Summary

- During this reporting period, the Houthi forces in Yemen launched a number of missile attacks on strategic locations in the south of Saudi Arabia, on 20, 22, 23, 27 and 28 April, respectively. The targets included a Saudi Aramco-owned port in the southern city of Jizan. In the latest attack on 28 April, four missiles were fired at a civilian area in Jizan. All four missiles were intercepted. However, the fragments from the falling missiles killed one Saudi citizen, and caused extensive material damage. This marks the first death of a Saudi citizen as a result of a Houthi missile attack.

- On 19 April, the Saudi Arabian Interior Ministry announced that four police officers were shot and killed during an attack on a police checkpoint in the southern Asir province. The police also reported that an additional four officers were injured in the ensuing firefight between security forces and the attackers. The assailants were all Saudi citizens.

- On 17 April, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Abdel Al-Jubeir, affirmed that Saudi Arabia is ready, willing and able to send troops to Syria to support American efforts to stabilize the war-torn country. According to reporting earlier in the month, US President Donald Trump was seeking assistance from a number of Arab countries, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia, to lend assistance to American military operations in Syria.

- The 2018 Arab League Summit concluded in Dhahran, Eastern Province, on 16 April. In attendance were leaders from 22 Arabic-speaking countries, including Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, Mauritania, Palestine and Sudan. The leaders discussed a number of key regional security concerns, including the ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Palestine. Of note was that Qatar was represented at the summit, although the Qatari emir sent the Arab League representative, rather than attending the Summit himself.

- For the first time ever, Saudi Aramco has appointed a woman to its executive board, a move described by the international media as a milestone for the world’s most profitable oil company. Lynn Laverty Elsenhans, formerly of Sunoco and Royal Dutch Shell, joined the 11-member board on 29 April. Discussions over the Aramco IPO listing location is ongoing, and it is expected the IPO will be delayed until 2019.
Significant Events: 16 - 30 April 2018

Saudi Arabia Bi-Weekly Summary

Asir: 19 April
Four police officers died during an attack on a checkpoint in Asir province. Four additional officers were injured in clashes following the attack. The perpetrators were all Saudi citizens.

Jizan: 23 April
An Aramco port facility in the southern province of Jizan was targeted by two Houthi missiles. The missiles were both intercepted before they made impact. The missile fragments fell on a residential area.

Jizan: 28 April
Houthi forces in Yemen fired four ballistic missiles at a civilian area in Jizan. The missiles were all allegedly intercepted, but one Saudi citizen was killed due to falling shrapnel. A number of buildings suffered material damage as well.

Najran: 22 April
A ballistic missile was fired at Najran. Fragments from the intercepted missile set a farm in rural Najran ablaze.

Najran: 17 April
A ballistic missile was fired at Najran. No injuries or material damage were recorded.

Najran: 27 April
A ballistic missile was fired at Najran. No injuries or material damage were recorded.

Jizan: 20 April
A ballistic missile was fired toward Jizan. No injuries or material damage were recorded.

Saudi Arabia Country Threat Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations &amp; Ratings</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>Riyadh</th>
<th>Jeddah</th>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Rating</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Threat Ratings
1 - Minimal
2 - Low
3 - Moderate
4 - High
5 - Very High
**Arab League Summit 2018**

The 2018 Arab League Summit, which was held in Dhahran this month, concluded on 16 April. In attendance were political leaders from countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

A number of key regional security concerns were discussed, including the ongoing situations in Syria, Yemen and Palestine. Firstly, Arab League delegates condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and called for an international investigation on the extent to which such weapons have been employed. Saudi Arabia and its allies also expressed support for the missile launches by the United States, the United Kingdom and France against alleged chemical weapons facilities in Syria. These strikes were however condemned by Iraq and Lebanon. Meanwhile, the Syrian government continues to deny using or possessing chemical weapons and said the strikes were an act of aggression.

Additionally, during the summit, Saudi Arabia announced a USD 150 million donation to the maintenance of Islamic heritage, namely the religious administration that oversees Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa mosque. Additionally, Saudi Arabia announced the donation of USD 50 million for programs run by the UN relief agency for Palestinians, after the United States cut aid to the program. A number of Arab leaders also condemned the decision of the United States government to move its embassy to Jerusalem. Leaders also emphasized the need for East Jerusalem to be the capital of Palestine.

**COMMENT:** Despite the ongoing international blockade and dispute between key members of the Arab Coalition and Qatar, an official invitation was sent to Qatar to attend the Summit. The Foreign Ministry announced that Qatar had accepted the invitation and ultimately attended the Summit.

As far as reporting goes, it appears that the Qatari diplomatic crisis was not discussed at the Summit. There was speculation amongst journalists that this could potentially mark a thawing of relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, who have been engaged in a dispute since November 2017, over alleged Qatari funding of terrorism and undermining of Saudi efforts military and diplomatic across the region. Whilst tensions were not addressed, the Qatari emir was not present, but rather the Qatari Arab League representative was present, and he did not appear in the group photo, suggesting that the Qatari issue is far from being resolved.

Additionally, recent media articles published evidence which allegedly show that Qatar had indirectly funded terrorist groups in Iraq, by paying ransoms of up to USD 425 billion, in order to secure the release of 25 Qatari nationals. Qatar had previously denied that it had paid terrorist organizations as part of the deal to release the hostages, and earlier this month, US President Trump spoke about how Qatar has stopped its funding of terrorism after the visit of the Qatari emir to the White House.

On the subject of Jerusalem being recognised by the United States as the capital of Israel, all delegates were in agreement that the move was mistake, and would have negative consequences for the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. The biggest criticism came from
Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who was extremely critical of the decision to withhold millions of dollars of aid to the UN agency that is instrumental in providing aid to an estimated 5 million Palestinians.

Iraq and Lebanon were highly critical of the recent air strikes by the British, French and American militaries. Lebanon’s criticism is to be expected, given the influence of the Shia group Hezbollah in Lebanese politics, and the Iranian support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Iraq also remains one of the few Arab countries that supports the current Syrian regime.

Most recently, in July 2017, Iraq and Iran signed an agreement to boost military cooperation with Syria. Egyptian President Sisi also expressed some concern about the airstrikes, which given the strong historical ties between Syria and Egypt, is to be expected. In February 2018, Egypt reaffirmed its support of the Syrian government during a meeting in Cairo.

On the subject of Yemen, Saudi Arabia stressed that Iran was a key factor in the ongoing, unstable situation in Yemen, as the Iran backed Houthis have fired over 125 missiles into Saudi Arabia since Saudi entered the war in Yemen in 2015. It is speculated that Dhahran was chosen as the location for the summit as it is currently out of the reach of current Houthi missile capabilities. COMMENT ENDS.

One new case of H5N8 avian flu recorded

On 16 April, the Saudi Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture announced the detection of two cases of the H5N8 strain of avian flu in Al-Kharj governorate. This spurred the Ministry to collect a large amount of samples across the following week.

Later, on 21 April, the Ministry then announced that no further cases of the H5N8 strain of avian flu had been recorded, but they had culled 4086 birds in the previous 24 hours.

COMMENT: H5N8 continues to be a pervasive problem in the kingdom. Cases of the virus have been identified mostly in the central regions of Riyadh and Al-Kharj, as well as in Dammam in the Eastern Province. A handful of new cases are spotted each month in the kingdom, usually totaling to three to four cases each month.

Saudi Arabia has been fighting the spread of the H5N8 avian flu since late 2017, and has largely been successful at preventing the spread of the virus. Saudi authorities have shut down a number of bird markets in different localities across the country, including Al-Kharj, Riyadh and Dammam. A large number of birds have been culled every month since the virus was spotted in the kingdom, and poultry imports from the Netherlands (where the H5N8 strain has been recorded) have been halted. This has slowed down the spread of the virus dramatically, and has prevented the virus from spreading to other parts of the country.

The disease is highly pathogenic to birds, but it is not known to cause human infections. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has concluded that the human infection from the H5N8 virus cannot be excluded, although the likelihood for the zoonotic shift of the pathogen is low. There have been no reported fatalities.
associated with this strain of the virus, although with the H5N6 strain of avian influenza, 6 out of 14 reported cases were fatal. Much like the MERS-CoV disease, whilst it is unlikely that this outbreak will seriously impact the health of those within Saudi Arabia, the WHO issues the following public health advice:

- Avoid contact with birds (poultry or wild birds) or other animals that are sick or are found dead and report them to the relevant authorities.
- Wash hands properly with soap or a suitable disinfectant.
- Follow good food safety and good food hygiene practices.

**COMMENT ENDS.**

**KSA to send USD 100 mn in humanitarian aid to Syria**

On 25 April, it was announced that Saudi Arabia will provide an additional USD 100 million on humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian population. The aid will be channelled through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief).

The announcement of this latest aid package was made by Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir at an international conference in Brussels. During the conference, Al-Jubeir also reiterated that the only acceptable solution to the Syrian crisis is a peaceful political resolution, and that Saudi Arabia has been working to achieve this since the crisis began, whilst also working with others to end the continuing suffering in Syria. Al-Jubeir also affirmed the Saudi support for the efforts of the UN secretary general’s envoy to Syria, Stephan de Mistura, to resume negotiations between all sides of the conflict.

**COMMENT:** Since the conflict in Syria began, Saudi Arabia has taken in about two and a half million Syrians, reportedly treating them like its own citizens, providing them with free health care, work and education. Saudi universities and schools have more than 140,000 Syrian students. Additionally, it is reported that Saudi Arabia is also supporting and helping to care for millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, in coordination with the governments of those countries. The humanitarian assistance provided by the KSA to Syrians so far totals to USD 1 billion. **COMMENT ENDS.**
Yemen updates

Overall, there has been a slight decrease in ground activity along the Saudi-Yemeni border in this reporting period. This scaling back of ground activity is likely a result of the increase in missile and drone attacks launched by the Houthi forces. Six attacks were launched in this reporting period. However, the situation in the southern border regions of Jizan, Najran and Asir remain extremely volatile.

Significant incidents over the reporting period include:

♦ On 14 April, a Saudi soldier was apparently killed in action by a Houthi sniper in the Najran province of Saudi Arabia. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.

♦ On 14 April, Houthi forces allegedly ambushed a Saudi Military convoy with an anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) in the Jizan province. Three soldiers are thought to have been killed in this instance, but this was no confirmed by the Saudi government.

♦ On 16 April, three Yemeni soldiers allied to the Saudi-led coalition were killed by the Houthi forces in the Jizan region of Saudi Arabia. This has not been confirmed by the Coalition.

♦ On 16 April, Houthi forces alleged that they blew up a Saudi army vehicle in Jizan. An unspecified number of soldiers were apparently killed. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.

♦ On 19 April, the Saudi-led Arab coalition killed a top Houthi commander in the northern Saada region of Yemen, near to the border with Saudi Arabia.

♦ On 23 April, Houthi fighters allegedly killed several Saudi soldiers in the Najran province, in a suspected roadside IED attack. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government, and Houthi media have been known to overstate the extent to which they are able to carry out IED attacks within Saudi Arabia.

♦ On 23 April, the political leader of the Houthi forces, Saleh al-Sammad, was killed in a Saudi-led airstrike in the Hodeidah province off Yemen. This may lead to an increase in retaliatory missile attacks in...
Yemen.

♦ On 24 April, the Houthi forces allegedly ambushed several Saudi army vehicles in Jizan, destroying several vehicles and killing several soldiers. This has not been confirmed by the Saudi government.

**KSA air defense systems intercept Houthi missiles**

On 28 April, Houthi forces in Yemen fired four ballistic missiles at a civilian area in the southern city of Jizan. The missiles were fired at the same time, at around 10:40 GMT+3, according to Col. Turki al-Maliki of the Saudi-led Arab coalition, who said that the missile were intentionally fired at civilian targets.

The missiles were all intercepted, however, a Saudi national was killed due to shrapnel from a downed missile. The shrapnel also caused extensive material damage to a number of civilian residences.

Additionally, on 27 April, Saudi air defense systems intercepted a missile over Najran, in the south of the kingdom. This attack was thought to be a retaliatory attack, after the coalition killed a Houthi commander the previous day. No material damage or injuries were reported in this instance.

Furthermore, on 23 April, the Houthi forces in Yemen fired two ballistic missiles at an Aramco oil facility in the city of Jizan. According to the coalition spokesman, both projectiles were destroyed, and no injuries or material damage was reported. According to Houthi media, the target was a port owned by Aramco, but the missile fragments fell on a residential area. It was confirmed that the missile fired in this instance was a Badr-1 class of Scud type missile.

Moreover, Saudi air defense systems intercepted a ballistic missile over Najran on 22 April. The fragments fell on a rural farm, which was set ablaze by the fragments.

In addition, on 20 April, Saudi air defense forces intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Houthi militias in Yemen toward the southern city of Jizan. The missile resulted in no injuries or material damage.

Finally, on 17 April, air defense forces shot down a ballistic missile that was fired at Najran. Unlike previous attempts, it is believed that this was fired from the Amran province of Yemen. No injuries or material damages were recorded.

**COMMENT:** The most recent Jizan attack marks the 13th attempted Houthi missile attack on Saudi Arabia in April. This is the highest number of attacks recorded in a single month since the Houthi forces in Yemen began to fire missiles at strategic locations in Saudi Arabia in 2015.

This also marks the first death of a Saudi national as a result of a Houthi missile, and the second death overall. Last month, an Egyptian national was killed in Riyadh when a fragment from a downed missile fell on his residence. A further three Egyptian nationals were injured in that incident.

In the March 2018 incident, it was speculated that a number of the
Patriot missiles from the Saudi air defense system malfunctioned, missed, or otherwise failed to intercept the Houthi missiles, leading many to believe that the Egyptian national was killed by the impact from the missile, rather than the fragments. There is no evidence to support this claim either way, but Patriot missiles do have a history of failing to intercept their targets. As such, it is possible that the Saudi air defense systems failed to intercept one of the missiles in the Jizan attack.

The missiles used in the 28 April Jizan attack were likely Qaher-1 or Badr-1 missiles, as these missiles have the necessary range to target strategic locations in the south of the kingdom, with a range of around 350km. These are both short-range, Scud type ballistic missiles. It is also likely that the missiles in all the recent attempts originated from the northern Saada region of Yemen, as this is a known Houthi stronghold, which has been the origin point for the vast majority of missile attempts into Saudi Arabia. COMMENT ENDS.

Thirty foreign nationals held in KSA on terror-related charges

Since 1 April, the Saudi security forces have arrested 30 people of 12 different nationalities, all suspected to have links to a number of terrorist organizations. The detainees include 11 people from Sudan, 9 from Yemen, 2 from Egypt, 1 from Turkey, 1 from Kenya, 1 from Iran, 1 from Syria, 1 from Bahrain and 1 from Kyrgyzstan.

This brings the number of terror related detainees in Saudi Arabia to 328 Yemenis, 207 Syrians, 72 Egyptians, 34 Sudanese, 18 Turks, 12 Bahrainis, 10 Iranians, 4 Somalis, 3 Canadians, 2 Kyrgyz, and 1 Kenyan.

KSA border guards stop smugglers

Saudi Border Guards in the south of the kingdom stopped several attempts to smuggle more than 400kg of hashish into Saudi Arabia, and arrested 34 smugglers in the process.

According to a spokesman for the border guards, 32 of the arrested suspects were Ethiopian, and the remaining two were a Yemeni and a Saudi national.

Four security officers shot in Asir

On 19 April, according to the Saudi Arabian Interior Ministry, four police officers were shot during an attack on a police checkpoint in Asir province. The police reported that an additional four officers were injured in clashes that followed the attack.

The ministry added that police units chased the attackers, and captured two of them and a third was killed in the fire exchange that followed. The ministry also announced that all those involved in the attack are Saudi Arabian nationals. No other information has been released at the time of writing this report.

KSA ready to send soldiers to Syria

On 17 April, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Adel Al-Jubeir, affirmed that Saudi Arabia is ready, willing and able to deploy troops in support of any US-led effort to stabilize Syria.

The Wall Street Journal has previously reported that US President Donald Trump was seeking to assemble an Arab force, including troops from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to help stabilize Syria.

According to Al-Jubeir, Saudi’s offer of assistance is not a recent occurrence, with Saudi Arabia previously making a proposal to the Obama administration that if the US were to send troops then Saudi would offer assistance as part of the contingent.
EASTERN PROVINCE SECURITY SUMMARY

Following decades of discontent Shia majority areas in Eastern Province are at growing risk of instability. Numerous risk factors need to be closely observed.

Shia militancy. Low-level but relentless small arms fire attacks on security forces in Qatif and Dammam continue to sour relations between the local community and security forces, in turn driving youth radicalization. With villages such as Awamiya having existed under a prevailing state of emergency since popular protests in 2011, there is a growing risk that confrontations between Shia militants and the Saudi state will escalate. On 1 August 2017, hundreds of people fled Awamiya, due to government forces fighting Shia gunmen. Tensions had been escalating since May 2017, due to authorities’ attempts to tear down the old quarter to prevent fighters using the narrow streets to evade capture.

Popular mobilization. There is an enduring risk that discontent among Shia communities will translate into popular protests such as those seen in 2011. On 2 January residents of Awamiya reportedly took to the streets to commemorate the first anniversary of the execution of Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr. Al-Nimr – a revered cleric and the spiritual leader of Shia dissent in Saudi Arabia – was extremely popular with disaffected Shia and his execution has helped further alienate the community. Other local issues such as the planned demolition of historic homes in Mosawara may combine with the growing militancy of the youth to trigger wider protests with little warning.

Regional rivalries. The situation in Shia areas of Eastern Province is sensitive to developments in Bahrain, which is currently witnessing a period of significantly heightened tensions. Most recently, on 27 February there was a bomb attack on a police bus, wounding five officers. Against a background of growing militant attacks, Bahraini authorities have been escalating their prosecution of leaders of the Shia protest movement, fuelling further dissent. The House of Saud strongly supports Bahrain’s ruling family in its confrontation with elements of the Shia population, which it sees as part of the broader conflict with Iran.
UK and KSA target USD 90bn trade and investment opportunities

Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom have set a new goal to their bilateral economic relationship, with an ambitious target of achieving USD 90bn in trade and investment opportunities across the next few years.

A number of commercial initiatives have been lined up within the framework of the newly created UK-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council, following the recent visit of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the UK.

In addition to this, a high-profile meeting between Saudi and British tech entrepreneurs was held on 24 April, which is expected to further boost ties between the countries.

According to the British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Simon Collis, there has been a surge in bilateral trade, especially in exports of fresh food produce from Britain. Collis further announced that the strategic council will serve as a key mechanism for discussing and developing all aspects of the bilateral relationship. This includes UK support for Vision 2030; support on security, defense and international humanitarian assistance; and support on regional and international issues.

The Saudi British Joint Business Council is also hosting the ambitious partnership forum to bring together some 100 Saudi and British small-to-medium enterprises, investors, business incubators and supporting organizations in the smart cities and e-commerce sectors in London on 24 April.

Aramco appoint first woman to executive board

Saudi Aramco has appointed a woman to its executive board for the first time. A move seen by the international community as a milestone for the company and the country.

On 29 April, the company announced that American oil executive Lynn Lavery Elsenhans joined the 11-member board. Elsenhans is the former chief executive and chair of American oil refiner Sunoco, and had previously been an executive at Royal Dutch Shell, and a member of the board of GlaxoSmithKline.

COMMENT: The appointment of Elsenhans by Aramco comes at a time when Saudi Arabia is aiming to improve gender equality within its borders. Currently, only one fifth of Saudi women work, and there are very few women in executive positions across the country.

As part of the wider Vision 2030 economic policy, Saudi Arabia hopes to increase female participation in the work force from 22 percent to 30 percent by 2030.

Additionally, this move draws more press to Aramco, at a time when it is about to embark on the world’s largest initial public offering (IPO). The IPO has stalled in recent months, with indecision over the international listing location slowing down proceedings.

The appointment of a woman to the Aramco board signifies that the country is moving to a more liberal outlook on women’s rights, making investing in Aramco a more attractive option for liberal western nations. COMMENT ENDS.
Between 15 and 30 April 2018, Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Health (MOH) reported three additional cases of MERS-CoV.

According to the MOH, the latest figures for 2018 bring the national total to 1,668 MERS-CoV cases, including 64 asymptomatic cases, 707 deaths and 7 patients still receiving treatment. On 5 January 2018, it was reported that a 57-year-old male died in Riyadh after being infected by MERS. Notably, accurate accounting of MERS-CoV cases remains generally difficult because of historically poor reporting by officials and slow international confirmation.

The US CDC maintains an “Alert – Level 2” travel advisory for Saudi Arabia due to the risk of MERS infection. The CDC’s “Alert – Level 2” advisory is the second of three advisory levels, notifying travelers of elevated risk at a destination, often associated with specific risk factors. This level also encourages travelers to take specific actions and emphasizes the need for travelers to enhance their usual health precautions - predominantly ensuring all vaccinations are current and diligence in personal health precautions, in the case of MERS. People with diabetes, renal failure, chronic lung disease, and immunocompromised persons are thought to be at highest risk and are advised to avoid contact with camels, consuming raw camel milk or camel urine, and eating meat that has not been properly cooked.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Apr 2018</td>
<td>Arab League Summit</td>
<td>Conference in Dhahran</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Apr—28 Apr 2018</td>
<td>Cyber Security Summit</td>
<td>Conference in Riyadh</td>
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<td>16 May – 15 Jun 2018</td>
<td>Ramadan*</td>
<td>Religious observance – reduced working hours for public sector and some commercial organizations</td>
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<td>15 Jun 2018</td>
<td>Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)*</td>
<td>Public and religious holiday – widespread office closures</td>
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<td>11 Sep – 12 Sep</td>
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<td>23 Sep</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Nov</td>
<td>Prophet’s Birthday</td>
<td>Public holiday</td>
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* Muslim holidays are often determined by local sightings of lunar phases; dates given are approximate.
Constellis is a leading provider of risk management, protective security, crisis management and enabling support services to governments, international organisations and major corporations across the globe. We specialize in serving the energy, construction, extractives, critical infrastructure, development and national security sectors—assisting our clients in understanding risk and in conducting their operations safely and securely, no matter their location. Constellis takes pride in our strict adherence to an exacting code of ethics and rigorous focus on standards and compliance—reinforcing the pioneering role we play in fostering stability, efficiency and sustainable economic development.

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