

PAPER 2

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY

The Government's strategy to reduce the threat from terrorism directly responds to the nature of threat described in paper one. Paper two explains how we have shaped that strategy in the light of this threat; sets out the Government's strategic objective; describes the four key elements of the strategy itself – the 4 "Ps": prevent; pursue; protect and prepare; and explains that this must be an international strategy, not just a national one.

Shaping the strategy

An effective strategy to reduce the threat from international terrorism must start by addressing the factors which distinguish Al Qaeda and the networks inspired by it. In particular:

- If we are to prevent the creation of future generations of terrorists we must challenge the powerful ideological motivation of Al Qaeda and its adherents. We reject completely their assertion that loyalty to Islam and modern democracy are intrinsically opposed to one another. Our vision is of a society in which people of all faiths, backgrounds and convictions can prosper, bound together by a common loyalty to our institutions and democratic values. We strongly believe that this vision is more powerful than the narrow and arid ideology of hatred preached by Usama Bin Laden and those who think like him. We must communicate this vision effectively at home and abroad. Only then will we decisively separate the terrorists from the communities they falsely claim to represent. In a press release condemning the 9/11 attacks, the Muslim Council of Britain said: "We utterly condemn these indiscriminate terrorist attacks against innocent lives. The perpetrators of these atrocities, regardless of their religious, ideological or political beliefs, stand outside the pale of civilised values." The Government agrees.
- We need to recognise the resilience of the terrorists. This is not a threat which can be overcome quickly or where negotiation is possible. Political engagement is not an option because there is no common ground. Although Al Qaeda has been damaged as an organisation since 9/11 – losing key leaders, its base in Afghanistan and, with it, its infrastructure of training camps and laboratories - its ideology has inspired other networks of terrorists across the world, some exploiting local grievances. We must accept that the threat will persist for some time. Reducing it is as much about preventing the recruitment of future terrorists as about pursuing those who are already terrorists. We must ensure that everyone feels part of a just society, free to live their lives without discrimination and prejudice.

- We need to respond to the sophistication and ambition of the terrorists. The threat is the more potent because of the terrorists' ability to exploit modern travel, means of communication and financial systems and because of their interest in acquiring unconventional weapons capable of inflicting mass casualties. This means that we cannot act alone. We must work with our international partners to make it: harder for terrorists to travel undetected; harder to communicate without being overheard; harder to finance their operations by moving money across borders. It also means that we must be prepared for the possibility of attacks using unconventional weapons and intent on inflicting mass casualties.

The Government's strategic objective

In the face of this unprecedented threat, the UK Government's strategic goal is to:

“Reduce the risk from international terrorism so that our people can go about their business freely and with confidence.”

This objective is based on these premises:

- We cannot in the foreseeable future eradicate international terrorism. Nevertheless we can, and shall, make it much more difficult for terrorists to operate and mount attacks. But it is the very openness of our society that we aim to protect. This means that we cannot identify every terrorist network or pre-empt every possible attack.
- We must enable people to go about their daily lives as freely as possible. Though terrorists exploit the freedoms of our society, we will not sacrifice those freedoms to tackle terrorism. We must strike a sensible balance between collective security and individual freedom. This means pushing ahead with the introduction of ID cards and electronic border checks which make it easier for law abiding citizens to travel and transact business, but much harder for terrorists to do the same.
- We cannot ensure “business as usual” without the active support of all our fellow citizens. UK citizens have in the past been alert but calm in the face of terrorist threats. More than ever, we rely now on our citizens being alert to suspicious activity or objects and willing to report them, but to get on with their daily lives in the absence of specific threats. Our citizens can be confident that we shall warn if a specific threat emerges against which they can take action to protect themselves. But we do not intend to provide a running commentary on our assessment of the threat. That would help terrorists without helping the public.

Key elements of the strategy: the four “Ps”

The Government has a clear and consistent strategy built around four “Ps”: prevent, pursue, protect, prepare.

- **Reducing the threat by:**
 - (i) **preventing** terrorism through action to tackle the factors which encourage and facilitate recruitment; and
 - (ii) **pursuing** terrorists and those that sponsor them by better understanding terrorist networks in order to track and disrupt and, where we can, bring to justice and
- **Enhancing the UK’s ability to withstand terrorist attack by:**
 - (iii) better **protecting** British people and British interests at home and abroad so that we are a harder target and
 - (iv) **preparing** thoroughly to respond to any attack so that we can reduce the consequences if one occurs.

Paper three looks at the Government’s strategy to reduce the threat and the balance we must strike between individual liberty and collective security.

Paper four reviews the steps the Government and its partners have taken to improve our ability to withstand terrorist attacks.

International co-operation

This strategy must be pursued internationally. The challenge we face is international. Its causes lie in conflicts overseas. The terrorists operate across international boundaries. Our people and interests around the world are at risk, as are the people and interests of other nations. Effective protection depends on international co-operation and international standards. The UK therefore works closely and effectively with its partners both bilaterally and multilaterally.

- We have worked with the international community through the United Nations and with our partners in the European Union and G8 to put in place measures to disrupt terrorist networks.
- Our police and intelligence agencies work closely with their counterparts overseas.
- We have supported countries with less developed experience of terrorism to strengthen their counter-terrorist capabilities through

programmes of training, of support with protective security and of help with preparedness and crisis management.

International Co-operation: the United Nations, European Union and G8

UN - The UN plays an important role in leading the international counter-terrorism effort. Through 12 conventions, a landmark Security Council resolution and countless more detailed standards (for example on aviation security), the UN has set out what is expected of States. It has established a committee of the Security Council to ensure States receive the help they need and to scrutinise compliance with the key standards. It has also imposed sanctions on people and organisations linked to the Taleban and Al Qaeda.

The UN also plays a broader role. Its efforts to resolve conflict, promote human rights and encourage good governance are important in their own right, but are also crucial to our own counter-terrorism effort.

The UN's response continues to develop. The Secretary-General's High Level Panel has produced recommendations including that there should be a clearer overall strategy pulling together all the UN's counter-terrorism efforts. And the Security Council has recently strengthened its team to scrutinise and assist States on counter-terrorism. These are positive moves to ensure that the UN response is as effective as it can be. As a permanent member of the Security Council, we play a leading role in these efforts, and will continue to support them strongly.

EU - As well as the constant and strong bi-lateral co-operation we enjoy with individual European countries, we work closely with our 24 fellow EU Member States to reduce the risk from international terrorism. Following the atrocities in Madrid on March 11 2004, the EU agreed an Action Plan with 7 objectives: to deepen the international consensus; restrict the access of terrorists to financial resources; maximise capacities to detect, investigate and prosecute terrorists; protect the security of international transport and ensure effective systems of border control; enhance capabilities to deal with the consequences of a terrorist attack; address the factors which contribute to support for terrorism; and target support for priority countries which need help with counter-terrorism. Real progress has been made, for example: in improved cross-border police and judicial cooperation through Europol and Eurojust; agreed minimum standards on aviation security; and inclusion of counter-terrorism clauses in agreements with key third countries, committing them to implementation of international legislation against terrorism. We will use our forthcoming Presidency to drive forward this vital work.

G7 – The development of the fight against the financing of terrorism and financial crime has also been an important theme of the G7 finance

ministers. Under the twin principles of effectiveness and engagement, the UK, as G7 President this year, will lead further efforts to take effective action to counter global terrorism and financial crime. These efforts will be developed in close co-operation with the UN, the IMF, World Bank and – the international standard setter in this field - the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). These efforts at both policy and operational levels are aimed at creating a more hostile environment in which terrorists are prevented from sourcing, moving and deploying their finances.

G8 - Combating terrorism is an important part of the G8's work, and with the 7 other members - the US, Canada, Japan, Russia, Germany, France and Italy - we are using our Presidency to focus on solid, practical outcomes. A key area of work is the Secure and Facilitated Travel Initiative (SAFTI), a range of 28 projects which will further improve the security of transport and borders. As in the EU, there is also important work underway to tackle terrorist financing, by encouraging more effective co-operation between finance specialists, regulators, policymakers and law enforcement within G8 governments, and a range of new initiatives to prevent terrorist recruitment.