

Infinity submitted 'Providing protection and continuity' to the IPPR's Commission on National Security in the 21st Century in August 2007. To view the submission, visit: <http://www.ippr.org/ipprcommissions/?id=2656&tid=2656&node=6>

Focussing specifically on issues of critical national infrastructure (CNI), Infinity argue that authorities are 'worryingly naive' about the risks posed to CNI by the lack of central co-ordination. They call for more 'joined-up thinking' and in the final section use the Thames Valley region as an example to demonstrate the vulnerability of our current infrastructure to disruption.

There is a need, they suggest, for a different view of security as an integral part of operations, rather than as a burden upon them. Thus, preventative measures should be implemented as part of long-term strategies, rather than as a burden upon them.

Their suggestion is that the entire process by which risks to CNI are assessed and dealt with should be changed: business should be involved at an earlier stage, and a stronger, national framework based on organisations such as the London Resilience Forum should be introduced. Moreover, they argue, the government's current cross-departmental counter-terrorist strategy is bureaucratic and slow.

They make a number of concrete suggestions to strengthen the counter-terrorist response:

- Better education
- Better distribution of information and more opportunities for discussion
- More resource for local government to tackle CNI issues
- More efforts to encourage the participation of business in CNI issues
- The strengthening of the command-and-control process for major incidents

They conclude: It is of paramount importance that we understand that the threats to the United Kingdom's critical infrastructure – primarily power and telecoms – are very real and the fallout from a man-made attack or from an environmental incident can be potentially devastating.