

## Memo

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From: N Hamilton  
Permanent Secretary

Your ref:  
Our ref: PSE 497/01

Tel: 028 9054 1175/6

cc: NI Permanent Secretaries

Date: 27 September 2001

To: Mr Loughran

### IMPLICATIONS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

1. I am responding to your request for an urgent note on the potential implications for DRD responsibilities.
2. I would be happy to explain some of these issues in greater detail but, succinctly, the issues which immediately occur to me are as follows:
  1. Airports – threats to the viability of both Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport with significant reduction in use by airlines
    - threats of further withdrawal of airline services eg British Airways to BIA
    - the importance of the joint use of the run-ways at BIA with the adjoining RAF base
    - implications of full searching of personnel and screening of hold baggage before embarkation
    - implications of likely reductions in tourist traffic, particularly international services.
  2. Sea Ports – security implications relating to international traffic into the ports particularly Belfast, Larne, Warrenpoint and Londonderry
    - ports and sea-routes could easily accommodate any transfer of passengers from airlines.

DOF&P

3. Roads – any potential significant increase in the price of oil would have immediate implications for street lighting, use of plant and vehicles, etc
  - significant oil increases might also however reduce the amount of normal road traffic
4. Public Transport – any significant oil increase would create pressures for further fare increases
  - any enhanced terrorist activity, nationally or locally, would have immediate disruptive effects eg the prolonged series of attacks on the Belfast-Dublin railway line; loss of buses; disruption of individual travelling and wider economic activities.
5. Water Service – increased oil/electricity prices would put significant further costs on the operation of water treatment plants/sewerage facilities/pumping activities.
6. Key Installations – there are well established procedures for handling attacks on key installations such as water supplies, major road bridges, airports, sewerage treatment plants
  - in the event of terrorist attacks, the top priority would be to maintain essential services such as the provision of water, the treatment of sewerage, the clearance of roads and other transport facilities
  - major difficulties could emerge if further escalation led to the use of biological or nuclear weapons, particularly in preventing contamination of water supplies.
7. Staff Issues – delivery of key public services still depend on the ability and willingness of staff to maintain services such as water, transport, etc

- there is a need, centrally, to review issues of protection such as arrangements for the evacuation of buildings, etc.

**NIGEL HAMILTON**