



COMPANIES “FAILING TO PREPARE FOR TERRORIST ATTACK”

Think-tank report calls for Government to involve Business in contingency planning and information sharing

Widespread fatalism about the risk of terrorism means that many companies are not taking precautions that could save lives and their business in the event of an attack, according to a new collection of essays published by the Foreign Policy Centre. The apparent randomness of terrorist attacks in New York and Bali has led to a sense that there is nothing most organisations can do to protect their workforces. Report editor Rachel Briggs claims that this sense of powerlessness ignores the real lessons of September 11 - many lives were saved because emergency procedures had been drilled after the first attack in 1993

In a survey of 5000 companies, only 45 per cent had business continuity or consequence management plans in place. Bruce George MP, Chair of the Defence Select Committee, argues in the collection: “many (companies) have decided either rationally or out of indifference that little requires to be done”. The report also argues that the Government has a responsibility for creating a framework in which business can operate - currently Businesses are not included in scenario planning, and are not given access to high quality intelligence.

These findings are published in *The Unlikely Counter-Terrorists*, a definitive collection of essays by seven security experts on the threat posed to British Business and the City of London since September 11. It features a foreword by London Mayor Ken Livingstone and original contributions from leading anti-terrorism figures including David Veness, Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

The report also claims that companies who formulated emergency plans based on IRA bombing campaigns could be unprepared for the new threat: Al Qaida are unlikely to give the warnings that were a hallmark of Republican terrorism and are likely to produce damage on a much larger scale. Outdated plans could even prove counter-productive: evacuating buildings during a chemical or biological attack may lead to higher casualties by creating a major movement of air, spreading the agent over a wider area.

The report argues that as Government buildings have been fortified, Business poses an increasingly attractive target. Intelligence in the collection shows that Al Qaida has been linked to plots against companies including Microsoft, and other US companies in Singapore.

Much of the UK’s critical infrastructure that is a likely target for attack - water and energy suppliers, financial institutions, transport and telecommunications networks - is now in private hands. As shown by the scale and speed of disruption during the fuel crisis, this economic backbone is vulnerable to organised terrorist action. Therefore, companies must

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take part in scenario planning along with Government to prepare for the maintenance of essential services.

FINDINGS:

- **Companies must prepare for losses and damage on a much larger scale than they have ever faced before.** John Smith writes: "It is now prudent to consider and plan for damage on the geographic and time scales of Chernobyl, Bhopal or Toulouse. Successful chemical, biological or radiological attacks may deny access to large segments of cities for significant periods". According to Roger Davies, explosives are likely to remain Al Quaida's weapon of choice - postal bombs, booby traps and radio-controlled bomb - used in multiple coordinated attacks: Cities must be prepared to deal with simultaneous no-warning truck bombs containing more than 500 kg of explosives. Companies within 400 m of a US, UK or Israeli Embassy should also review their crisis procedures
- **Sectors directly vulnerable to terrorist attack include transport, water, oil and gas, chemicals, electricity and gas distribution,** according to Dr Sally Leivesley. Others at serious risk from the economic consequences of a terrorist attack include those directly dependent on public confidence -banks, retail, property, construction and leisure. Conversely, sectors that might thrive in an emergency include IT, hardware, media, aerospace and defence.
- **Research in the US reveals that commercial premises are more likely to be targeted than government, military police or security establishments,** according to Bruce George MP. In the US Department of State's "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001" published in May 2002, Business made up 397 of the 531 facilities struck in acts of international terrorism.

Recommendations:

- **The Government should collaborate with companies in a nation-wide series of scenario planning sessions and give Business access to higher quality intelligence.** Sally Leivesley recommends establishing a "one-stop shop" link for companies within government, and creating a link between the Cabinet Office and industry leaders to share information and intelligence. Bruce George MP argues that the Government "needs to look carefully at whether access to intelligence could be deepened and widened"
- **Companies must have succession and relocation plans in place:** They should organise alternative "hot" or "warm" sites where they can relocate in the event of an attack. These tend to be near enough the original office to limit the amount of disruption to staff and operations. The consequences of clustering key staff in the same building also needs re-examination. .
- **Specialist police officers must be devoted to internal security.** Moving officers between professional crime fighting and internal security results in both roles being performed poorly, argues David Veness, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations at New Scotland Yard. The twin role of the Police force "creates new demands for long-term resourcing"

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- **Public information materials must be updated:** John Smith recommends updating the respected Home Office pamphlet *Bombs: Protecting People and Property* to include information about chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks.

Rachel Briggs said:

“There is a little pressure exerted on companies that choose not to take the safety of their workforce seriously. There are no agreed code of conduct, making it difficult for a company’s staff and shareholders to question the policy it adopts. Business needs to be involved in anti-terrorism policies. A national policy without them will make the UK a softer target for attack”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Foreign Policy Centre was set up in 1998 by Prime Minister Tony Blair (Patron) and then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook (President) to explore the consequences of globalisation.
2. *The Unlikely Counter-Terrorists* is strictly embargoed until Tuesday November 26 06.00
3. Rachel Briggs runs the Risk and Security Programme at The Foreign Policy Centre. Her reports include *The Kidnapping Business* (2001) and *Travel Advice*. (2002)
4. **The Unlikely Counter-Terrorists** will be launched on **8.45-10.30am on Tuesday, November 26th, 2002 at The Foreign Policy Centre**. Speakers include **Bruce George**, MP; **David Veness**, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police; **John Smith**, Head of Group Security, Prudential chaired by **Rachel Briggs** of The Foreign Policy Centre.
5. John Bray specialises in political risk and corporate accountability issues at Control Risks Group.
6. Bruno Brunskill is Executive Consultant with Anite Modernising Government Division and a board member of the Information Assurance Advisory Council.
7. Roger Davies MBE QGM is a former British military counter-terrorist officer with significant operational experience. He provides analysis of terrorist incidents and threats to UK and US government departments as well as to the commercial sector.
8. Bruce George has been MP for Walsall South since 1974. He chairs the House of Commons Defence Committee and was recently elected as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Natalie Whatford BA MSc is a researcher and heads the parliamentary office to Bruce George MP.
9. Dr Sally Leivesley is Global Continuity Manager for Risk Analysis (UK) Ltd. She trained as a scientific Advisor with the Home Office in NBC responses, and has acted as a consultant on projects such as the Channel Tunnel and Thames Barrier.
10. Richard Sambrook is Director of News for the BBC, responsible for all news output on radio, TV and online. He has been Deputy Editor of the 9 O Clock News, News Editor, Head of newsgathering and Director of Sport before taking up his current position in 2001.
11. John Smith is Head of Group Security at Prudential. He has been in commercial security since 1978 before which he was with the Royal Military Police, specialising in close protection and investigation.

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- 12.** David Veness CBE QPM is Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations at New Scotland Yard. He joined the Metropolitan Police in 1964 and has handled hostage negotiations since 1979.
- 13.** *The Unlikely Counter-Terrorists* is sponsored by BAe Systems, Control Risks Group and The Risk and Security Management Forum.