

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 naïve' 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.