly functioning too cope. The political system may lack the strength and legitimacy to manage the crisis peacefully. People may lack confidence in key institutions, especially those responsible for security and justice. Or unemployed and unrepresented people may decide that violence is their only option.

Political inclusion is essential for peace…

4.2   The most peaceful political systems are accountable, giving everybody a voice, and trusted to manage difference and accommodate change. Ghana suffered a series of military coups from the 1960s ending with the creation of a new constitution in 1992. It has now managed to build a successful political system that people have started to trust, and which gives them the confidence to invest in the future. The experiences of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana's near neighbour, provide a vivid contrast. Political systems that fail to encourage and enable all groups, including women, to participate in political and economic life, will generate anger amongst the excluded and lack the legitimacy to mediate conflict peacefully.

Building democracy and civil society can strengthen peace…

4.3   Democracy can provide an effective mechanism for allocating political power and managing conflict. There is no standard model for democracy but, over the long term, it provides the best route to building accountable and responsive states able to safeguard human rights and promote social and economic development. In new or weak democracies, it is important to work with existing democratic elements rather than attempt to impose a particular model. Elections, while essential to democracy and often a critical part of building legitimacy, entail risks and their timing, design and monitoring are crucial. Holding them when there is no confidence in their fairness and quality may backfire. Election losers must have a clear stake in the future of their country and sufficient trust in the system to believe they are not permanently excluded from power.

4.4   Effective local politics and strong mechanisms which weave people into the fabric of decision-making – such as civil society, the media, the unions, and business associations – also have a crucial role to play. All sections of the population need to feel that they are part of the warp and weft of society, including women, young people and different ethnic and religious groups. There needs to be a growing acceptance that the use of violence is not normal or acceptable. The freedom to question the way things work is an important test of the political health of society.

Security and justice matter…

4.5   From Sierra Leone to Iraq and Afghanistan we are learning that we cannot build stable states without functioning security and justice systems. Effective and accountable security and better access to justice that is seen to be effective make people feel safe in their daily lives. They give an entrepreneur the confidence to invest, and provide people with the means to resolve conflicts before they escalate. Improved security and justice requires local ownership and political will.

4.6   In many fragile states the army or police can be the main face of the state for many citizens, and their behaviour can have a disproportionate impact on perceptions of legitimacy. When accountability is weak, security forces may be seen as sources of insecurity or oppression. They may even be used as an instrument of terror or as tools for economic or political gain. Following repressive and authoritarian rule, it is vital that security is maintained while local security forces are reformed and signals a clear shift away from any past abuses.

4.7   Support to build the capacity of security forces must be matched with efforts to build accountability, legitimacy and respect for human rights, for example through strengthening civilian oversight of the armed forces; ensuring the proper functioning of parliaments, the media and civil society organisations; and through such measures as educating the police on dealing appropriately with sexual violence. Effective and accountable military and police forces can also play a role in regional and global stability through troop and police contributions to peacekeeping missions.

4.8   Access to justice is a basic need for all citizens. The law, the judicial system, respect for human rights and combating impunity are all integral to justice. The links across the criminal justice system, from policing to prosecution, courts to prisons are all crucial. Working in just one segment is rarely sustainable and can place undue burden on another part of the chain. In many fragile states, formal security and justice systems tend to be only part of the picture, with the majority of these services being delivered through informal or traditional systems. These informal systems often help resolve local conflicts. Understanding why citizens turn to the justice providers that they do and how to ensure equitable justice is accessible to all is important.

As do a working economy and jobs…

4.9   Countries that secure fast broad-based economic growth after conflict are less likely to fall back into war than those which fail to grow. Low incomes, when combined with income inequality and lack of opportunities, particularly high unemployment, exacerbate instability and violence. Jobs, economic opportunity and wealth creation are critical to stability. Lack of economic opportunity is cited by citizens as a cause of conflict, and is often the most significant reason why young people join gangs, criminal organisations or rebel groups.

4.10   Only a healthy private sector and a well-functioning state can, in the long run, generate the growth and, particularly, the jobs needed for a sustainable exit from poverty, fragility and conflict. Even in the most fragile countries, such as Somalia, some elements of the private sector can continue to thrive, and targeted support to these can help generate income, jobs, and alternatives to violent conflict. Where the rule of law is weak, care needs to be taken not to fuel the war economy when providing such support. Equitable and legal cross-border trade which ties together peoples and economies of neighbouring countries can play a key role in consolidating peace. Legal trade builds prosperity, stability and peaceful relations.

4.11   Without growth and employment, it is impossible to meet the basic needs of the population, and people's aspirations for a better life for themselves and their children. This is particularly important where there is rapid urbanisation and rising numbers of unemployed youth. Supporting growth and the role of the private sector, including through foreign direct investment, is critical. In the short term, public sector programmes can play a key role in generating employment.

Public confidence is critical…

4.12   While an inclusive and legitimate political system is a requisite for stability, confidence in the future comes when people see that their needs and expectations are being met on the ground. National and local government are both important. Their ability to make laws, provide security, exercise justice and deliver a degree of financial and macro-economic stability, including through effective revenue systems, is essential.

4.13   The state also needs to meet the broader expectations of the population. The fabric that holds society together is strengthened if people see that their taxes are used effectively, for example to provide health care and education for their children, to build roads and provide reliable electricity services. The delivery and quality of such basic services matters. In Nepal, grievances over access to basic services in impoverished communities helped fuel the insurgency revolution. In Pakistan, the poor quality and content of education can make young people vulnerable to extremist messages.

But bad governance works for some…

4.14   Conflict, organised crime and instability create winners as well as losers. Elite groups often have strong incentives not to open up the political system. Understanding the network of elites and the drivers of their behaviour is important. Many fragile states are rich in natural resources. Rather than revenues from oil, diamonds or minerals providing a down payment for a better future they often drive conflict as elites, political leaders and organised criminals struggle for personal enrichment and gain. For example, criminals, including businessmen and military officers engaged in illegal mineral extraction and smuggling in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, depend on continuing instability for their criminal activities.

4.15   In a range of states, from Somalia to Zimbabwe and Burma, weak and bad governance is entrenched. Corruption, discrimination, economic collapse, human rights abuses, violence against women and children, and a lack of security, justice or basic services fuel the grievances of the population. In these countries, people do not have trust in government institutions to work for them.

Approaches to preventing conflict

5.1   When crisis looms in a fragile country, rapid action can be crucial to prevent the outbreak or escalation of violent conflict. The nature of the action that is needed differs from country to country. Countries in the immediate aftermath of a conflict or political transition present particular challenges as governments struggle to build trust, but they also offer opportunities to support positive change.

Diplomatic engagement is critical

5.2   Active engagement at key moments by senior figures that are not seen as partisan can often have a significant impact on the dynamics of a conflict. Respected senior statesmen confer legitimacy on efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation between parties to a conflict. Their involvement signals the intent of the international community to ensure that conflict does not gather momentum. Field visits, shuttle diplomacy and the hosting of fora involving all the parties have all been used to good effect, in part by creating space for negotiation. Kofi Annan, for example, led a negotiation process that prevented widespread violence in Kenya from escalating into civil war following contested election results in 2007-08.

5.3   Such approaches have met with some success, and an increasing number of violent conflicts are now being settled by negotiations rather than military victories. However, peace agreements are only the start. The processes that follow tend to exclude sections of society and often produce groups with objectives and agendas that continue to clash even after the formal cessation of hostilities. It is therefore vital that international partners support inclusive peace agreements and political settlements that are more than just bargains between elites or armed groups and that help lay the foundations for tackling the full range of issues that caused and perpetuated the conflict. This means supporting coalitions that include a wide enough cross-section of society to build confidence and begin the initial stages of institution building.

Laying the foundations for peace

5.4   Even though politics are central to stability, the international community has often looked for technical fixes to conflict. New analysis and voices from fragile countries are encouraging the international community to focus more on how it can prevent conflict and help build a stable foundation for development. The starting point needs to be a focus on conflict sensitivity –to analysing and understanding the situation to ensure that work designed to build stability does not unintentionally make things worse. The chances of success are greatest when the international community gets behind a political settlement that lays the foundations for tackling the causes of conflict in a country.

Part Two

Our strategic response

6.1   It is in the UK's interest to identify crises emerging overseas early, to respond rapidly to prevent them - or deal with the instability and conflict that does emerge, and to tackle the causes of instability, fragility and conflict upstream. There are three mutually-supporting pillars on which we need to focus to improve our performance in tackling instability and conflict:

- **Early warning:** improving our ability to anticipate instability and potential triggers for conflict.

- **Rapid crisis prevention and response:** improving our ability to take fast, appropriate and effective action to prevent a crisis or stop it spreading or escalating.

- **Investing in upstream prevention:** helping to build strong, legitimate institutions and robust societies in fragile countries that are capable of managing tensions and shocks so there is a lower likelihood of instability and conflict.

6.2   We will focus on those fragile and conflict-affected countries or regions where the risks are high, our interests are most at stake and where we know we can have an impact. We will consider situations where there is tension within and between states, seeking to ensure our effort under this stream of work complements the National Security Council's agenda.

6.3   We will strengthen our ability to operate as one government with shared objectives in conflict-affected states. We need to be realistic about what we can achieve alone. Working with multilateral organisations and international partners will be key to our success. We must also be realistic about the pace of change, providing long term predictable support, taking risks and accepting some failures in order to secure transformational results.

6.4   Our focus on results, transparency and value for money will help us to learn lessons and ensure that our approach to building stability remains relevant, effective and efficient. This will be supported by rigorous internal and external challenge and evaluation. We will report on progress annually as part of the public statement on overall progress with the SDSR.

Maximising UK capabilities

6.5   **We will strengthen our integrated approach, maximising the contribution of UK capabilities** to tackling instability and conflict. This will help us draw more effectively on the skills and capacities across government and internationally and to tailor our approach to each situation. These skills and capacities include:

- **Strong intelligence and assessments** which underpin political analysis and can help spot emerging risks and opportunities and also make sense of the huge amounts of electronic information generated at times of crisis.

- **Diplomacy** which can influence events in countries and across regions, build our understanding of what is happening, and generate international consensus to act, including through our permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

- **Development work** which helps to build or re-build critical institutions, support security and justice and generate jobs and public confidence.

- **Defence engagement** which is critical to support security sector reform and develop accountable security services that can win the trust of their people.

- **Work to promote trade and open markets** which can create economic opportunities.

- **The Stabilisation Unit** which can respond rapidly to conflict or pre-conflict situations on behalf of the government, and in partnership with other key players. The unit draws upon expertise from across government, the police and the military to deliver these outcomes. It also manages the Civilian Stabilisation Group of over 1000 civilian experts from the public and private sector with critical stabilisation skills and experience.

6.6   The UK's capacities go beyond Government. We can also draw on the experience and expertise of universities, NGOs, think tanks and the private sector. These organisations have a depth of knowledge on conflict and instability that represents a key part of the UK's comparative advantage.

Early warning

7.1   The National Security Council (NSC) created by the Coalition Government in 2010 has driven tighter and more focused attention on the highest priority countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia where the threats to our interests are most immediate.

7.2   Events in the Middle East and North Africa have shown that instability and conflict can develop quickly. We will focus on identifying areas of risk, rather than trying to predict events. We will pay more systematic attention to the tier of countries just below the threshold for regular NSC attention and strengthen our understanding of where the risks of conflict and instability are high. This work will be led and regularly reviewed by the Director-General level Building Stability Overseas Steering Group comprising representatives from DFID, FCO, MOD and other departments with an interest, including the Cabinet Office. The Steering Group will advise or consult the NSC when Ministerial attention is required and significant UK action is needed.

7.3   **We will establish an Early Warning System** that will take a global view of countries in which political, economic and security shocks over the next 12 months could trigger violence. This will be underpinned by all-source analysis from the Cabinet Office, FCO, MOD and external experts and will be summarised every six months in a new Early Warning Report. The Steering Group will consider whether early warning signals demand a UK response and, if so, set the necessary action in motion.

7.4   Drawing on material from the Cabinet Office, including its six-monthly review of Countries at Risk of Instability, **we will produce a new internal Watchlist of those fragile countries** in which we assess the risks of conflict and insecurity are high and where the UK has significant interests at stake. The Watchlist will be reviewed annually. **The Steering Group will carry out systematic reviews of UK activity in Watchlist countries to ensure that our overall approach to building stability is realistic, appropriately resourced, fully integrated and draws on the greatest possible support from international partners.**

7.5   There are a range of horizon-scanning and strategy functions across Whitehall which look beyond the five year timescale. Some look at themes or regions. Many have a security-related focus and can inform our work on early warning. **We will draw the products of these functions together into an Annual Horizon Scan of emerging issues relevant to stability overseas.** The Steering Group will consider how this should inform the operation of the Early Warning System.

7.6   In taking forward this work, we will ensure those departments and agencies with an interest are consulted as we review Watchlist countries and will consider with which other government departments and agencies we should share the Early Warning Report and the Watchlist. For example, these materials could usefully inform the Department for Business Innovation and Skills' work on export licensing, the Home Office's counter-terrorism work and the FCO's consular activity.

Rapid crisis prevention and response

8.1   The pace with which events have unfolded in the Middle East and North Africa emphasise the need for swift, flexible, well-informed responses. Success will be most likely when we contribute to a coherent international effort. We will play to the UK's comparative advantages of speed, flexibility, a willingness to adapt, and our ability to take a whole of government approach while helping to shape the international response.

Early Action Facility

8.2   We need to have the right funding mechanisms and capabilities to support an agile response. The UK's tri-departmental Conflict Pool provides cross-government resources to prevent conflict but lacks the flexibility needed to fund responses to early warning signals and other opportunities that arise in situations of instability and conflict. **We will therefore create a £20 million annual Early Action Facility (EAF) within the Conflict Pool.** This will amount to £60 million over the current Spending Review period. It will be a cross-government facility drawing on a mixture of Official Development Assistance (ODA)[1] and non-ODA resources. The EAF will help us move more swiftly in response to warnings and opportunities, for example to fund quick assessments to lay the groundwork for more significant support and help to leverage work by others.

Stabilisation Response Teams

8.3   An agile response will also mean new ways of working. The SDSR introduced the concept of Stabilisation Response Teams (SRTs). SRTs are integrated teams drawn from across government including military, police or civil servants and other experts. They can deploy swiftly into difficult environments and enable the UK to rapidly help shape the response to emerging crises either bilaterally or in support of multilateral or multinational stabilisation efforts. The first SRT deployed to Libya in May. The role that it has played there suggests that SRTs will be an important addition to the government's toolkit for dealing with instability and conflict. **We will continue to develop and improve the readiness of SRTs, learning from our experience in Libya.**

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[1] For the definition of ODA, see www.oecd.org/dac/stats

The Libya Stabilisation Response Team

A UK-led international Stabilisation Response Team (SRT) was deployed to Benghazi in late May 2011 for a three week mission. It sought to build a shared international understanding of Libya's interim stabilisation needs, with a view to supporting the UN's post-conflict planning. The SRT has helped to underpin the international stabilisation effort in Libya, including assistance to build up the National Transitional Council's capacity to deliver services for the people of Eastern Libya, ensuring that people are safe and secure, and restoring important infrastructure.

Expeditionary diplomacy

8.4   Rapid diplomatic efforts to build consensus for action to prevent conflict or to de-escalate crises are critical. British expeditionary diplomacy has played a central role in responding to recent crises and shaping their future development. Examples include our diplomatic engagement with the National Transitional Council in Benghazi, Libya, with key actors in Khartoum and Juba to help facilitate a successful Southern Sudan independence referendum, and in cities across the Middle East and North Africa as the events of the Arab Spring unfold. British diplomacy with emerging powers, with our traditional allies, and in international organisations including the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union, has also been central to building international coalitions for action in Libya, Cote d'Ivoire and in supporting the reforms of the Arab Spring. We will continue to build Britain's diplomatic capabilities. Through our programme of Diplomatic Excellence, we will ensure that we have the right people with the right skills and can deploy them where and when they are needed to safeguard and advance Britain's enlightened national interest by responding effectively to impending or ongoing crises and by building long-term stability overseas.

Humanitarian action

8.5   When crises create a humanitarian emergency, humanitarian action is a crucial part of the UK response. Protecting civilians is at the core of the UK's policies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict. The UK Government believes that humanitarian space needs to be protected and expanded, including in fragile and conflict-affected states. Humanitarian access is fundamental to ensure that those affected by disasters are assisted and protected, and it has become increasingly challenging. The UK will ensure that its humanitarian aid is delivered on the basis of need alone and on the basis of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in accordance with its key international commitments. We will maintain a principled non-politicised approach to humanitarian aid. As crises come to an end, it is critical that the transition from humanitarian response to longer-term support lays the foundations for future stability and development.

Investing in upstream prevention

An integrated approach over the medium to long term

9.1   **Work to prevent conflict is most likely to succeed when it marshals diplomatic efforts with development programmes and defence engagement around a shared integrated strategy.** As the SDSR made clear we must work to address the causes of conflict and fragility; support an inclusive political system which builds a closer society; and strengthen the state's own ability to deliver security, justice and economic opportunity. These changes take time and will require sustained engagement.

9.2   **We will introduce a new cross-government strategic conflict assessment.** This will be used in conflict-affected and fragile states to identify the situation-specific interventions that will be most likely to succeed in helping to prevent conflict and build stability. It will bring together political, economic, social and security analysis to provide joint assessment of conflicts, considering issues such as human rights abuses, the nature of the political system in place and the dynamics of the conflict economy.

9.3   The prospects for success are greatest when support is coordinated around a country-owned strategy that identifies short, medium and longer-term measures for stabilisation and prevention. We will assist partner countries in the development and implementation of such strategies. As set out in the SDSR, **we will produce integrated UK strategies for key countries and regions.** These will be informed by our strategic conflict assessments.

Increased investment for stability

9.4   We are already investing more in upstream prevention. We are increasing to 30% by 2014/15, the proportion of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) that supports conflict-affected and fragile states. Our programmes will help to get government working better, support wealth creation, and improve the delivery of services like security and justice, health and education.

UK aid impact in fragile states

Well-designed UK aid can make a real difference, tackling both poverty and the upstream causes of conflict and fragility. In Nepal we will help re-integrate 3,000 former combatants into civilian life by 2015.

UK aid helps improve citizen security, and access to justice. In Ethiopia we will increase by 50% the number of women with improved access to security and justice as a result of UK funding. In Sierra Leone we will help give 50% of remote communities access to mediation services by 2015.

We also support other basic services. By 2015 we will help get an additional 800,000 children into education in Northern Nigeria and provide sustainable access to safe drinking water for 800,000 people in Sudan.

Jobs and a thriving private sector are also vital for peace and development. By 2015 UK aid will help create 45,000 jobs in Somalia, and build, upgrade, maintain or rehabilitate over 500 kilometres of roads in Nepal.

The Conflict Pool

9.5   The Government's Conflict Pool is an important mechanism which demonstrates joined-up delivery across DFID, FCO and MOD. The Pool, which includes a mixture of ODA and non-ODA resources, can be used to fund a wide range of conflict prevention work, and also plays a number of important niche roles - for example it supports regional and cross-border work and invests in improving the effectiveness of international partners.

9.6   The SDSR announced that the Conflict Pool's programme resources will rise over the Spending Review period to a total of £1.125 billion. We need to ensure that Conflict Pool resources are invested strategically, contributing to the broader UK effort in a country in an efficient and effective way. **We will therefore introduce a stronger results focus in the Conflict Pool, and improve programme management. We will work to ensure that the Conflict Pool provides predictable multi-year resources for country or regional strategies, where they exist, helping to build: free, transparent and inclusive political systems; effective and accountable security and justice (including through defence engagement); and the capacity of local populations and regional and multilateral institutions to prevent and resolve the conflicts that affect them.**

Investing in partnerships beyond governments

9.7   We will not only work with central governments in fragile and conflict-affected countries. While recognising that our engagement can have a significant impact on the dynamic amongst political actors, **we will work with key groups such**

as local government, communities, the private sector, faith groups, civil society and the media. The work of these groups may reach the most vulnerable people, including those whom the government cannot or will not reach. We will support efforts to strengthen and develop effective conflict management and peacebuilding capacities within communities, countries and regions.

9.8   Soft power will play a significant role in support of our efforts. The work of the British Council is important in building engagement and trust for the UK through a mutual understanding of values and the role of citizens, governments and civil society worldwide. The BBC World Service provides access to news which can be trusted by people in fragile countries. The work of the BBC World Service Trust and other institutions which help to build the capacity of in-country news services is vital. Organisations, such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, also have an important role in providing assistance to parliaments and political parties.

Supporting the role of women

9.9   Women have a central role in building stability. **In line with our National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, we will continue to address violence against women and support women's role in building peace.** For example, in Afghanistan, the UK military has deployed Female Engagement Teams (FETs) to strengthen links between the UK military and Afghan women. We are also supporting Afghan women's civil society organisations to strengthen the influence of Afghan women in public life and to enhance their protection from violence through support to legal reforms. We are working through the UN, the EU and NATO to drive international action in support of UN Security Council Resolutions relating to women and conflict including 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960.

Supporting a responsible private sector

9.10   We will do more to support the responsible private sector in difficult countries and regions. **DFID's Private Sector Unit will strengthen efforts to support the genuine, reputable private sector in fragile states,** accelerating the road to long-term peace and stability through jobs and new sources of income. In Afghanistan, for example, a new Business Innovation Fund will provide assistance and small grants to new businesses that focus on services, jobs and incomes that benefit the poor.

Tackling corruption

9.11   The Government is also proactively tackling international drivers of conflict, including corruption. UK aid is funding police units within the Metropolitan Police and City of London Police to investigate allegations of corruption relating to developing countries which involve British citizens, companies or financial institutions. The new UK Bribery Act will reform UK criminal law to create new bribery offences. This will make it clear that bribing foreign public officials is illegal; that UK citizens can be tried in UK courts for offences committed elsewhere in the world; and that businesses have a corporate responsibility to have systems in place to prevent bribery in the course of their activities.

9.12   The UK is committed to supporting and building the capacity of law enforcement in parts of the world that suffer from instability and political upheaval which impacts on the UK. The UK is actively involved in supporting local efforts to tackle a range of organised crime threats in West Africa, for example. These include drugs, fraud and corruption. Two sites in West Africa deliver joint-working, sharing of intelligence and operational information and a coordinated approach to capacity building. There is a UK-led platform in Ghana and a French-led platform in Senegal. The forthcoming Organised Crime Strategy will set out a new approach for the UK's efforts against organised crime. This will include tackling the causes of organised crime such as instability, and there will also be emphasis on developing international cooperation, working with partners to disrupt and prevent upstream criminal activity.

Defence engagement

9.13   Defence engagement activities work alongside – and complement - broader UK Government activity in areas including strengthening security and justice; building UK influence with counterpart institutions and with the country as a whole; and developing capacity to support international peacekeeping missions. **We will ensure that the Defence Engagement Strategy sets out in practical terms how we will implement the SDSR commitment to direct more non-operational defence engagement to conflict prevention**. This work will examine the UK's highly-valued defence and security assets to ensure they make the greatest contribution to the UK's global influence in priority countries and regions, and will be completed by Autumn 2011.

Defence engagement

We have flexible and adaptable assets at our disposal, including, the Defence Attaché network, military training teams, International Defence Training/Education and Royal Navy ship visits.

When working with a country's armed forces we not only build their capacity, we are also able to enhance their support to international peacekeeping missions. For example, British Peace Support Teams (BPST) in South Africa and Kenya support the training of the Regional Africa Standby Forces. The UK provides funds to the Peace Support Operations Training Centre in Sarajevo which delivers high quality training to officers across the region. All training is conducted with due regard for human rights and international humanitarian law. Where necessary, other safeguards for potential human rights violations will be put into place, including seeking high level assurance that new capabilities will not be used or misused for the commission of human rights violations.

In the Middle East, we have focussed on building the capacity of the Palestinian Authority's security forces, critical to the viability of a future Palestinian state. In Iraq, we have worked to ensure the Iraqi Armed Forces remain a secular, independent and accountable public institution able to provide internal security against an ongoing extremist threat and a strong maritime border, protecting vital oil infrastructure. In addition, International Defence Training courses educate many foreign military and civilians on courses that promote professional and accountable security forces. Approximately 3000 students were trained in 2009/2010. Training is delivered both in the UK and by sending trainers to countries such as Ethiopia, Uruguay and Ukraine, building military capability, friends and allies in these regions and increasing their ability to work together. These types of activities often give additional benefits in terms of the level of influence the UK is able to achieve within those countries.

9.14   Providing assistance for the security sector in fragile states means working with countries and institutions where we have concerns about their respect for human rights and democracy. In conducting this work, it is vital that we engage with the security and justice sector in ways which promote rather than undermine human rights, and that we take steps to mitigate any potential risks to human rights.

A regional approach where appropriate

9.15   Where appropriate, we will take a regional approach to building stability. The Arab Spring presents a crucial opportunity for the Middle East and North Africa region to build more inclusive and prosperous societies. Bilaterally, through the DFID-FCO £110 million Arab Partnership Fund we are working with reforming governments, civil society, parliaments, the media and judiciary to build stable, responsive institutions, promote inclusive economic growth, and strengthen citizen participation.

The Arab Partnership Initiative

The Arab Partnership Initiative is the joint FCO/DFID approach to the Arab Spring. Launched as a £5 million FCO fund in February 2011, it was expanded in May to £110 million over four years in recognition of the historic opportunity presented to support the building of a more stable, open and prosperous Middle East and North Africa region. The Arab Partnership includes an FCO-led Participation Fund (up to £40 million) and a DFID-led Economic Facility (up to £70 million).

The Participation Fund is working across the countries of the region to support meaningful political reform, in partnership with civil society, parliaments, the media and judiciary. Programmes to support political transitions in Egypt and Tunisia are already underway. In Tunisia, for example, ahead of Constituent Assembly elections, the UK is working in partnership with the BBC World Service Trust and international and local civil society organisations to ensure freedom of expression is protected in legislative frameworks, and to build capacity for balanced and accurate reporting during elections.

The Economic Facility will provide technical assistance to support economic reform, and help to build more open, inclusive, vibrant and internationally integrated economies. This assistance will also contribute to strengthening the rule of law and voice/accountability. It will focus on those countries embracing reform, starting with Egypt and Tunisia, and then broadening out to countries such as Jordan and Morocco.

Working in partnership with others

10.1   Working in partnership with others, leveraging the expertise and resources that they have, will be critical to our success in building stability. For example, bilateral activity under the Arab Partnership Initiative is complemented by working with a wide range of strategic partners. We are engaging intensively with the G8 through the Deauville Partnership and with the European Union through European Neighborhood Policy to ensure a comprehensive offer of support for the region. The Arab Partnership's economic facility will work directly with the International Financial Institutions, including the Regional Development Banks, to help countries in the region fully benefit from their assistance. **We will work more closely in partnership with international and multilateral organisations encouraging them to take an integrated approach to building stability and preventing conflict.**

International organisations

10.2   Work through the United Nations, and particularly the UN Security Council (UNSC) which was created to address threats to peace and international security, will be key. As a permanent member, we will support the Council's role, for example in focusing international attention to emerging conflicts or imposing sanctions to block access to resources, funding, and military hardware and so change the behaviour of leading belligerents. We will build on our success in supporting the UN's work on horizon scanning. And we will further encourage the Council to mainstream climate security into its conflict work.

10.3   UN Peacekeeping missions and operations authorised by the UNSC and led by regional organisations contain violence, stabilise fragile post-conflict situations and reduce the likelihood of hostilities resuming, without the need for direct UK military intervention. Though relatively low cost compared to coalition missions, international peacekeeping is still an expensive undertaking. We will to continue to lead efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, and ensure that such interventions support the political processes which will deliver long-term stability. We will also work to ensure peacekeeping missions stay no longer than necessary.

10.4   Throughout the UN, we will encourage a more joined-up approach to peacebuilding and state building. All the parts of the UN system need to work better together on this agenda. And we will support efforts to strengthen the UN's contribution to conflict prevention. We will continue to engage with and support UN Departments, Funds and Programmes to improve their combined

effectiveness and to ensure the international system delivers tangible results in fragile and conflict-affected states. This includes working to ensure that the UN Peacebuilding architecture and the UN's political, humanitarian, security and development tools are brought together more effectively.

10.5   We will work with the World Bank, in particular to take forward the recommendations of the World Development Report 2011 on 'Conflict, Security and Development' and shift the behaviour of donors to fragile and conflict-affected states from short-term, technical and partial solutions towards the strengthening of institutions that provide people with security, justice and jobs.

Regional organisations

10.6   The European Union (EU) has a range of significant tools and levers for building stability. It provides over half the world's development aid. Its enlargement and neighbourhood policies, including their trade elements, are essential components of our approach to building stability in the Western Balkans, or Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods. The EU currently employs a range of foreign policy instruments to build stability across the globe. These include sanctions regimes; civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions such as those in Kosovo, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan; and military CSDP missions including the EU's efforts to tackle piracy off Somalia. Where possible, we will ensure that these tools and levers support and add value to our own efforts.

10.7   We want the EU to be able to intervene effectively to build stability, tackle crises as they emerge and respond to conflict. We will encourage the European External Action Service (EEAS) to develop integrated strategies that draw together security, political and development activities for preventing and resolving conflict. We will push for an EEAS capable of intervening at any stage of the conflict cycle, bringing together the full range of EU instruments, regionally and in individual countries. We welcome the decision by the EEAS and the Commission to launch a new European Neighborhood Policy with the countries on our borders that is structured to provide significant incentives for those who seek meaningful reform and underpinned by clear conditions. As a high priority, we will work to improve EU early warning capabilities and responses.

10.8   The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has been a builder and provider of security since its creation. It has unique conflict management capacities, including the unparalleled capability to deploy and sustain robust military forces in the field. NATO's Strategic Concept, agreed in 2010, commits the 28 member alliance to use its political and military capabilities to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilise post-conflict situations and to a broad spectrum of activities - including to: enhance integrated civilian-military planning throughout the crisis spectrum; form an appropriate but modest civilian crisis management capability to interface more effectively with civilian partners; and develop the capability to train and develop local forces in crisis zones. The UK will seek to play a part in the development of all these activities by funding the NATO

Command Structure, providing military and civilian capabilities when requested, and supporting the Alliance's political engagement activities.

10.9   Building the capacity of regional institutions, such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the African Union, to deal with conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict political settlements is cost-effective and helps enable regions to handle their own conflicts. One excellent example of success at a regional level is the UK's support to institutional capacity building in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This called on resources from the FCO, DFID and MOD and close coordination with international partners. ECOWAS has since mediated and prevented several conflicts in its region and negotiated several ceasefire agreements. It has worked to improve the free movement of people and goods within its boundaries and develop peacebuilding programmes in the aftermath of conflict. It is currently working on an integrated approach to tackling drugs and people trafficking in the region. **We will continue to work to strengthen regional efforts and actively engage with regional groupings.**

Moving beyond traditional partnerships

10.10   We will continue to work closely to build stability with traditional partners such as the United States and France. In a more expeditionary approach to diplomacy, the FCO is also actively seeking to strengthen ties with a wider range of countries including China, Brazil, South Africa and the Gulf countries, intensify relations with India and reinvigorate relations with Commonwealth partners. These countries all play an important role in their own regions and, increasingly, globally. **We will invest greater diplomatic efforts in new 'prevention partnerships' with these countries.**

10.11   We will continue to work with conflict-affected and fragile countries themselves, for example through the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, to bolster their efforts to demand more effective support from bilateral and multilateral donors.

Strengthening the rules-based international system

10.12   Work to strengthen the rules-based international system to address external pressures leading to instability and driving bad governance will support our efforts. A positive example is the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative. The agreement by G20 leaders of a comprehensive Anti-Corruption Action Plan is a strong statement of political will that the G20 should lead by example in tackling corruption. The plan sets out a range of concrete steps for countries to take, which cover domestic and international corruption in both the public and private sectors. Securing a robust Arms Trade Treaty that will help regulate the global arms market to prevent weapons reaching those who use them to undermine stability and democracy is a very high priority. More needs to be done to strengthen the tools for coping with organised crime that works across borders.

Making this happen

11.1   Effective and efficient support for building stability overseas requires an integrated approach to bring together different resources, capabilities and areas of expertise that exist across government and the international community. We must be able to respond in real time whilst also planning ahead to meet emerging challenges: prioritising and using our assets strategically in complex fast-moving situations. To make this happen, we need mechanisms for effective coordination across government, clear lines of responsibility for delivery, and a focus on results and value for money.

11.2   The NSC is the central point for prompt, coherent and coordinated decision making on national security issues. Within the NSC the Foreign Secretary and International Development Secretary, working closely with the Defence Secretary, are the lead Ministers for building stability overseas. These three Secretaries of State will jointly champion implementation of this strategy.

11.3   Directors General from FCO, DFID and MOD with responsibility for building stability overseas in the SDSR will oversee the implementation of this strategy, working closely with colleagues across Whitehall, to help ensure that UK efforts are rigorously prioritised and closely integrated. The Building Stability Overseas Board, established by the SDSR, will agree an appropriately resourced implementation plan and will have particular responsibility for the reform of the Conflict Pool.

Monitoring and evaluation

11.4   **We are committed to ensuring that our investments deliver real results on the ground, are transparent and provide value for money for the UK taxpayer.** We recognise the need to make a step change in measuring our impact, relying less on subjective internal assessments and drawing more on external expertise and data.

11.5   **We will implement a systematic cross-Government reporting framework** that is consistent across Posts conducting activity supported by the Conflict Pool so that we can measure our impact across regions. We will supplement qualitative reporting by working with international partners to develop consistent quantitative indicators of progress. For example, we need to be able to rigorously measure whether public confidence is growing in the ability of a fragile state to deliver the things they most care about like jobs, security and justice.

11.6   Increasing the UK Government's focus on upstream conflict prevention is a central part of this strategy. This poses particular challenges in terms of

developing indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Ultimately, establishing the UK's contribution to conflict prevention relies on counter-factual analysis – examining what level of conflict would have been likely without intervention. We will work to develop robust approaches to this.

External challenge

11.7   We will open up our work to more external challenge and evaluation, **using an independent view of the Government's conflict prevention performance to challenge our thinking and drive continuous improvement**. As a first step the new Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) which reports directly to the International Development Committee in Parliament has signalled that it will carry out an evaluation of ODA spent through the Conflict Pool during financial year 2011/12. This will cover work by all three Departments. Building on this, we will put in place an evaluation strategy for the Conflict Pool, covering the Spending Review period. This will help to focus our programming and improve lesson learning.

11.8   We will introduce expert challenge panels comprising a range of external experts e.g. NGOs and academics, to review our analysis. We will also look for new innovative ways to review our overall approach. For example, **we will help to develop an independent assessment of the Government's overall conflict prevention performance.**

Strengthening the evidence base

11.9   Research over the past decade has emphasised that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to fragility, and that 'context is everything.' It has helped shape a framework that focuses on the politics of conflict, seeks to build a sustainable and inclusive political settlement, and requires attention to both state and society. Notwithstanding this progress**,** the overall evidence base and conceptual foundations for engagement in fragile states remain patchy, underdeveloped and, in some areas, contested.

11.10   The UK will continue to work to strengthen the evidence base. We are supporting two long-term research programmes on conflict and fragility: one on access to security and justice, and the other on livelihoods, basic services and social protection. We have also commissioned systematic reviews of the evidence, including on the impact of employment creation on stability, the impact of interventions to reduce violent crime in developing countries, the impact of climate change and the effectiveness of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes.

Source materials

In preparing this strategy, we have drawn on analysis and data sets produced by international organisations including the UN, the World Bank, the International Energy Agency and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and by non-governmental organisations including the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, the Institute for Public Policy Research, the International Action Network on Small Arms, International Alert, the Overseas Development Institute, Oxfam, and Saferworld.

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