



Report on Resilience First Webinar

9 September 2020

‘Preparing to mitigate extremism and terrorism’

Speakers:

Sir Mark Rowley QPM, former Assistant Commissioner for Special Operations at the Metropolitan Police

Matt Maer DSO MBE, Director of Security and Resilience, Canary Wharf Management

Chair:

Professor Brooke Rogers OBE, Professor of Behavioural Science and Security, Department of War Studies, King’s College London

Key Messages

- In the introduction, the point was made that 2017 had seen the start of a marked shift in the level of the threat, particularly far-right extremism which the [Global Terrorism Index 2019](#) reports has increased by 320% in the past five years. (The trends are shown in the accompanying slides.) The spend on counter-terrorism operations in the UK stood at £757m in 2018-2019 ([CONTEST 2018](#)).
- The jihadist threat is our most significant challenge. Much of this activity is scattered and connected with local grievances. The right-wing extremist threat cannot be ignored. It is shifting from individuals to groups and based upon fragmented ideologies. The pandemic crisis, protest campaigns and hate crimes have all fuelled the grievances. The environment has become more atomised, volatile and diverse. At the same time, the vulnerabilities to these threats have expanded from the growth of failed states, to financial instability, and to increasing mental ill-health.
- It will be important for businesses to reinforce three (of the four) ‘Ps’ of CONTEST, namely Prepare, Prevent and Protect. Companies should keep a watchful eye open for disgruntled employees at work (including WFH) who show signs of radicalisation. This may avoid subsequent claims of not acting soon enough should an incident occur i.e. the Prepare and Prevent elements.
- It is important to consider the advice that ‘confidence outweighs preparedness’ (Deloitte) and ‘preparedness in crisis management is the next competitive advantage’ (PWC). Preparedness is important as a distinct factor and should not be treated as merely a housekeeping function.

- It is also important to keep a perspective. In spite of the lives lost to terrorist and extremist acts, the losses from the pandemic are in a different order of magnitude e.g. 63 more lives lost to the pandemic in the US than in 9/11. This means that at the moment businesses do not see terrorism per se as a major concern or priority for resources: such a sentiment is likely to persist until the next serious attack.
- A focus on extremism rather than terrorism might engender an elevated, invigorated response. The broader push factors for a wider extremist-focused landscape are: lack of prospects, socio-political marginalisation, and economic vulnerability. The notions of both alienation (not belonging to society) and disgruntlement (with fewer personal opportunities in life) are likely to grow on the back of Covid-19. The outcome from the 'have nots' may be expressed and thrive in a variety of violent, criminal acts including extremism.
- There are several non-terrorism focused activities that can produce a safer workplace. One of these is to show an interest in staff, with staff knowing their colleagues even when remotely working. A second is to provide mentoring through personal contact, particularly for younger members of staff. A third is to make sure people understand the broader canvass on which they sit within their organisation i.e. being part of a larger team, and the role that their organisation plays locally, nationally, or internationally. A fourth is to employ younger staff so that different viewpoints emerge and traditional stereotypes do not dominate.

The speakers answered a series of questions from the participating audience.

The full video recording can be found [here](#) and updated slides used [here](#).

Speakers' Biographies

Professor Brooke Rogers OBE

Professor Brooke Rogers is a Professor of Behavioural Science and Security in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. Professor Rogers is a social psychologist interested in risk communication, public and practitioner attitudes to, perceptions of, and responses to health and security risks and threats.

Many of her multidisciplinary, collaborative research projects explore psychological and behavioural responses to low-likelihood, high-impact events such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. Other projects focus on community and organisational resilience, protecting crowded places, pathways into violent radicalisation, insider threat, risk communication with vulnerable groups, and more.

Professor Rogers chairs the Cabinet Office National Risk Assessment/National Security Risk Assessment Behavioural Science Expert Group, as well as the Home Office Science Advisory Council. She is an independent participant on the Science Advisory Group for Emergencies and is co-chairing the behavioural science sub-group during the Covid-19 pandemic. Professor Rogers also contributes to a range of local, national, and international committees, including the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology.

Sir Mark Rowley QPM

Sir Mark has a wide portfolio, centred around three themes, with a common focus on secure and thriving communities:

- technology-led innovation and transformation - as Executive Chair and adviser to several Govtech companies assisting policing/security agencies to access their potential.
- utilising specialist security and investigation expertise on interesting and complex problems, both as a non-executive director of Quest Global, and more widely providing international security and policing advice.
- contribute with 'thought leadership' as a Distinguished Fellow of the Royal United Service Institute, as a member of the Independent Expert Group to the Commission for Countering Extremism, and other appointments.

Shortly after his retirement, Sir Mark was knighted by HM the Queen in the 2018 Birthday Honours list for his 'exceptional contribution to national security at a time of unprecedented threat and personally providing reassuring national leadership through the attacks of 2017'. He led UK Counter Terrorism Policing for four years (2014-18), preventing 27 Islamist and extreme right-wing plots; represented the police with the National Security Council; and his responsibilities also encompassed the protection of VIPs, Royals, and Parliament. He was A/Deputy Commissioner of the Met Police between February and April 2017.

Prior to this he had joined the MPS as an Assistant Commissioner in December 2011, immediately after the London riots, leading the response, and transforming approaches to policing gangs (shootings down by 42%) and to public order. He also led Scotland Yard's combatting of organised crime and fraud, and major police operations. He was formerly Chief Constable of Surrey leading massive reductions in crime and achieving the highest level of public confidence in the country.

Matt Maer DSO MBE

Matt Maer joined Canary Wharf Group as Director of Security & Resilience in 2012. He is responsible for the security of Canary Wharf Estate and as such the financial centre for Europe and the third largest retail area in Greater London. His role also covers contingency planning against a range of risks faced by the Estate, from pandemics to cyber and terrorist attack.

Prior to this, he had a 27-year Army career during which he undertook eight operational tours; numerous times to Northern Ireland, Bosnia (for which he was awarded the MBE), Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, Matt served two tours in Defence Intelligence and with the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, of which he was a founder member. His final appointment before joining Canary Wharf was leading the Ministry of Defence's intelligence team with regard to Afghanistan and coverage of the Libyan crisis.