

## Email to Cabinet Office re NRA, June 2014

**From:** Walport Mark (GO-Science)

**Sent:** 10 June 2014 15:54

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**Subject:** RE: 20052014 - CO note on the NSRA

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter outlining your vision for the next iteration of the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA). This is a useful summary.

As you set out in your note, the importance of hazard and threat being co-considered is central to a successful system. It allows effective prioritisation and planning to take place, both in terms of response and developing appropriate capabilities. I understand the different timeframes for assessing the risks across the National Risk Assessment (NRA) and NSRA. As for the latter, I would emphasise the important role that horizon scanning has in assessing critical changes, both nationally and internationally.

I also agree that when it comes to the aftermath of an event, the response should be as local as possible. I applaud the approach that you use for developing generic and flexible responses to support a range of different but related scenarios. Similarly the CCS "play books" that you speak of marry well with the Science Guidance Documents that my team are developing, such as the solar weather one which is already completed. I am keen to ensure that these CCS response guides incorporate, where appropriate, agreed lines to take for the most serious events, which are able to provide strategic coordinated messaging to the public.

I remain of the opinion, however, that response and recovery is only a part of the benefit of a successful risk management. It is surely as important to be pro-active in taking steps to prevent events from happening in the first place, or if that isn't possible, to take steps to mitigate against their effects. As such, I am keen for us to explore how Government could use the NSRA (and indeed the NRA) more effectively to avoid and mitigate against specific risks. CPNI do this for the range of threats to the UK's infrastructure, by developing a detailed understanding of the impacts of such events which leads to evidence based approaches to tackling them. They then work with the owners and operators of the UK's national infrastructure to provide appropriate tailored advice. I would like to see how this approach might be widened to cover natural hazards as well.

In terms of assessment of risks, GO-Science have agreed with Philippa Makepeace that Chief Scientific Advisers (CSAs), led by Bernard Silverman (the CSA at the Home Office) would make an assessment of how 'plausibility' might be developed into a more robust concept. We will carry out this piece of work as part of the on-going NRA review.

All the best,

Mark

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