

Fact Sheet 17: Instability and Conflict Overseas

We will invest early in supporting stability and security overseas...

Instability or conflict overseas can incubate direct threats to UK security. Where formal government is absent or weak, as in Somalia or Yemen, terrorism, organised crime and piracy can take root.

The National Security Council (NSC) has directed an increased focus on tackling such threats at source, rather than when they have escalated to full-blown conflict or materialised on UK territory. This approach, underpinned by our commitment to human rights and justice, will be delivered through close cooperation with our key partners and international organisations, including the UN.



Tackling conflict overseas in the UK's national interest

... with an integrated approach that brings together all UK Government Departments

We will tackle instability and conflict overseas through an integrated approach that brings together our diplomatic, development, defence and intelligence resources. We will:

- expand the remit of the joint Stabilisation Unit so that it can help prevent conflict and instability as well as respond to crises;
- direct more non-operational, defence engagement overseas towards security sector reform and capability building;
- bring military and civilian expertise together in Stabilisation Response Teams (see box below);
- resource this integrated approach with a larger joint Conflict Pool to fund our conflict prevention activities. We will increase the Pool from £229 million now to around £300 million by 2014/15;
- provide clear direction through a Government-wide “Building Stability Overseas” strategy.



We will strengthen the capacity of others to deliver stability and security

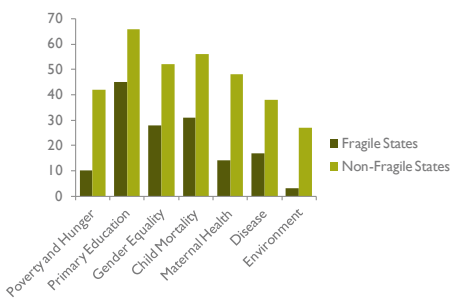
Stabilisation Response Teams: a world-leading, joint civilian-military capability

As we have seen in Afghanistan, preventing conflict and instability often requires both civilian and military expertise. So we will build our capability to deploy joint, civilian-military Stabilisation Response Teams (SRTs). These teams will be bespoke, flexible and able to conduct a range of tasks, from assessing or monitoring an emergent crisis, such as the Pakistan floods, to providing expert advice and training, for example on peace talks or police training, through to post-conflict reconstruction, as in Afghanistan.

SRTs will build on the existing relationship between the Stabilisation Unit and the Ministry of Defence with more joint training and exercises to establish a genuinely integrated, civilian-military approach. By April 2011, SRTs could be deployed, at short notice, anywhere in the world.

Our aid programme can reduce global poverty and support our national security

Percentage of countries achieved and on-track to meet the MDGs



Fragile and conflict states are among the poorest in the world



The Government is determined to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of GNI by 2013. This reflects our commitment to reducing world poverty. But instability and conflict undermine this goal. No fragile state has yet achieved a single Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and they consistently lag behind non-fragile states on progress (see graph^[A]).

Tackling the root causes of instability and conflict, can accelerate progress towards both the MDGs and our national security objectives. Increasing this spending to 30% of ODA means we could double support to such activity by 2014/15. Consistent with the OECD guidelines, the primary purpose of all UK ODA will remain the economic welfare of developing countries and the Department for International Development (DFID) will continue to be responsible for the vast majority of ODA spending.

Tackling poverty and weak governance in Yemen supports our national security

State failure in Yemen could present a national security risk to the UK in terms of international terrorism and threaten our energy security, trade routes and stability in the Gulf.

As part of a coordinated UK Government approach, we are increasing our aid to Yemen from £12 million in 2007/09 to £50 million this year. Working with Yemeni, regional and international partners, our aim is to support a more accountable and responsive government capable of bringing stability and security to the country. Alongside the diplomatic effort, our assistance will focus on building government capacity, strengthening its accountability and bringing tangible improvements in basic services, economic opportunity, security and justice to poor Yemenis. Improving governance and meeting the basic needs of the population are not only the foundations of enduring stability and poverty reduction, but also the best defence against extremism.

We must prioritise where we choose to act

We cannot tackle conflict and instability everywhere. We will focus on those countries and regions where the risks are high, our interests are most at stake and where we know we can have an impact. In this range of countries where we choose to act, we will sustain our commitment, working closely with international partners.

[A] Source: World Bank 2010, World Development Report 2011 team calculations based on data from MDG Monitor