

## MAJOR EVENTS

One of the key challenges that have changed security decision-making post 9/11 has been the menace of a mass casualty event. This has regularly taken the form of synchronized terrorist incidents carried out without warning aimed at civilian targets. This challenge has impacted judgments that need to be made in the course of pro-active counter terrorist investigations in pursuit of suspected terrorists.



For example, considerations of public safety may cause an investigation to be concluded by arrests at an earlier stage than would be the case if the danger of large scale public casualties was not so pressing. The menace of a mass casualty terrorist event or series of incidents has had similar implications for major event security. In a different era, it could be claimed that media coverage of a major event was successful if the main news was of the event itself rather than the security that made it possible. Such an ambition appears much less realistic in 2008. Ironically, the changed operating context has highlighted important elements of major event security planning which include:

1. National implications
2. Global reality and
3. Structural and visionary legacy

No modern major security event can be regarded as restricted in its implications to the actual venues of the event. A major security event heightens the profile of the country (and possibly the region) in which it is held. Thus, the period leading to the major event is pertinent in terms of events which may occur and the resulting implications which follow. This is an additional element of vulnerability which must be addressed in major event planning. Next, a major security event provides a global stage and will inevitably involve both expected and unexpected international dimensions. The implications of the global reality of major events are very significant for event preparation but this realization is not universal. Postponement of international engagement can lead to a barrage of diplomatic and public/private issues too close to the delivery of the event.

Finally, significant major events are important not only for the main focus of the event but also for the

structural legacy that hopefully will have been created and will be sustained over time. Many events also contribute vision and inspiration across a range of agendas. Achieving balanced security in an era of heightened threat where the factors of national implications, global reality and legacy are of increased significance is a formidable challenge.

For these reasons, it is even more vital that contemporary major event planning and delivery is conducted in full knowledge of this developing background and achieved on the basis of proven professional knowledge. There is now a premium upon sound principles and high levels of professional competence and experience. It is not feasible to achieve a safe modern major event on the basis of ad hoc arrangements. Thus, the contribution of organizations such as UNICRI working with a wide range of member states and key entities provides a vital foundation for events which are both secure and enduring.

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