

**The London Bomb Incidents of 7 and 21 July
2005: 'New Normality' or Just as Predicted?**

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Introduction

Within the UK debate about the implications of 9/11, there have emerged from authoritative sources –such as MI5 Director-General Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller and from the former Assistant Commissioner Specialist Operations (ACSO), Sir David Veness– two very clear expectations. First, that the UK would be a target and, secondly, that it was highly likely that 'iconic' or 'picture post-card' targets would be probable targets. Of the many possible targets, London, because of its national and global symbolism, was considered a particularly likely location for an attack. Moreover, the London Underground was easily identified as a probable but especially problematic target in terms of counter-terrorism (CT) measures. A counter-terrorism exercise involving the tube in 2003 demonstrated some of the likely problems.

Given the above, why did senior figures in the Metropolitan Police refer, after the incidents, to there being a 'new normality' implying expectations of a heightened threat level. There are two possible answers to this question. First, there had been major changes at senior level in 2005, before the July incidents, to the higher direction of the UK counter-terrorism effort, with new incumbents in the posts of Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, Metropolitan Police Commissioner and Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner (Specialist Operations). Of these three changes in post-holder, two certainly did not have comparable experience to their predecessors. Secondly, there was, perhaps, a particular feeling of insecurity which arose, relating to the two incidents, despite the previous allocation of extra resources to the counter-terrorism effort.

It can be suggested that this insecurity arose from the following elements of the incidents. There is the fact of the existence of two, apparently unconnected, 'groups' of suspects unknown to the counter-terrorism agencies as such. Or if they were known, such as July 7 bomber Mohammed Siddeque Khan, they were only seen as of low-level interest. Furthermore, some of the perpetrators had very ordinary backgrounds of the 'person next door' variety. There was the implication that the incidents might herald the presence of a terrorist capability to carry out a sustained campaign of incidents. Finally, if the London tube system was likely to be a target again there are the major implications, in terms of feasibility and cost, in any attempts to move to airport-style security in a rapid transit system.

The basic facts of the two incidents have become clearer and there is a certain amount of information on the post-incident counter-terrorism responses. This paper will discuss the intelligence background, describe in outline the two incidents, examine the key features of the incident-management responses and review the consequence-management process.

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Discussion of the 21 July incident has to be limited because of on-going legal proceedings. The paper will further consider some of the implications of other, relevant, proposed institutional changes such as the further reorganisation of the police in England and Wales.

Intelligence Issues

The suicide bomb attacks on the London tube system and a London bus on 7 July 2005 and the further bomb attacks –but with main charges not exploding– on the tube system on 21 July 2005 were both attacks for which there was no warning available from intelligence sources and which came after a decision by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), in June 2005, to ‘re-calibrate’ downwards the threat level facing the UK from ‘severe general’ to ‘substantial’. The ‘re-calibration’ was on an assessment that there was no intelligence of a specific plot. After 7 July the threat assessment was raised to ‘severe specific’, meaning a further attack was anticipated.¹ However, it should also be noted, as stated by the Home Secretary that the downward assessment did not lead to any ‘significant diminution to specific protective measures’. Such measures being connected to the separate public sector alert status system.²

Much of CT intelligence has to focus on the relatively small intelligence footprint of suspect individuals, but to reach this focus the analytical work has to manage a geographically dispersed, large volume of information. This is a resource-intensive process, in terms of: *humint*, *sigint*, *imint* (photography/imagery) and intercept sources. It is also an extremely complex task in relation to the Islamist groups and their supporters, which are made up of a mixture of nationals, non-nationals, unknown illegals, false identities (anything up to around 200 for a single person) and, apparently, law-abiding persons with no criminal records. In the case of some of the suspects in the 21 July London incidents, false identities have already been revealed as an issue. For example, Ibrahim Muktar Said is said to have used six aliases and Hussain Osman used five names and variously claimed to be from Eritrea or Somalia when in fact he was Ethiopian.³ In this context, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller pointed to the dilemma in intelligence work of ‘balancing investigation and monitoring of those whom we know present a threat, with work to discover and nullify previously unknown threats’.⁴ Target Islamist suspect numbers in the UK had risen from around 250 in 2001 to around 800 in July 2005. One measure of the counter-terrorism resource stretch is that ‘An intensive operation, for example, into imminent attack planning, can consume almost half of the Security Services’ operational and investigative resources’.⁵

In terms of possible intelligence ‘gaps’ and the London bombings of 7 July 2005, an issue clearly exists in respect of one of the dead bomb suspects, Mohammad Siddeque Khan. It has been reported that Khan did come to the attention of MI5 in 2004, in relation to the ammonium nitrate seizures, but at the time he was not thought to be a priority target for surveillance. Further analysis of intelligence files is reported to have shown that there was knowledge of communications between Mohammad Sidique Khan and another of the 7 July bombers, Shazad Tanweer, relating to terrorist training camps in Pakistan and other

¹ See the reports in *The Times* on 11/7/05 and 20/7/05.

² Home Secretary Charles Clarke, Home Affairs Select Committee, Minutes of Evidence, ‘Counter-Terrorism and Community Relations in the Aftermath of the London Bombings’, Q1, 13 September 2005, HC 462-I, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmhaff/uc462-i/uc462>, accessed 14/9/05.

³ See the reports in *The Times*, 6/8/05.

⁴ Dame Eliza Manningham – Buller, ‘The International Terrorist Threat and the Dilemmas in Countering it.’, Speech to The Netherlands security service (AVID), 1 September 2005, <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page387.html>.

⁵ Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC), ‘Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005’, Cm. 6785, HMSO, London, May 2006, p. 7-8.

terrorism-related matters. Furthermore it has been suggested that Khan's planning and preparation process could even be dated back to 2003 when he is believed to have undergone terrorist training in northern Pakistan.⁶ It seems as if the intelligence available about Khan and Tanweer in the 2003-05 period was not placed in the 'essential' or 'desirable' investigative priority categories, which meant that they were not in a threat category requiring counter-terrorism resource allocation.⁷ It needs to be remembered that in the summer of 2005 the intelligence agencies and the police had resources allocated to at least ten high-priority surveillance operations and these represent a significant amount of the total resources available. The question which arises, after July 2005, is whether the priority parameters need to be rather more widely drawn in terms of when CT resources are assigned to a person appearing on the intelligence 'radar'.⁸ As the Security and Intelligence Coordinator said, post 7 July, 'What July showed us was that we were not wholly on top of the problem'.⁹

Another important part of CT intelligence is that which looks at organisations in terms of whether they should be added to the list of proscribed organisations. If this does not happen, suspects may have to be released and, of course, 'groups' may circumvent proscription by starting new organisations. Proscription considerations have formed part of the response to the July 2005 London incidents as the Home Secretary has indicated to Parliament.¹⁰

The general terrorist threat from Islamist groups to areas outside the Middle East was identified by the UK in 1995. However, as Sir David Omand has pointed out, MI5 actually 'under-estimated the extent to which there were radicalised individuals here in the UK'.¹¹ One part of that underestimation related to a relative lack of appreciation of the radicalisation impact of the conflict in Bosnia. The presence of the Bosnian factor is illustrated in the September 2005 Old Bailey trial, on four charges under the Terrorism Act 2000, relating to the possession of items relating to the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism, of a British national, former drug dealer and Muslim convert named Andrew Rowe. In court Rowe is reported to have said, after travelling to Bosnia in 1995 as a volunteer aid-worker that 'I wanted to participate and help people defend themselves against an aggressive force'. He admitted that he was prepared to act as a courier carrying military equipment and ordnance, however, he denied the terrorism-related charges.¹² By contrast, the UK counter-terrorism agencies have been more fully aware of the radicalising effect of the UK's participation in the current conflict in Iraq but their political masters have been less willing to face up to this issue.

It can be suggested that the current use of intelligence in the UK with regard to the domestic management of terrorism in the UK does now, in general, fulfil the alerting and public warning role as far as is feasible. However, perhaps under 'public information' more could be done in explaining threat alerts, the intelligence-led disruption strategy and how early interventions, whilst producing headline grabbing features on large-scale police raids, may in fact be inconclusive in terms of criminal justice system outcomes. Assistant Chief Constable Beckley said, regarding the Terrorism Act 2000, 'it was specifically understood that it was about disruption as opposed to detection'.¹³ After the July bombings further thought is being given to a more comprehensible public system relating

⁶ *The Sunday Times*, 22/1/06.

⁷ *Ibid.* and see ISC, Cm 6785, p.8.

⁸ *The Times*, 17 and 18/7/05, and *The Independent*, 18/7/05.

⁹ ISC, Cm 6785, *op. cit.*, p.8.

¹⁰ HC 462-i, *op. cit.*, Qs 11 and 12.

¹¹ Sir David Omand, 2004, as cited in Intelligence and Security Committee, 'Annual Report 2003-2004 re the Intelligence Services Act 1994 ch.13', Cm. 6240, London, The Stationery Office, June 2004, p. 38, para 137.

¹² *The Times*, 15/9/05.

¹³ ACC Robert Beckley, ACPO-TAM – Oral Evidence, Minutes of Evidence, 'Terrorism and Community Affairs', Home Affairs Select Committee, 25/1/05, HC 165-ii, Q342.

to information on threat levels and alert states.¹⁴

The crucial problem, with regard to intelligence, appears to be the adequacy in terms of numbers of the relevant human resources elements in both MI5 and MI6 as noted in the official reports on the services. Increased recruiting has been budgeted for, but given the acknowledged relative neglect of counter-espionage and the suggestion that MI5 may take a role in countering animal rights extremism, will these increased staffing levels – once recruited and trained– be sufficient?¹⁵

The July 2005 London Bomb Incidents

The two bombing incidents can be summarised in the following terms. The bomb attacks on 7 July were, intentionally or not, suicide attacks using 2kg-5kg peroxide-based explosives in rucksacks. It is possible that the 7 July group may have had additional plans for themselves or even others as indicated by finds in a car associated with them at Luton railway station car-park and in a 'bomb-factory' house in Leeds. The finds included additional bomb components with the added element of shrapnel to cause additional harm. It is believed that these attacks cost about £8,000 to finance and that the group arranged its own finances.¹⁶ The attacks on 21 July were also carried out using peroxide-based explosives in rucksack bombs. In this case, by sheer chance only the detonators went off and not the main charges. One possible explanation for the failure of the main charges is that, whilst no links have yet been identified between the two groups, the example of 7 July may have prompted an attack date which was a little early in the explosives preparatory cycle. The only relatively uncommon feature of the two attacks, as person-borne attacks, was the use of rucksacks as opposed to some form of body-strapped explosive device. Consequently, none of those involved would have been seen as in any way dressed unusually for the time of year. Although no links have yet been established between the groups, one hypothesis is that they might have used a common 'manual' or training experience.

For the July 7 attacks the dead suspects are: Hasib Hussain from Leeds for the Tavistock Square bus bomb (13 killed), Shahzad Tanweer, also from Leeds, for the Circle Line (Aldgate) tube bomb (6 killed), Mohammad Siddeque Khan, also from Leeds, for the Circle Line (Edgware Road) tube bomb (7 killed) and Jermaine Lindsay, a Jamaican-born British resident from Huddersfield, near Leeds, for the Piccadilly Line tube bomb in Russell Square (26 killed). The first three were British nationals of Pakistani origin; the fourth was British with part West-Indian ethnic origins. Of these suspects only Mohammad Siddeque Khan has left a personal statement. In Khan's video he describes himself as a 'soldier' at 'war'. This group had predominantly Indian sub-continent ethnic origins.

In relation to the July 21 attacks, the following suspect bombers were arrested, charged and brought before the courts and remanded in custody for trial in September 2006: Ibrahim Muktar Said (suspected over the attempt to bomb a No. 26 bus at Shoreditch), Ramzi Mohammed (suspect in the failed attempt to bomb the Tube near the Oval), Yassin Hassan Omar (suspect in the bomb attempt on the Tube near Warren Street), Hussain Osman (suspect in the bomb attempt on the Shepherd's Bush Tube station) and Manfu Kwaku Asiedu (the alleged fifth bomber charged with conspiracy to murder London Transport passengers). This group has predominantly East African ethnic origins. A total of 39 arrests were made in connection with these attacks and 10 of those arrested were charged with related offences. Given the similarity of targets on the two occasions, two hypotheses can be advanced; first, that the 21 July attack was a 'copy-cat' in terms of

¹⁴ Government Reply to the ISC, Cm 6786, HMSO, London, May 2006, p.3.

¹⁵ *The Times*, 10/9/04.

¹⁶ Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005', HC 1087, HMSO, 2006, p. 23.

location or, secondly, that it was also pre-planned and with a similar strategic goal in relation to attacking iconic London targets. So far only Hussain Osman has made any comment on the July 21 bomb attempts. During his efforts, in Rome, to avoid fast-track extradition under the European Arrest Warrant proceedings, he claimed that the devices were not meant to explode fully but just the detonators as a protest against government policy.

UK CT Incident Management and the Suicide Attack Threat

The July 2005 incidents were certainly not unexpected new threats for the UK CT agencies. In this section, the pre July 2005 preparatory work will be reviewed and considered alongside the issues arising from the de Menezes case of 22 July. Apart from the review of airport and air-transport security, examining the threat from suicide bombers was the first post 9/11 specific new threat study carried out by the UK police as distinct from the more general studies of response to catastrophic events. The initial work was carried out by the police Working Group on Suicide Bombers led by a superintendent of the MPS ATB.¹⁷ This work consisted of an open source study of suicide attacks worldwide, supplemented by field work visits to locations where such attacks were experienced, for example, Israel, Sri Lanka and Russia. Field work visits were also made to countries without prior experience of suicide terrorist attacks in order to compare UK response plans to those in this group of countries, such as the USA.

This research work covered areas such as typologies of suicide bombers, the psychology of the suicide bomber, commonly-encountered suicide IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and their methods of delivery whether by person or vehicle, the 'lone' bomber problem and the bomber with a support, supply and command and control network. This research resulted in a valuable analytical study for use in issue-awareness briefings and training and it was also used as the basis for developing strategic and tactical responses. *En passant*, the project research revealed, in this threat area, an example of the British response problem of 'silo' thinking.

Why does the threat of a suicide bomber(s) pose a separate set of challenges to those present where terrorists or extremists simply plant an IED? First, the element of control over the IED may allow a more precise form of targeting. Secondly, the suicide bomber using an aircraft, vehicle or boat may be able to reach target locations in a way and on a scale not available by simply planting an IED, as 9/11 showed so dramatically. Thirdly, the suicide bomber gains publicity through the shock-value of a human being blowing himself up, leaving a legacy in the public's mind that it could be the passenger/shopper next to them. Fourthly, tactically, a suicide bomber poses four sets of problems for the police:

- Can intelligence help to identify at an early stage a suicide bomb threat and the bomber(s)?
- Can technology or sniffer dogs identify the bomber(s) if earlier disruption operations are either not feasible or are unsuccessful?
- How will the IED be triggered? The options are self-detonation, automatic timer or remote detonation by a third party.
- How do you tackle an identified bomber(s)?

The police team reflected on both the knowledge that they had gained from their research period and the issues, set out above, that the research raised and channelled their findings into response projects. Operation Clydesdale was a project which considered the implications of a response, where intelligence had identified both target and potential perpetrator. Here, the issues related to whether the police would have time to make a

¹⁷ Interviews with Working Group leaders in 2003 and 2004.

suspect identification and carry out an intercept operation at a point where damage could be limited in the event of the device being triggered during interception. Operation Kratos was a linked project, which considered what was called a spontaneous incident in which the police would have no prior intelligence warning but might receive just a 'suspicious behaviour' report from sources ranging from CCTV, a private security guard, a member of the public or a police patrol. Moreover, in this case, they might face the additional uncertainty about whether the suspect person is the bomb transporter or the actual bomber. In this case, the police have to prepare to tackle a situation without any previous information and where other possible indicators –such as bulky clothing or a wire coming from a shoulder bag– might be indicators of nothing more sinister than that the suspect person feels the cold and has also just bought some garden wire. Furthermore, unlike the situation of facing a person with a firearm, in the suicide bomber case there may be no realistic option of getting closer and negotiating unless the bomber, in some way, 'gives up'. Therefore, the Silver Commander must prepare to authorise an armed response involving the lethal force option.¹⁸

As the suicide bomber threat was not covered in the PIRA-orientated 'Bombs, Police, Response' operational guidance manual, the Working Party produced training and operational command and control documents as the first element of the response. The second element of the response was to consider, in parallel, the development of new operational aids such as explosives detection-trained sniffer dogs and special detection devices.

Normally, our knowledge about special detection devices would, understandably, be limited. However, in December 2003, interviews with the then Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir John Stevens put some information into the public domain.¹⁹ The reports referred to the development and deployment of a portable scanner device based on millimetre-wave technology. It was said that this device can detect objects, such as a bomb, through a suspect's clothes and that information can be relayed to a police control location. Sir John Stevens had referred to the threat of a suicide attack as having taken a 'quantum leap' since the attacks in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Russia and Iraq.

Five conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the response to the suicide bomber threat:

- (1) Good intelligence remains the fundamental requirement for pre-empting or preventing a suicide bomb attack and it needs to operate in parallel with appropriate preventive security measures.
- (2) The value of technical solutions depends upon their reliability and their availability in sufficient numbers for rapid emergency response.
- (3) The suicide bomber response has to become an ongoing component of training.
- (4) It raises a particular training requirement for Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs), in that they may be instructed to shoot a suspect in a situation where the visibility of the threat is markedly less than where an armed suspect is visibly pointing a firearm.
- (5) Any local evacuation orders, which may be considered in the short time likely to be available in the face of a spontaneous event, will need to be well informed by an understanding of the varied effects of explosions depending on the position of the IED, when detonated.

Because of the ongoing de Menezes case arising out of the aftermath of the 21 July London bombing attempts further comment on the suicide bomber policies must

¹⁸ *The Times*, 7/12/03.

¹⁹ *The Times*, 23/12/03.

necessarily be restricted. However, first, former Home Secretary Charles Clarke indicated that after the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has reported, the Government would look at the issue of a public debate on 'lethal policies' and suggested that the Commons' Home Affairs Committee might also want to look at the issues.²⁰ Secondly, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair has pointed out that the policy was based on 'a development of existing law' and based upon 'section 3 of the Criminal Justice Act, the use of reasonable force, which has to be "proportionate and necessary" to the threat.'²¹ Moreover, Sir Ian Blair stressed that the policy had been developed through the normal official consultations process and approved by ACPO in January 2003. He said 'Home Office officials, the CPS, the Treasury, councils[legal counsel], independent advisers were aware of the policy...'.²² As of late May 2006 the investigation of the de Menezes case by the IPCC has been concluded and their un-published findings, in respect of the police officers involved, referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS has to decide if there are grounds for any criminal prosecutions. The only apparently definitive statement that has been reported relates to the officer in operational charge, Metropolitan Police Commander Cressida Dick. Commander Dick, the Operation Silver commander or tactical controller, is reported to have said to the IPCC that her orders were to 'stop' de Menezes as an identified suspect person, but that she did not invoke the Kratos procedures.²³

Three issues arising from the de Menezes case are of a generic nature and comment can therefore be made even while the investigative process is in progress. First, there is the long-standing issue of the inadequacy of police radio communications capability within the tube system. Secondly, there are clearly matters of command and control to be resolved. Thirdly, the nature of the July 21 incidents and their immediate aftermath constituted a terrorist bomber(s) scenario that fell between those on which the previous policies had been based. It can therefore be assumed that the police are revising their strategies and tactics to provide a variant that, in essence, assumes the possibility of a scenario where some intelligence of possible intent might exist but allowing for a greater possibility of random spontaneity. ACPO's Review (March 2006) of 'The UK Police Service response to the threat posed by suicide terrorism' noted *inter alia* the need for: a review of police C3I procedures, the suicide terrorism policy to be articulated in a public document and for the police to engage with communities in developing suicide terrorism policies.

Consequence Management

In evidence to Parliament following the London bombings, the ACSO Andy Hayman provided details of the scale of police operations and referred to the storing of 38,000 exhibits, 1,400 fingerprints, over 160 crime scenes and the investigation of 54 murders and other crimes.²⁴ These points were reinforced by the Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, stating that it was 'the first time in living memory that the Metropolitan Police has declared something called "mutual aid", which means that we are paying hundreds of officers from other forces to work with us'.²⁵

There is, post the July 2005 London bomb incidents, an even greater strain on surveillance and investigation resources. For the MPS, Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur, who was responsible for Serious Crime operations, has said that from 300 to 470

²⁰ Oral evidence by the Rt. Hon. Charles Clarke to the Home Affairs Committee, 'Counter-terrorism and Community Relations', HC 462-I, 13 September 2005, Q23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Q59.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *The Sunday Times*, 15/1/06.

²⁴ HC462-i, *op. cit.*, Q47.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Q51.

of his serious crime investigating officers were posted to the post-incident investigations.²⁶ As a rough quantitative measure of the problem, a senior police officer has indicated that a 40 person-strong surveillance team is required to keep 24/7 surveillance on one target individual, and the then Home Secretary Clarke stated, in September 2005, that there are 'certainly hundreds of individuals who we have been watching very closely and continue to watch closely'.²⁷ Therefore, even the fact that MI5 will be able to recruit an extra 1,000 staff (the current staff level is around 2,000+, rising to 3,000+) over the next few years needs to be placed in context.²⁸ First, it will take time to recruit and train this increase in personnel, assuming that sufficient recruits of the right calibre can be found. Secondly, MI5 has also recently admitted that, despite the ending of the Cold War, they have not only a continuing but also a rising need for resources to be devoted to counter-espionage.²⁹

The issue of police restructuring, in England and Wales, was raised, once again, in the spring of 2005 and given pre-eminence by the Home Secretary in the autumn of 2005 with a goal of reorganisation plans, by the merging of forces, being proposed by the end of January 2006. In fact, many forces and their police authorities are resisting the pace of change being proposed by the Home Secretary. However, the former Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, did vigorously endorse proposals for a new round of police force amalgamations, following the September 2005 Inspectorate of Constabulary report, 'Closing the Gap'.³⁰ One of the core arguments for change related to the varying abilities to handle terrorist incidents. For example, a reform variant suggested by former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir John Stevens envisaged that no provincial police force should be less than 3,000 strong or more than 7,000 strong.³¹

Within police counter-terrorism specialisation, there have also been proposals for the radical reform of Special Branches and for a National Counter-Terrorism Police force. Indeed, following the July bombings but reflecting earlier discussions, the current Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, announced, in September 2005, that he plans to merge SO13, the Anti-Terrorist Branch; with the Metropolitan Police Special Branch (SO12) to form a unified Counter-Terrorism Command. One argument, being put forward to 're-brand' police Special Branch units, suggests that they may be seen as a threatening policing body by communities who are approached for terrorism-related information.

The Inspectorate of Constabulary Report ('Closing the Gap') of September 2005 does show that there still remain significant concerns about the ability of the current structure of provincial police forces to meet some aspects of terrorism policing challenges.³² For example, the Report notes that 'almost none of the forces assessed have planned, tested or practised for a chaotic, distributed event'.³³ The London incidents of 7 and 21 July 2005 would fall into this category of event. Moreover the problems for smaller forces are evident in the Report's comments about reliance, in those forces, on both 'multi-tasking for individuals' and on assistance from other forces 'for fairly modest operations'.³⁴

²⁶ Reported in *The Times* 3/8/05.

²⁷ HC 462-i, *op. cit.*, Q5.

²⁸ MI5 staffing increases announced, *The Times*, 23/2/04 and 2/3/04. By comparison, the CIA has around 16,000 personnel and a budget in 2004 of US\$40bn. See M.A. Goodman, '9/11: The Failure of Strategic Intelligence', *Intelligence and National Security*, 18 (40), Winter 2003, p. 66-68.

²⁹ See the report in *The Times*, 7/3/04.

³⁰ See the comments of Commissioner Sir Ian Blair to the Home Affairs Select Committee, Minutes of Evidence, 'Counter-terrorism and Community Relations', 13 September 2005, HC462-I, Q47.

³¹ Sir John Stevens, *Police Review*, 2004.

³² HMIC, 'Closing the Gap', Report, September 2005.

³³ *Ibid.*, para 5.38.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, para 5.42.

More generally, after consultations with the counter-terrorism agencies, the Prime Minister set out in the summer of 2005, an ambitious 12-point plan to tackle terrorism which included the new Terrorism Act 2006. In the Parliamentary stages of this Act, controversies arose in respect of the balance to be drawn between civil liberties and security measures. For example, following police proposals for an extended period of pre-charge detention in terrorism cases, the government proposed in the draft legislation for the detention period to rise from 14 days to 90 days. The police case had been derived from problems in evidence gathering, partly arising from early stage arrests, the 'average' time it was taking to access encrypted material on computers and to obtain assistance from numerous overseas police forces. Referring to the 'bomb factory', found in Yorkshire after the July 7 attack, an Anti-Terrorist Branch briefing note pointed out that it took 'over two weeks before safe access could be gained for the examination to begin. It took a further six weeks to complete the examination'.³⁵ The Terrorism Act 2006 contains three sections on offences in Part I, including: encouragement of terrorism (s1), dissemination of terrorism publications (s.2) and preparation of terrorist acts (s.5). It also includes offences involving radioactive devices and materials, nuclear facilities and site(s. 9 and 10).

However, the Prime Minister was defeated in the Commons on the detention period and MPs only voted in favour of a maximum 28 days pre-charge detention. Proposals for various offences 'preparatory' to or 'glorifying' terrorism were also controversial. Plans for time limits on deportations have had to be abandoned as unworkable. However, a new Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill does contain provisions to: automatically refuse asylum to anyone who has taken part in terrorism anywhere in the world and to strip non-British born persons of UK citizenship.

Conclusions

Currently the Government is reviewing all aspects of its 'Contest' counter-terrorism strategy, including how to respond to the radicalisation of individuals, which may be a process that takes much less time than was previously thought. The outcome and pace of proposed amalgamations within the provincial police forces remains uncertain although a police review of counter-terrorism strategy will be completed by July 2006. The use of peroxide-based explosives remains difficult to counter, in a pre-emptive sense, because of their components' easy availability from normal shopping purchases. Although a greater awareness among communities of preparation 'indicators', such as bleached foliage or a person suddenly having bleached hair, might be encouraged by a public information campaign. In general, the UK counter-terrorism and emergency response agencies felt 'that the quality of the response on 7 July was in no small part due to the investment in training and personal relationships at countless multi-agency training and planning exercises'.³⁶ Had the two groups struck, simultaneously, at more widely dispersed targets in the UK then the strains in the response would have been very much greater and more problematic.

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³⁵ Letter from ACSO Andy Hayman to the Home Secretary, 5/10/05, <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2005/oct/met-letter-law.p>, accessed 12/10/05.

³⁶ DAC Peter Clarke, Head of SO13, MPS, 'Lesson Learned from Terrorist Investigations in the UK', *RUSI Journal*, 151 (2), 2006, p. 22-27.