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An armed officer patrols central London yesterday



say Masood acted alone. But his extremist beliefs were not held in isolation. He was known as an associate of radical individuals in Birmingham, said one official. The individuals arrested in the wake of Masood's attack may not have had any direct knowledge of his intentions, but they may be able to shed light on how he arrived at them.

The core of the matter will be determining how much contact he had, if any, with Isis or al-Qaeda. That in turn may shed light on other plots in train.

Though Isis claimed Masood's attack as an attack perpetrated by one of its "soldiers" yesterday, it was a victory declared with significant ambiguity.

The jihadis have a tried and tested model of connecting with disparate, vulnerable and extremist individuals through online messaging or social media, and rapidly manipulating them towards taking violent action in their name. The timed nature of Wednesday's attack, a year after the deadly Isis bombings in Brussels, as well as his profile certainly fits the jihadis' pattern. Masood may prove to be their latest success.

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standing outside Westminster Abbey at the edge of a police cordon yesterday.

"We feel safe being here. We just feel sorry for the British people."

Some Germans suggested that Brexit — not security — might be a bigger factor in preventing them from visiting London again. "It depends on the politics of the country," said Marie-Sophie Guntram, a 25-year-old teacher who was leading 18 secondary school students from Duisburg.

French tourism was shaken after the Isis gun attacks in Paris in November 2015. It was just beginning to recover when a man killed 85 people in Nice in July by driving a truck through a crowded promenade.

In the second quarter of 2016, overnight hotel stays by foreigners in the Paris area were down 12.9 per cent.

Wouter Geerts, senior travel analyst at Euromonitor International, said immediate impacts were to be expected after terror attacks but the long-term effect on tourism in Paris, Berlin, Nice and Istanbul depended on the government response and the tourist offerings. London would prove resilient, he said.

The UK capital welcomed a record 14m international visitors in the first nine months of 2016.

Personal safety

More constituencies than in Commons

...es, the former Liberal Democrat MP for Cheltenham, was attacked by a sword-wielding constituent who killed his aide, Andrew Pennington.

"In here I feel safe. In the constituency, I feel far less safe," shrugged one London MP, adding that he offered advice to constituents only by appointment. Another said he had recently had a panic room fitted in his flat. "In here I have the ring of steel, but in the constituency I'm on my own," he added. Many MPs described feeling shocked



... yesterday — Jack Taylor/Reuters

or appalled by this week's attack but not necessarily frightened, given the protection in place at Westminster.

Heidi Alexander, a former member of the shadow cabinet, said she had felt much less scared on Wednesday — trapped in a committee room — than during the 7/7 attacks of 2005 when she was out and about in London.

She said there was an essential principle at risk if MPs tried to hide away from constituents.

"I think direct contact between their constituents and members of parliament is absolutely essential for the functioning of democracy and if you change that, you're letting them win," she said. "I was thinking about Jo Cox yesterday, she would have wanted us to continue doing our jobs in the way we were doing them before she was killed."

One of the biggest challenges MPs face is distinguishing between genuine threats and mere verbal aggression on social media.

Last year, not untypically, several were sent an email saying "I will kill you and all your family" with a photograph of a decapitated man.

"You live with risk . . . you have to

make an assessment of what your risk threshold is, most MPs have a high one," said Chris Bryant, a Labour MP.

"Our partners tend to have a lower threshold of abuse, and we also have responsibility for our staff in the constituency offices."

Jack Dromey, a former Labour minister, said MPs had always had genuine concerns about their own personal safety. "Now it's a very serious concern, the threat is real," he said. "MPs have to be accountable, we are public servants, we can't ever hide from the public, but sensible steps can be taken."

Some MPs have complained to Ipsa, the expenses regulator, after it ordered them to provide greater information about their mileage.

Tom Brake, a Lib Dem MP, said that Ipsa's new requirements were "designed in such a way that for MPs who live in a small village or an isolated house, someone will be able to work out where they live."

But Ipsa said it redacted all sensitive and personal information that might compromise MPs' safety, insisting that claims did not need to include postcodes or full addresses.