European Parliament

The Civilian CSDP Compact

A stronger EU footprint in a connected, complex, contested world

SUMMARY

Member States demand more coordination, flexibility and efficiency from civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions. The European Union (EU) is currently undertaking a strategic review of the civilian dimension of CSDP to take the form of a civilian CSDP Compact (CCC), in order to adapt the CSDP to the challenges of the current geopolitical environment. Europe's 'strategic environment has changed radically' and is surrounded by 'an arc of instability', according to High Representative Federica Mogherini. Conflict and violence used to be understood in terms of (and as caused by) hard borders. Today, however, physical distances and borders have become redundant in the face of evolving and persistent threats such as poverty, climate change or hybrid warfare. The EU has been active in recognising this changing environment through various defence integration initiatives, not least through the EU global strategy (EUGS).

The most visible EU commitments to international peace and security remain its missions and operations deployed outside the Union. Missions under the CSDP can have a military or civilian nature, although the latter are more prominent in EU activities. Focused on goals such as rule of law reform, stabilisation, fighting organised crime, and reform of the security sector, civilian CSDP is currently being adapted to the EU's revitalised integrated approach to conflict prevention, which envisions much closer coordination between the relevant EU actors and instruments during all stages of a conflict. By establishing tight links between the security, development, justice and home affairs (JHA), trade, climate and energy domains, the Compact aims to widen the scope of civilian missions. The goal of eradicating conflict-provoking issues such as poverty, resource scarcity, corruption or flawed governance is combined with the aim of ensuring sustainable long-term development and the societal resilience of partner countries.

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EU strategic environment: contested, connected, complex

In his 2018 State of the Union speech, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker stated that 'the world has not stopped turning. It is more volatile than ever. The external challenges facing our continent are multiplying by the day'. A strategic foresight report predicts the high likelihood that in 2050, the situation in Europe's neighbourhood will remain a key challenge, as rapid population growth will create instability and spill-over to neighbouring countries and beyond. Conflict and violence due to state fragility, resource scarcity and climate change in a large number of African countries are also predicted. The African continent continues to witness the largest proportion of the world's armed conflicts. Terrorism will likely persist as a regional challenge, while poverty and citizens' growing awareness of inequality may potentially increase crime rates. If left unaddressed, fragile state governance will also be a contributing factor in rising organised crime.

Violent conflicts in the EU's neighbourhood*

*For the purposes of this briefing, only conflicts in the neighbourhood of the EU have been included although other continents also host significant violent conflicts.

Source: Conflict Barometer, Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research.

The EU is currently operating in a geopolitical environment where instability has become the norm. Crises and war on the African continent, cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure and international organisations, hybrid warfare in Europe and global threats such as desertification and resource scarcity are only some of the challenges facing the EU's security and prosperity. The migration crisis of 2015 is one example that has brought the EU's limited preparedness to react to crises and the importance of conflict prevention to the fore. Calling them 'indissolubly linked', the European security strategy emphasised the internal and external aspects of security as early as 2003.

The 2016 EU global strategy provides further guidance for the EU to act globally to prevent the root causes of conflict and poverty by integrating the internal-external security nexus. The often encountered term 'root causes' refers to threat multipliers such as poverty, human rights violations, corruption, weak governance, discrimination and violence, which can result in the displacement of millions of people. As such, a multi-dimensional and multi-phased approach is proposed by the EUGS: streamlining all policies and instruments in order to act at the stages of prevention, resolution and stabilisation.

EU approach to conflicts: prevention rather than intervention

The impact of crises, whether at home or abroad, cannot be underestimated. Uncontained crises which evolve into a conflict usually have manifold consequences, with implications for the local community, for neighbouring countries and for the rest of the world. Starting with civilian casualties, and continuing with internal displacement of citizens, the impact of conflict on citizens can easily escalate into humanitarian crises and uncontrolled refugee flows. Few would dispute that such circumstances breed fertile ground for radicalisation, violent extremism, human rights violations, crime and terrorism. To prevent the emergence of potential sources of conflict and to build resilience, the EU recognises the need for capabilities such as early warning systems and the deployment of civilian or military missions to assist partners. A guidance note jointly developed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2013, points out that the fragmentation between the EU's diplomatic (including CSDP) activities and those related to external assistance reduce 'the EU's leverage and effectiveness in the area of conflict prevention and peace building'. The EUGS aims to address this weakness through an integrated approach to conflicts. The approach owes its name to the strategic decision to streamline actions such as diplomacy, economic sanctions, and crisis management through CSDP, development aid and humanitarian assistance together with other policy areas such as trade, justice and home affairs (JHA), energy and climate in order to create all-encompassing sustainable development. Moreover, the approach tackles all stages of the conflict cycle from prevention to stabilisation and all levels of conflict, from local to national, regional and global. Finally, the approach aims to engage all key actors involved in a particular conflict, to ensure a lasting resolution and to consolidate resilience. In short, the integrated approach is: multi-dimensional, multi-phased, multi-level and multilateral.

Resilience

'A resilient society featuring democracy, trust in institutions, and sustainable development lies at the heart of a resilient state' (EU Global Strategy).
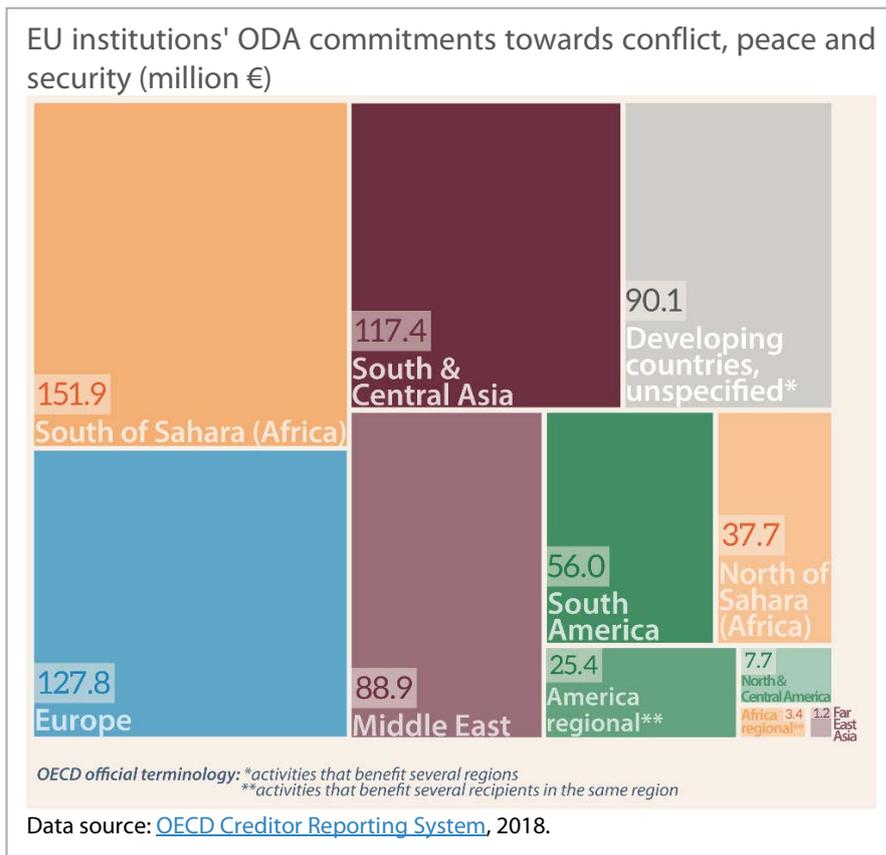
Encompassing development, conflict prevention, rule of law, human rights, good governance, security and defence, civil society and sustainable economic development, resilience is framed in the EUGS as a versatile, across-the-board concept. It refers to the strengthening of all the elements necessary for a healthy state which citizens trust and feel protected by. During a hearing at the European Parliament, HR/VP Mogherini explained the advantages that Europe gains by investing in Africa, concluding that 'if Africa fails, there's no way Europe can succeed'. Resilience is a key contributor in several strategic EUGS goals, including effective global governance, cooperative regional orders and the security of the Union.

Source: EU global strategy, 2016.
More information: Resilience in the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, Patryk Pawlak, EPRS, 2016.

Security sector reform (SSR)

An effective, accountable and independent security sector is key to ensuring democratic development and citizens' security. The EU's SSR activities aim to help partner countries' security systems develop in accordance with the rule of law and in full respect of human rights, integrity, transparency and accountability. The objective is to reform or rebuild a third country's security sector so that it can function in accordance with the principles of good governance, while generating national ownership and ensuring the legitimacy and sustainability of the security sector. The scope of SSR includes, and is not limited to: police forces; gendarmerie; border guards; intelligence; justice and law enforcement institutions; and even private militia. According to the EEAS, nine of the EU's ten civilian CSDP missions are SSR focused.

Source: European Commission, 2016.

The multi-dimensional character of the integrated approach affords a complexity which is challenging to implement: tackling localised issues such as poverty, marginalisation or lack of education while also taking steps towards the wider objective of sustainable development in the long-term during which effective crisis management is also required to manage present violent conflicts. It is additionally challenging to maintain a high level of resources and political capital committed to prevention when ongoing crises require urgent reaction, resources and capital from the same financial envelope. Nevertheless, from a political perspective, peacekeeping, conflict prevention and in general civilian approaches to crisis management are more palatable to domestic audiences than military interventions. It is perhaps no coincidence that EU civilian missions have been more numerous and wider in geographical scope than military ones.

EU institutions' ODA commitments towards conflict, peace and security (million €)

OECD official terminology: *activities that benefit several regions
**activities that benefit several recipients in the same region

Data source: OECD Creditor Reporting System, 2018.

Early prevention and containment of potential eruptions of violence rather than crisis management through interventions are the objectives of the EU's peacebuilding strategy. Stemming from Article 21(2) of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), which empowers the EU to pursue actions in order to 'preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security', the EU's approach is defined by pre-emption, empowerment and resilience, rather than risky and costly intervention. EU institutions' commitments towards conflict, peace and security,[1] manifested through official development assistance (ODA) are testimony to these objectives. Operationally however, the most visible EU action is the deployment of civilian and military missions under the CSDP. Expanding what are known as the 1992 'Petersberg tasks', Article 43 (1) TEU sets out the range of tasks for these operations, including among others, humanitarian and rescue tasks, disarmament operations, conflict prevention, peace-keeping, crisis management and post-conflict stabilisation.

Reform, strengthen, train: EU civilian crisis management

The Portuguese city of Santa Maria da Feira is considered the birthplace of the EU's civilian crisis management capabilities. The European Council conclusions elaborated at Feira on 19-20 June 2000 identified four key priority areas for the EU's civilian crisis management: police; strengthening of the rule of law, especially in the judicial and penal systems; strengthening civil administration; and civil protection, including search and rescue operations. In practice, this means that third countries can benefit from the knowledge of legal and police experts as well as border and customs professionals from the EU to help them improve their law enforcement capacities, border management, anti-corruption and training capabilities. In terms of the launch process, CSDP missions are established by a Council of the EU (the Council) decision, and either by a UN Security Council resolution or at the host state's invitation/consent. Most civilian missions have been deployed using the latter legal basis. Civilian missions are funded from the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget and only partly by Member States (MS) through secondment of staff.

Institutionally, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability in the EEAS serves as the operational headquarters for civilian missions, while its military sister, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability serves the military strategic level. The sisterhood of the two directorates is officialised through a Council conclusion, stipulating the need to share expertise, best practices and capabilities between civilian and military missions through a Joint Support Coordination Cell.

A multitasking challenge for civilian CSDP?

In the ensuing 18 years, the security environment has transformed considerably from that familiar to EU leaders in the 2000s. The EUGS is a statement of this evolution, given its emphasis on the internal-external security nexus. The new level of ambition called for in the EU global strategy and laid out in the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence is part of the journey of translating the EUGS into concrete action, and reveals the changing security paradigms.

Within the scope of Chapter V, which lays down the provisions on the CFSP, and specifically, Articles 41, 42 and 43 TEU, civilian CSDP can be further strengthened to better fulfil tasks such as 'peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations (UN) Charter'. The civilian aspects of CSDP are useful tools for engaging in all stages of a conflict, from prevention to stabilisation. According to the Council, civilian CSDP can be employed to tackle a large variety of challenges confronting the EU, including terrorism, organised crime, border management, maritime security, violent extremism, hybrid or cyber warfare. The 14 November 2016 Council conclusions are equally useful for understanding the various missions and operations that civilian CSDP should be fit to undertake. Non-exhaustively, they include managing crises in high security risk situations, conflict stabilisation, monitoring and helping host countries to reform their security apparatus (SSR). Through such missions, civilian CSDP aims to enable sustainable security and rule of law measures in partner countries. For example, launched in 2004 following an invitation from the Georgian government, the EU's first rule of law mission (EUJUST THEMIS) had the purpose of assisting Georgian authorities to reform their judiciary system.

> ### Civilian CSDP interactions with other defence initiatives
>
> A cross-cutting domain with a large spectrum of responsibilities, civilian CSDP could benefit if the ambitions of the proposed European Peace Facility (EPF) are reached. Aiming to set up a €10.5 billion fund outside the EU budget, the EPF has the potential to improve mission effectiveness (even though it is focused on military missions) and to further contribute to capacity-building and peacekeeping.
>
> The much-discussed EU permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) is usually seen through a military lens, while it could very much contribute to civilian CSDP. Out of the total 34 PESCO projects, no less than 20 could also benefit civilian CSDP in fields such as maritime security, disaster relief, intelligence and cyber training, strategic command and control or crisis response.

A multilateral approach to pursuing international peace and security is embedded in the objectives and current achievements of civilian (and military) CSDP. The EU's added value in global crisis management is conferred by the multiple instruments it can mobilise and by its multi-dimensional vision of crises. The methodological difficulties in assessing the actual impact of such missions are not few. Improvements in a country's judicial systems cannot be assessed solely through the CSDP lens since other actors and national policies could also be determining factors. It is therefore difficult to exactly identify the CSDP contribution. Additionally, reduced political commitment from Member States can also impact the effectiveness of a mission through funding a short-term mandate when a situation would require a longer-term approach, for example. Still, an argument can be made that sharing know-how, providing training, building capacity and nurturing diplomatic relations with host countries can contribute to stability and security in the long run. When EU Member States rally behind a mission – which would be necessary, due to the intergovernmental nature of CSDP – this generates diplomatic leverage in the third country which in turn can increase the influence of the proposed reforms inside the country, as well as cause a regional diffusion. Finally, in its three-ingredient recipe of success for CSDP operations, the EU Institute for Security Studies prescribes:

Member States' commitment, coherence of EU instruments in the operation and the buy-in of the host state. These factors therefore constitute the challenges for the future civilian CSDP.

Strategic upgrade of civilian CSDP

To date, the EU has deployed 34 missions and operations on three different continents. The first ever EU civilian mission was launched in January 2003, as a policing mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Civilian Headline Goal 2008 could be considered the initial strategic paper behind civilian CSDP, as it sets out ambitions for civilian CSDP, followed by the Civilian Headline Goal 2010. The current strategic upgrade of civilian CSDP is taking place in a favourable political climate, in which European security and defence has been invigorated through the launch of initiatives such as Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund, among others, and through re-energised EU-NATO cooperation. The coordination of CSDP missions and operations has matured since 2003, with inter-institutional streamlining becoming more evident and with the EU highlighting the contours of its own integrated approach to crises. The activities and objectives of civilian CSDP closely link security and military activities with development cooperation, which also confer missions a political dimension, since Member States' foreign policies and strategic cultures may also be reflected. As another example of a civilian mission's objectives, the mandate of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia was to strengthen the rule of law, reform the police and to fight against corruption and organised crime. Today, there are 16 ongoing CSDP missions: 6 military and 10 civilian.

Map of EU civilian CSDP missions and funding (million €)
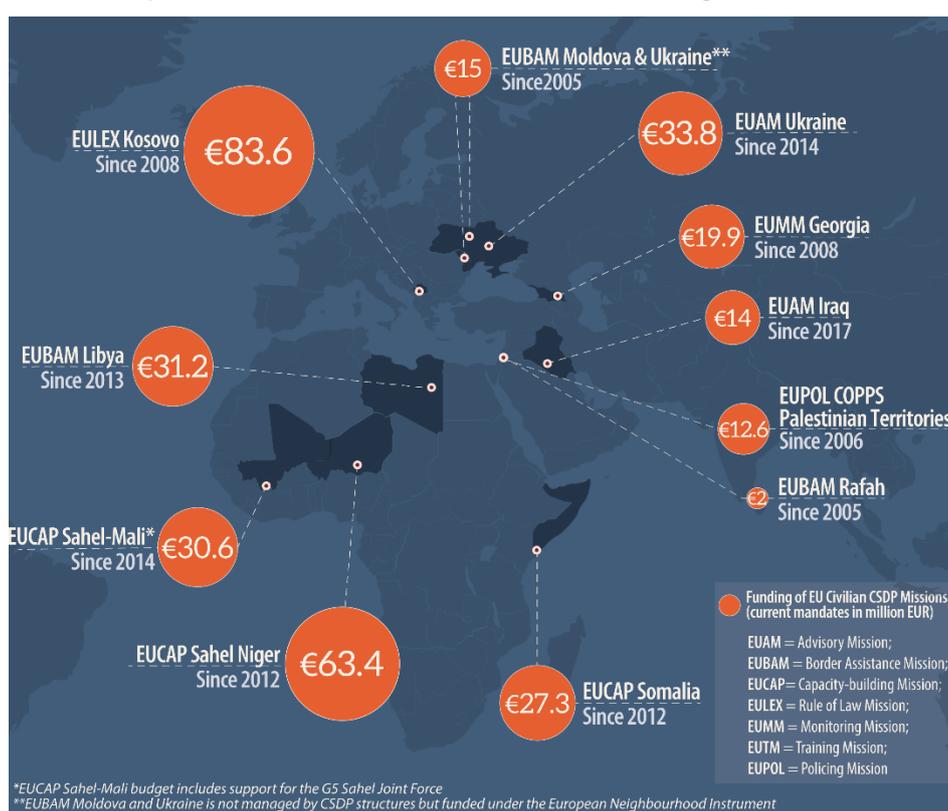
Data source: European External Action Service, 2018.

In its conclusions of 28 May 2018, the Council reiterated the relevance of the Feira priorities for today's civilian CSDP, underlining the importance of SSR and monitoring activities for ensuring partner countries' resilience and security. Although still pertinent today, the priorities need to be revised in light of the aforementioned transformation of the strategic environment.

A Compact for Civilian CSDP

Deriving from the EUGS and following up on the December 2017 European Council, the conclusions announce the launch of a Civilian CSDP Compact (CCC) aiming to reform civilian CSDP and establish strategic crisis management as part of the integrated approach. Responding to invitations from the Council and the European Council and after consultations with EU Foreign Affairs, Interior and Justice Ministries, the Commission and other stakeholders, the HR/VP has developed two key documents: a Concept Paper on strengthening civilian CSDP, and a Civilian Capabilities Development Plan (CCDP). These are the two pillar documents highlighting strategic and operational objectives and setting the framework of the CCC.

The Concept Paper indicates thematic lines of operation for future mission planning in civilian CSDP and represents the strategic basis of the CCC. Starting with countering organised crime, border management support, counter-terrorism and maritime security, the list expands into the realm of hybrid, cyber and even cultural heritage. Given the need for integrated conflict responses and crisis management, the Concept particularly highlights boosting existing cooperation and coordination with JHA actors and other EU actions, as well as streamlining relevant EU instruments, underpinning the focus on the internal-external security nexus. While acknowledging the progress achieved with the establishment of the Core Responsiveness Capacity and Warehouse II in speeding up the deployment of missions, the Concept suggests potential stand-by specialised teams from Member States ready to be deployed on short notice. The CCC is thus meant to revitalise civilian CSDP by making it more agile in terms of deployment, flexible in terms of adaptability to unpredictable circumstances and better equipped in terms of resources. The latter aspect in particular is tackled in the CCDP which describes key necessities at both the EU and national levels for meeting the ambitions set out in the Concept Paper, albeit in a qualitative rather than quantitative manner.

The strategic direction of the Concept and CCDP recommendations such as consolidating synergies between the national and supranational levels and prescribing improvements regarding faster deployment, shared analyses and further boosting civil-military cooperation have been taken on board in the 19 November 2018 Council conclusions formally establishing the CCC. The conclusions restate the strategic direction outlined in the Concept and set 22 political commitments by the Council and Member States. Key commitments include the ability to deploy a civilian mission of 200 staff anywhere in the world within 30 days, swifter operational decision-making, continuous capabilities development, and intensified cooperation with: JHA actors, international organisations such as the UN, NATO, OSCE, and with partner countries. Although the CCDP recommended a Coordinated Annual Review of Civilian Capabilities alike its military sister, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence managed by the European Defence Agency, the conclusions agreed on Civilian Annual Report on Capabilities to be provided by the EEAS. All in all, the purpose is to make civilian CSDP more efficient, integrated, adaptable and fast. The real test however will come when assessing coordination on the ground, the actual allocation of resources, Member States' support and the sustainability of the approach. The next steps are a joint EEAS/Commission Action Plan in spring 2019, for Member States to then develop National Implementation Plans and to organise an annual conference on the topic. Full delivery of the Compact is expected at the latest by summer 2023.

Stakeholders' views

A report by the Istituto Affari Internazionali raises concerns about a potential repurposing of CSDP missions and operations to focus on migration and border control, which could ultimately undermine the EU's credibility as an external actor. The report also warns about discrepancies between setting high expectations for the CCC's results and the level of expertise and resources currently at the EU's disposal. The views of the EU-CIVCAP consortium are positive about the EU's increased ambitions as a security actor, but cautious about the willingness of Member States to fill the recruitment targets needed to meet the targets of the CCC. A briefing by the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) acknowledges the CCC as an important step towards strong civilian

crisis management and advises on the importance of engaging national security actors in the process of deepening the civilian-military nexus. Like the aforementioned stakeholders, the DGAP also highlights the need to develop national recruiting structures and calls for the development of concepts as necessary for a smooth implementation. Finally, the EUISS creatively compares civilian CSDP to Cinderella. As Cinderella, the CCC would find itself needing a ball gown in the form of a credible strategic framework, a pumpkin carriage to help her reach her destination – adequate capabilities, and a trustworthy Prince Charming – credible commitments from stakeholders.

European Parliament position

The European Parliament (EP) has positioned itself as an ardent supporter of a more ambitious and effective CSDP, embedded in the broader idea of a strategically autonomous actor. Already in its May 2015 resolution, Parliament expressed concerns about the shortfalls of CSDP missions and called for faster reaction, more flexibility, and greater solidarity between Member States. In December 2016, a review of the EU approach to civilian CSDP missions was encouraged by the EP – with the same call being reiterated once again in the 13 December 2017 resolution on CFSP. On the same date, Parliament's CSDP resolution underlined the need to streamline all available policy instruments and improve conflict prevention capabilities through greater coordination between military, civilian, development and humanitarian actors. On 16 March 2017, Parliament called for a greater role in CSDP decision-making, including about civilian missions, and welcomed the emphasis on the internal-external security nexus. Overall, the 8th legislature of the European Parliament expressed support for a stronger civilian CSDP as being key for a comprehensive European response to crises, for building partners' resilience and for protecting citizens.

MAIN REFERENCES

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European Commission, Capacity building in support of security and development -Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises, April 2018.

ENDNOTE

[1] The numbers considered in the graph represent donors' intentions, not actual payments. One caveat to acknowledge is the fluctuation of aid policies, which affect political commitments. Commitments on issues such as gender equality, ending violence against women and girls, education reform, election observation, democracy promotion, rule of law, media freedom or infrastructure are not counted in the amounts presented in the graph due to the OECD's categorisations, although they all make essential contributions to conflict prevention, de-radicalisation, stabilisation and overall resilience. The OECD's methodology in the Creditor Reporting System also evolves each year, making yearly comparisons difficult.

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