

22.03.29

**9 Senator K.L. Moore of the Chief Minister regarding the escalation of war in Ukraine (OQ.62/2022)**

Will the Chief Minister advise the Assembly of the consideration he and emergency planning officers have given, if any, to the Island's response and actions in the event of an escalation of the war in Ukraine?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):**

I think it is quite important to put this question into context, as I understand it was raised by an individual in a recent *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* article, more broadly speaking. For the context I should state that that person in question has previously offered his services to the Government during the COVID pandemic. Those services were declined, partially because they were deemed rather expensive. To answer the question, the possibility of a conflict in Ukraine and its possible implications for Jersey was raised before Christmas and officers began considering information and intelligence about the crisis and the risks arising from it before the war began. It was formally raised at Emergencies Council before the invasion and officials had been meeting weekly and well before the invasion occurred. Since the invasion, the Council of Ministers have met 5 times to discuss the impact of further escalation and the Emergencies Council has also met and there have also been 2 States Members' briefings. Taking policy direction from the Emergencies Council and the Council of Ministers, teams led and staffed by experts from Government, as well as other sectors where appropriate, have been working on contingency plans relating to cybersecurity, radiological and nuclear, critical matter of infrastructure, supply chain, economic impact, sanctions and wider diplomatic matters and of course direct financial support to Ukraine and arrangements to welcome Ukrainian nationals with family in Jersey to escape the terrible risks they face at home.

**3.9.1 Senator K.L. Moore:**

I am grateful to the Chief Minister for his answer. Could the Chief Minister perhaps assure the Assembly that communication of these discussions might be forthcoming on a regular basis in the future?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

As I said, Members have been offered 2 briefings and we have also updated, on a very regular basis, the position on, for example, dealing with the most impactful issue on Jersey at the moment, which is the direct plight of the Ukraine individuals and families, either we are assisting financially or assisting relief for financially or are coming to this Island. There is a report due and, in compliance with the proposition and passed by the Assembly, a report will be presented to this Assembly this week, which will give the next update.

**3.9.2 Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

The Chief Minister mentioned supply chains in one of his previous answers. Can the Minister confirm whether and, if so, how often discussions are being had with U.K. counterparts in ensuring that in any eventuality that supply chains are disrupted to the point where Jersey could be affected, that contingencies are in place?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I would have to go in and see the information as to how often the discussions they are having are, but I would point out that obviously there has been a lot of contingency planning around Brexit over the last 2 years or plus and during COVID. In fact it has been more than 2 years and, therefore, that all feeds into the contingency planning that is already in place.

### **3.9.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can the Minister reassure us that, in a similar situation regards Brexit of us being a key part of the U.K. supply chain, those reassurances are in place should there be - and we do not want to see it - any escalation in the war in Ukraine that may affect our supply chain?

### **Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Insofar as I can give any assurance on that front, yes. It is my understanding there is absolutely no difference. In terms of how I answered Senator Mézec's response, i.e. the contingency plan that was put in place for Brexit and also during the COVID side of things, all that contingency planning remains in place. Supply chains are one of the issues that remain very clearly the focus of the officers who are dealing with this on a very, very regular basis.

### **The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Senator Mézec, did I miss your supplementary in my keenness to hear Deputy Ward?

### **Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

You did not but I was hoping I might since I did not ask for a supplementary or ask a single question that is not connected to my original one, if there is time when other Members have asked.

### **The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Well, we will see. Deputy Ward, did you have a supplementary?

### **Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, thank you, Sir.

### **3.9.4 The Connétable of St. John:**

Can the Minister confirm that our supply chain partners are involved in these meetings that he has indicated are taking place on a regular basis?

[11:00]

### **Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I will confirm directly later. My understanding is absolutely, yes, because of the way of the structure, which I think Members were briefed on, so, for example, if I use the utilities, which I know is not the same, but the utility companies do have representation on all the relevant boards. My expectation and understanding from previous instructions we have is that the supply people are involved as well. I will go back and confirm that but that was certainly my expectation and it is my understanding.

### **The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

We are doing well for time and this is an important subject so I will allow Senator Mézec.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

A supplementary, Sir?

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Sorry, you were slow off the mark there, Constable.

**3.9.5 The Connétable of St. John:**

I always wait, Sir. Does the Chief Minister agree with me that it is time to review on-Island stocks of essential supplies because of threats such as the Ukrainian war?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I think, from that perspective, it depends what we mean because it might have been before the Connétable was in this Assembly, and I cannot recall now, but there were discussions, for example, around emergency warehousing being required for Brexit versus COVID and there were a variety of discussions obviously. What you are getting involved in there is the commercial side of the supply chain versus, for example, what we need to do within the health service side for those kind of emergency supplies. Again, I make the point that we have no disruptions in the supply at all at the moment but, obviously, all of this remains very actively under review on a very regular basis.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Senator Mézec, one question please.

**3.9.6 Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

Could I ask the Chief Minister who, at both political and officer levels, is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of our resilience against potential cyberattacks should the war escalate and how much time are they dedicating to this role at the moment?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Well, for obvious reasons, I will not go into too many details about issues around cybersecurity. What I will remind the Senator of is there is one individual, by the way, who I will not name, who is responsible for cybersecurity and that percolates down in terms of the official level. I remind the Senator of the briefing we gave Members back, I think, in 2019 in terms of the early days of the first Government Plan which was around our systems and around the investment that we were putting in there. I think Members have had a further update on I.T. (information technology) generally in the more recent past. There is an individual who is then responsible and we do obviously tie in both locally to bodies outside of government and also international bodies.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

The Ministerial responsibility, I think, was part of the question, Chief Minister.

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

It does depend on the nature of the emergency because, ultimately, the buck stops with me but obviously the initial point would be the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture.

**3.9.7 Senator K.L. Moore:**

Could the Chief Minister describe how the supply chain risks in this situation differs from those of Brexit and if he could also confirm how he proposes to communicate to the public rather than simply briefing Members?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Well, the point I would make is that we do not have supply chain issues at the moment and I think that is quite important in terms of not wishing to create alarm where there is no need for alarm in that territory. In terms of messaging, to date it has not been an issue that has been raised other than by one or 2 individuals in the public domain. As I have said, the supply chain issues are very regularly kept under review and, to date, we have no indications at all that they are lacking.