

Shaken, not stunned:

The London Bombings of July 2005¹



Work in progress – not for circulation or citation!

Project leader: **Dr. Eric K Stern**

Case researchers:
Fredrik Fors
Lindy M Newlove
Edward Deverell

CRISMART
Crisis Management Research and Training

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Executive summary - The bombings of July 2005

On July 7th, the morning rush hours in London formed the backdrop for the first suicide bombings in Western Europe in modern times. Three different parts of the London subway system were attacked around 08.50: Aldgate, Edgware Road, and Russell Square.² The three Tube trains were all hit within 50 seconds time. A bomb on the upper floor of a double-decker bus at Tavistock Square was detonated at 09.47.

In the terrorist attacks, four suicide bombers detonated one charge each, killing 52 people. Seven people were killed by the blasts at Aldgate, six at Edgware Road, 13 at Tavistock Square, and 26 at Russel Square – in addition to the suicide bombers themselves. More than 700 people were injured. Hundreds of rescue workers were engaged in coping with the aftermath. Over 200 staff from the London Fire Brigade, 450 staff and 186 vehicles from the London Ambulance Service, several hundred police officers from the Metropolitan Police and from the City of London Police, as well as over 130 staff from the British Transport Police were involved. Patients were sent to 7 area hospitals.³

Crucial Decision Problems

1. What is going on? The first occasion for decision arose when alarms came flooding in the morning of July 7 and it became clear that something was terribly awry in the subway stations of London. A great deal of uncertainty shrouded the situation initially. Reports from Londoners regarding explosions and injured persons flooded in, but it was at first unclear what had happened and what had caused the problems.

At the G8-summit in Scotland, Prime Minister Tony Blair reportedly sat in a meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister when the news came in, initially indicating a power problem. His staff was not, according to press reports, allowed to interrupt the meeting. The government met in a regularly scheduled Thursday morning meeting at Downing Street, number 10. Vice PM John Prescott led the meeting in Tony Blair's absence.

As people emerged into the streets from the attacked trains, the mass media coverage started in earnest and the first police officers started to arrive at the scenes. People were also sending pictures of the attacks from their mobile phones. A large number of alarms quickly reached the command and control centers of the first responders. Within only a couple of minutes – particularly in the case of Edgware Road, where people, many of them injured, were walking from the station – it became apparent that the cause of the disruption was no power failure, but rather a large-scale terrorist attack against multiple targets in the underground system.

2. It's a terrorist attack – have they used CBRN? During Thursday morning, more and more indications suggested that a large terrorist attack had struck London. But had the terrorists also used chemical, biological or radiological weapons? One reason for emergency personnel to be cautious was the uncertainty of what kind of situation they were going to face. Although the cases

² The explosion at Russell Square occurred on a train traveling from King's Cross. Therefore, the site of the incident is sometimes also referred to as "King's Cross", but mostly as Russell Square, which will be used in this study.

³ The figures are based on Bennetto and Herbert 2005, "The London Ambulance Service (LAS) response to the 7th July explosions", LFEPA 2006, BTP 2005,

of CBRN-terrorism have been extremely rare, it is a scenario that is part of the planning process, as well as one regularly discussed and trained during first responder exercises.

In fact, the first responders did not wait for CBRN-experts or exotic equipment to arrive. Faced with a large number of injured people, they reacted according to their primary experience, basic training, and the ethos within the blue light services; their primary mission is to save lives. The fire crews, the police and the ambulance personnel did not hesitate to care for the wounded and undertake other critical tasks, despite the specter of the CBRN-threat.

3. Would more incidents follow? It was soon clear that London had been hit by several deliberate attacks. The exact number of sites, and the amount of casualties were still unclear, though the emergency services had started to arrive at the bombed sites. At about 09:15, the Metropolitan Police feared that up to nine underground stations had been hit. At the same time as it became clearer that London was under attack, a mounting worry emerged: would there be more to come?

The rescue services had, on the one hand, to mobilize large numbers to deal with the current incidents, but, on the other hand, they also had to consider the risk of overstressing their personnel. The problem was how to allocate scarce and potentially critical resources. The rescue services had to optimize deployment for any one site, in light of existing and potential needs at other sites. What if a new series of bombs hits London in the afternoon? Are the terrorists planning to strike again next week? How can responding organizations sustain the readiness and endurance of key personnel, already heavily engaged in dealing with the previous incidents? At the same, the ordinary work of the police, ambulance and fire services had to be carried out. Concern with the risk of overstressing staff capacity led to decisions minimizing the size of the crews engaged at the different sites and also to efforts to close these sites as quickly as possible.

4. What to do with the hundreds of casualties? The situation on Thursday morning remained uncertain concerning exactly what had happened, the number of incident sites, and what was going to happen next. It was however obvious that a large number of people had been badly injured and was in urgent need of care. The usual way of dealing with casualties is, obviously, to take the most critically injured ones to the hospital as quickly as possible.

In London on the 7th of July however, the decision was made to send lightly injured people to hospitals first. In that way, the rescue services were able to “get rid of” many people and could concentrate on those with severe wounds. People with less serious injuries were put on a number of buses and were transported to hospital, without further drain on the already strained resources of the blue light services. However, this fast way of transporting people to hospitals was brought to an abrupt halt by the bus bomb at Tavistock Square at 9:47. After that attack, Transport for London ordered all their buses back to the bus stations.

5. Assessing the threat to public transportation In reaction to the damage and overall assessment of vulnerability, first the Underground trains and then the buses were taken out of operation on the morning of 7 July. The shutting down of the London Underground was one of the most important strategic decisions made during the crisis, and was in large part a decision based on the lessons from the Madrid train bombings of 2004. At 9:15 in the morning, the decision was taken to get trains into stations and to wait for further information. Almost immediately after that, the instruction was given to evacuate all underground trains in all directions. Approximately 250,000 people in stations throughout London were evacuated.

For a short while, the buses kept on running. However, following the explosion on the bus at Tavistock Square the decision was made to cancel bus travel and evacuate passengers. This decision was taken because the network could not be maintained safely, and because of the risks of further attacks. A sign on the M6 motorway advised motorists to avoid London. The mainland rail service was also affected; several stations were closed and many train companies canceled services or terminated the routes before reaching the capital.

6. The show must go on During the morning information made its way up to the ministerial level. When Prime Minister Tony Blair stepped out of the G8 meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister he was instantly briefed by his staff. It was thought that a public statement was needed from the highest level as soon as possible. At the time, uncertainty about the events was still widespread. When it became clear that the incidents were terrorist-related Blair reportedly was shocked, but he very quickly made clear his determination that the G8 would not be disrupted. However, for Blair a dilemma arose. On the one hand, it was imperative that the G8 conference should not be derailed by the bombings. On the other, it was essential for the Prime Minister to be fully briefed and involved in the evolving response to this crisis. As a result, Tony Blair left the G8 meeting to meet with police and intelligence officials and other staff in London. During his absence, the G8 summit continued under the chairmanship of the Foreign Secretary. Later that evening, the PM returned to Scotland.

7. What is the scope of the threat? Are other parts of the country at risk? A great deal of uncertainty ensued in the aftermath of the bombings. It was not known if further attacks would be initiated or what such follow up targets would be. Other cities across England raised their state of alert immediately following the attacks. Bomb scares were reported from Manchester, Brighton, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Sheffield, for example. When Birmingham experienced a security threat two days after the 7 July bombings, the city center was evacuated, roads to the center closed down and emergency resources elevated. In Brighton, police were alerted to examine a suspected briefcase, and carried out a controlled explosion to destroy a potential bomb. In Edinburgh, suspected packages on a double-decker bus led to alerts, cordons, examinations and two controlled explosions onboard the bus. However, neither contained any explosives.

8. Resuming public transportation With the subway closed down, all city busses rerouted to the depots and roads gridlocked, it was nearly impossible to get from one part of town to another on July 7. The situation affected the mobility of the rescue services as well as of citizens trying to get home from work. *Transport for London* executives had to consider the trade off between peoples' safety and returning to normality. As long as restrictions of the public transportation systems were kept in place, chaos would prevail in the city streets. On the other hand, if there were more bombs placed on buses or trains the consequences of a premature restart could be dire indeed.

To resolve the situation, Transport for London ultimately decided to resume traffic. On Thursday afternoon, local and public transportation that had been terminated earlier in the day, (such as London city buses and Docklands Light Railway) were back in operation. Moreover, a large part of the mainland rail network was in service. The Heathrow Express from Paddington station to the airport also resumed service. Restarting parts of the public transportation system meant that the gridlocked traffic decreased in the afternoon. However, the underground remained closed for the rest of the day. At about 19:00, the decision was taken to restart the tube network

the following morning. Security checks and searches were conducted on trains in depots overnight. Service was resumed at 5:00 am the next morning.

9. Pressure from public to find missing loved ones In the aftermath of the bombings confusion was widespread. The London Ambulance Service had not been able to track the casualties. People did not know if their missing loved ones were in the hospital. Within the first days after the attacks the Scotland Yard casualty hotline received more than 120,000 calls.

Meanwhile, there were a lot of reports in the newspapers and on the television of families standing around railway and subway stations and going from hospital to hospital with photographs of their relatives trying to find where they were. As a result of those pictures, the political pressure mounted on the Cabinet Office to solve the situation.

Awareness of the sensitivity of this issue was one of the lessons from New York on 9/11. The politicians wanted to avoid replaying the 9/11-scenario in the UK. The political pressure was also heightened by the G8 conference. The day after the bombings, a meeting was held at Westminster City Hall. The first point on the agenda was to find premises that could open quickly for visitors so that they would have a focal point where they could go. The Culture Secretary was put in charge of government support for the families. (She was also responsible for supporting British victims of the September 11 attacks and the Asian tsunami). The family assistance center remained open from July 9 until the end of August.

10. What impact could the bombings have on communities across the country? A high priority issue was community cohesion, i.e., what impact could the bombings have on communities across the country? Agencies needed to address communities such as the Asian community and the Muslim community generally, who felt that they were vulnerable to racist attacks in the aftermath of the suicide bombings. An early breakthrough in the investigation suggested that the terrorist cell was home grown, which required deployment of a new set of consequence management plans for long-term integration of ethnic communities and battling extremism at home. The politicians and the British society had to deal with the balancing act of condemning radical Islamists, and at the same time reaching out to and cooperating with moderate Muslims.

A few days after the bombings, Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke before the Parliament. His statement included a section specifically addressed to the Muslim community: “We were proud of your contribution to Britain before last Thursday. We remain proud of it today.” The government’s strategy included taking security measures, such as increasing large numbers of highly visible police officers in the streets, as well as an endeavor which entailed working in cooperation with the Muslim community while harshly criticizing every sign of lenience towards extremists. In the immediate aftermath of the bombings the Home Secretary set up seven working groups to look at issues surrounding integration and tackling extremism. The “Preventing Extremism Together” Working Groups constituted an effort to promote national debate on what was behind the London bombings. The aim was to come up with practical proposals for a community-based response to extremism. On September 21 Charles Clarke unveiled plans on for a new commission to look at ways Muslims and other faiths can better integrate into the community. Since July 7, the government has proposed legislations to make it possible to deport people who “foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence”.

11. Was it a suicide attack? A short while after the rescue response got underway on July 7, the police launched their investigation into what had happened. During the first days of the forensic

investigation, the police found several identity documents belonging to the terrorists. Why had the suspects left such a clear trail? Very early on in this investigation, the police came to the conclusion that the UK had been hit by a suicide attack. In fact, on July 7th the police activated pre-prepared guidelines (essentially rules of engagement) for dealing with suspected suicide bombers. Despite this, on Friday the 8th of July, Sir Ian Blair, the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, stated that the police had no evidence that the terrorist attack had been carried out by suicide bombers. He was quoted, for example, as having stated at a press conference that there was “absolutely nothing” to suggest that a suicide bomber had carried out the Tavistock Square bus bombing.

On July 11, Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke in the House of Commons. He said nothing about suicide bombers. On the contrary, by speaking of “tracking down those who carried out these acts of terrorism”, the Prime Minister implied that at least some of the perpetrators (or some form of organization behind them), were still at large. The day after, Peter Clarke (the Head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch) held a press conference and revealed that the UK had been struck by suicide bombers. Three of the suspected terrorists were named, all three born in the UK.

12. Not again – the second wave On 21 July, four new attempted suicide attacks occurred. In much the same fashion as on July 7, four men carried backpacks with explosives onboard the subway and a bus. The men tried to detonate their homemade bombs, but only the detonators went off, not the main charges. The attacks did not cause any serious harm. The bombers managed to flee unharmed, but were identified by Closed Circuit Television and arrested a few days later.

Prime Minister Tony Blair heard about the events when he was in a lunch meeting with the Prime Minister of Australia. He then chaired a meeting in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room, COBR. While the police did not try to downplay the events, the political level appealed for the public to keep calm. Tony Blair urged Londoners to go about their business as normal, saying: “We have just got to react calmly”. After a large police operation during the following weeks, 17 people were charged. Five men were accused of plotting to murder passengers on London’s transport network on 21 July 2005.

13. An innocent man is killed By mid July, there was a growing consensus that London had fallen victim to suicide bombing. Would the terrorists strike again? How should the police deal with the threat of highly motivated perpetrators, willing to die together with their victims? Obviously, these questions became even more critical after the attempted bombings of July 21st.

To learn how to deal with potential suicide bombers in the wake of 9/11, police officers from London had been sent to Israel and Sri Lanka for training. They wrote a confidential report on how the police in the UK should deal with an al-Qaeda threat, including advice for dealing with suspected suicide bombers. The so-called Kratos guidelines were activated on July 7, immediately following the London bombings. The day after the attempted bombings of the 21st of July, police officers were watching an address in south London, where some of the suspects from the attempts were thought to reside. A man left his apartment and was followed by plain-clothes police officers to the subway station in Stockwell. There he boarded a train, was confronted by police officers, and shot. The Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes died immediately.

Nevertheless, both the Prime Minister and the Mayor of London expressed their support for the police. Tony Blair said he was “desperately sorry” for the death of Jean Charles de Menezes, but noted that the police were working under very difficult circumstances: “it is important that we allow the police and support them in doing the job they have to do in order to protect people in

this country”. A couple of weeks later, new information occurred, information that questioned the initial reports about de Menezes’ allegedly suspicious behavior prior to the Stockwell shooting.

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⁴ This draft contains the first two thirds of a typical CRISMART study. The case is introduced, contextualized, (partially) reconstructed, and dissected into a set of crucial decision problems. The final third of the study (consisting of an analysis, practical lessons, and conclusions) are not included. Rather, we invite the participants in the CIAG Conference of 2006 to join us in an analytical dialogue about the case.

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Method

The method used in CRiSMART:s case studies is a “user-friendly” approach to process tracing and comparative analysis of crisis cases.⁵ The consists of four steps designed to contextualize, reconstruct, dissect, and then analyze a crisis from different perspectives. The steps are context, chronology/narrative, decision occasions, and thematic comparison.

The *first step* is to put the crisis in to its proper historical, institutional and political context. No crisis takes place in a vacuum. How a crisis occurs, is understood, managed and remembered, depends in large measure upon these key factors.

The *second step* is to reconstruct the course of events. What is it that triggers the crisis and motivates key decision makers to act at various junctures? Many (but not all) crisis begin with a dramatic, unexpected event, while many crises tends to deescalate more gradually. Some crises get a relatively quick closure while others tend to be drawn out, and may gradually turn into an enduring national trauma. Swedish examples of “unfinished” crises include the murder of Prime Minister Olof Palme and the Estonia ferry catastrophe, while enduring controversy surrounding the JFK assassination stands out as a good example from the American context. The events are described chronologically, using available empirical material, such as government documents and press releases, official evaluations, Congressional or Parliamentary testimony, Reports from Commissions of Inquiry, newspaper articles and broadcast media transcripts, interviews, secondary literature etc. Various sources are combined and weighed against each other via source criticism, in order to produce a synthetic narrative.

The *third step* is to break the crisis down into occasions for decision. An occasion for decision is a development in the ongoing course of events, which demands answer to the question, “What do we do now?”. Decision occasions are generated as reactions to some kind of stimulus, an *impetus*, which generates a number of problems. During the Cuba missile crisis, the discovery of Soviet missiles on Cuba was the initial impetus. In the 1990 Gulf war, the initial impetus (which escalated the ongoing events to a full scale crisis) was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The impetus, which activates decision makers, might come from inside or outside the government apparatus. It could be a result of a dramatic event, changes in systematic indicators or signals received through formal or informal feedback. When there’s information that “something has happened”, a decision unit forms to deal with a particular problem or set of problems. It’s important to observe that such a decision unit might diverge dramatically from those described in organizational charts or mandated in constitutional arrangements. The *effective decision units* are formed in the interaction between codified requirements of governing, informal institutional rules and practices and contextual factors.

When analyzing the decision occasion, having identified a decision unit, the next step is to map out the range of options considered by this decision unit. That is not necessarily the same thing as attempting to construct a set of logically plausible options – what is interesting is to identify the options considered by the members of the decision unit. After this, the next analytical step is to examine the stage of choice: How is the initial problem definition transformed into a decision, toward the generation of action (or deliberate inaction)? The focus on the path towards the decision is motivated by the belief that an institutionally embedded process shapes many aspects of the decision long before the moment of actual choice arrives. The final element of analysis into each decision occasion is the implementation phase. There are a large number of factors that might affect how a decision is actually carried out: logistical difficulties, communication and coordination problems, ambiguities in directives, and variations in

⁵ This section is based on Stern and Sundelius 2002.

interpretation. The result of a decision occasion becomes an entry value, which might lead to the next occasion, triggered by a new impetus.

Three different criteria are relevant when identifying decision occasions. *Prominence in the crisis decision-making process*: which problems were regarded as the most important ones for the decision-makers to deal with? *Post hoc importance*: These are issues that might not have been seen as especially important during the crisis, but in retrospect seem to have had a dramatic impact on the course of the events. *Pedagogical value*: best or worst practice. These are the decisions that could serve as a good example for future crisis decision-making, or alternatively, those who could have had a negative impact under slightly different circumstances.

The *fourth step* in the CRiSMART model is comparative thematic analysis. A number of themes have emerged from the research CRiSMART has conducted, themes designed among other things to make comparison between different cases and identification of best (and lesser) practices possible. They will not be elaborated on in this version of the study, but are worth mentioning as they will be key themes to be explored in the analysis of the empirical material presented below:

- Preparedness, Prevention and Mitigation
- Leadership
- Decision Units
- Problem Perception and Framing
- Value Conflict
- Politico-Bureaucratic Cooperation and Conflict
- Crisis Communication and Credibility
- Transnationalization and Internationalization
- Temporal Effects
- Learning⁶

Sources

This study is to a large extent *preliminary*. No public inquiry has been launched in the UK, and the terror bombings are still subject to criminal investigations. Thus, there will certainly be aspects of this case study that will have to be updated when more complete and reliable empirical data emerges. Second, the study is based on a *bottom-up approach*, where crisis managers in various operative and regional functions have been interviewed first. This operative/regional point of departure has then been complemented by additional interviews and study of mass media sources to begin to reconstruct the course of events and coping processes at the national and international (e.g. EU and NATO) levels. Additional interviews and more in-depth research is planned in order to illuminate these levels more completely.

Interviews have thus far been carried out with more than 30 decision-makers at various levels of the British crisis management system, from the Cabinet Office to the blue light services (see Sources). Other sources of information are the major British newspapers: *The Guardian/The Observer*, *The Times*, *The Independent* and *Financial Times*, as well as the TV and radio networks of the BBC. *Resilience 05 – Sharing London’s Lessons*, a high-level conference in London in October 2005 was also attended, together with a large number of high-level officials, including Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, officials from the Cabinet Office, as well as a

⁶ See also Boin, ‘t Hart, Stern, and Sundelius 2005.

large number of commissioners from the police, fire service, ambulance service, hospitals and the transport services.

Political and historical context

The political and institutional context that a crisis takes place in influences the way it is managed. In order to truly understand the actions of organizations and individuals in a crisis it is therefore necessary to first describe such contextual preconditions. An important part of this is the actors' previous experiences. One's own or the experience of others tends to affect individual and organizational behavior and convey possibilities as well as limitations for the actors involved (Sundelius and Stern 2002, p 73).

About London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. Greater London is 1587 kilometers in area and is comprised of 32 boroughs, as well as the financial district in the City of London. Seven million people live in greater London, and every day an additional 500,000 commute into the city (LFB, 2006). The city boasts one of the world's largest collective traffic systems: Every day there are 6.3 million trips by bus, 3 million by subway, 1.4 million by train and 150,000 with the Docklands Light Railway (Tfl, 2006).

General crisis management in the UK

Crisis management is preferably performed at the local level in Great Britain. If local actors cannot manage a crisis, crisis management is expanded, for example, by bringing in additional police districts and fire departments. The relevant ministry, for example the Home Office, limits its work to following developments, and keeping Parliament, the media and the public informed. When an event is so extensive that authorities at the local or regional level cannot cope with the crisis, crisis management responsibility is then shifted to the ministerial level. The crisis at hand determines which department shall take responsibility; for example, the Home Office is responsible for terrorist attacks, while the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is in charge of coordination in the case of a flood. The department that takes responsibility for a crisis becomes the Lead Government Department. If the department in question deems that the crisis requires, or will require, substantial cooperation across departmental boundaries, it should contact the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) at the Cabinet Office. Until the summer of 2001, the Home Office was responsible for civil preparedness in Great Britain; that responsibility shifted upon to the CCS upon its creation as part of the Cabinet Office in 2001. The CCS is meant to make Great Britain's response to unforeseen events more robust through coordinating their management. If it is not clear which policy area a crisis should be sorted under, the CCS takes immediate control of crisis management. This is also the case if it is deemed that a single department cannot manage a crisis alone (Cabinet Office 2003, p 57 ff, UK Resilience 2003). On November 18th, 2004 Parliament passed the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which is meant to create a framework for civilian crisis management in Great Britain (UK Resilience 2005).

Cabinet Office Briefing Room, COBR

A crisis triggered by a terrorist attack is by definition political. In such a case, a crisis management group is established at the ministerial level in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR).⁷ This group cooperates with the strategic leadership of the effort through a Government Liaison Officer, a top official in the Home Office who is sent to the regional strategic crisis management group (GCG). The representative sent by COBR sits with GCG and functions as a

⁷ COBR is often called COBRA in the media.

link between the national and regional level (Massey, 2005, personal interview). The work of COBR is lead by the Home Office secretary, or a top official of that department. The idea with COBR is to ensure that decision-making is well informed, timely and authoritative. Decision makers gather in a single location and keep direct contact with the location with the crisis location. In that way they can attempt to establish a clear picture of what has happened, stay informed of the ongoing investigation to mitigate and disturbances that come about, and manage any possible international consequences the event may cause. The Home Secretary presumably speaks to the Prime Minister before sensitive decisions are made, if time is not an urgent factor. As mentioned, the Home Secretary is usually present at COBR in addition to representatives from the government chancellery, defence ministry, a top police official (the chairman of the GCG), along with the relevant departments. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the European Union are also kept informed (Smith 2004, personal interview).

The flow of information is supposed to work in the following way: The Silver Meeting takes place at the crisis location, the Gold Meeting of authorities takes place 15 minutes later and the GCG meeting within 30 minutes. If the system functions as planned, the result should be that the GCG chairman can attend the COBR meeting to give the ministers a complete picture of the event with up to date information on the operative, tactical and strategic situation (Waspe, 2005, personal interview).

News Co-ordination Centre⁸

In the event of an emergency, the News Co-ordination Centre, NCC may be established at the Cabinet Office. The NCC supports the responsible department, the Lead Government Department, in their communications management of the overall incident. The NCC will co-operate both with the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (at national government level) and with the Gold Co-ordination Centre (mostly at regional level). The nature of the NCC's support will depend on the circumstances, but it could take the form of securing extra staff to work at the responsible department or in an operations centre; helping to compile and distribute briefing material; designing and establishing websites; forward planning; collation of requests for ministerial interviews; and preparing media assessments. Additionally, the NCC could provide a central press office to co-ordinate the overall government message.

Crisis management at regional and local level – London

The London Resilience Forum handles the overall planning for catastrophes, serious accidents and larger terrorist incidents in greater London. This is a cooperation forum comprised of the heads of the rescue service authorities along with the mayor of London and representatives of local and transport authorities (London Prepared 2005). The forum meets four times per year (Massey, 2005, personal interview).

Emergency management work in London is based on a so-called multi-agency approach, which is guided by several central documents. The London Emergency Services Liaison Panel has since 1993 given out the LESLP Major Incident Procedure Manual. The LESLP manual describes local structures for crisis management (Massey, 2005, interview). The manual provides primarily information on what responsibilities various authorities have (Beasley, 2005, personal interview, Bryce, 2005, interview). It is first and foremost a management and coordination plan

⁸ This section is based on "Emergency Response and Recovery", p 47.

(Leonard, 2005, personal interview). If an incident escalates to the regional level, the London Resilience Team's *Strategic Emergency Plan* (SEP) provides the structure for emergency management. The Strategic Emergency Plan went into effect in April 2005, and was used for the first time during the July 7th terrorist attacks of that year (Bryce, 2005, personal interview, Beasley, 2005, personal interview). The document pulls together six central plans for accident management in London: Leadership and coordination; media and public communication; handling a large amount of casualties; large scale evacuation; clearing the scene of a serious accident; and a catastrophe fund (SEP, 2005). An incident that is covered by the Strategic Emergency Plan assumes at least some central government involvement (Massey, 2005, personal interview).

London's multi-agency approach is activated when an incident is defined as a "major incident". Rescue workers of any rank or level can declare an incident a major incident. The incident does not necessarily have to be interpreted as a major incident by all authorities; it is sufficient for the appointing authority to see it as a major incident. The consequence is that all authorities contribute to the effort (Bryce, 2005, personal interview; Beasley, 2005, personal interview). The criteria for large-scale incidents are the extent and seriousness of the incident, as well as whether the incident is deemed to require strategic coordination (Massey, 2005, personal interview).

The Gold, Silver, Bronze structure

The basic system for cooperation and leadership during crisis is the command structure known as gold, silver and bronze. It is a tool for assuring that the right actors and individuals are gathered under the conditions necessary to make strategic decisions. The three levels exist within key rescue and crisis management authorities, and are used to describe both external and internal staff leadership. Gold, silver and bronze identify different roles. The idea is that "gold" decides how the incident should be handled strategically; "silver" develops the tactics to make the strategy work, and "bronze" implements the tactics on the ground.⁹

During a large-scale incident, the first representative of the rescue services on the scene becomes silver, regardless of his or her rank. That person's mission is first reconnaissance, and then to report back to headquarters rather than to take operative action. The first person on the scene automatically becomes the incident commander, responsible for managing the situation until the arrival of a more senior commander with more tactical and strategic training for such incidents. According to the plan, silver commanders of various authorities should meet regularly throughout the incident (Beasley, 2005, personal interview, Bryce, 2005, personal interview, Massey, 2005, personal interview; Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

Gold commanders meet in predetermined locations within their respective authorities. From a purely operational perspective, when an incident is declared a major incident the operative leader, for example at the command centre at the London Ambulance Service (LAS), decides whether a gold command group should be established. A handful of commanders then move to the adjacent room. A guard outside the door makes sure that only necessary, predetermined personnel are allowed in. Once established, the working group consists of an inner chief of staff, telephone operators, radio operators and someone responsible for situational awareness (Waspe, 2005, personal interview). The gold discussions deal with, amongst other

⁹ In the UK: 1) Strategic level/Gold level, the highest level, 2) Tactical level/Silver level, the middle level, 3) Operational level/Bronze level, the lowest level. (In the US, and in Sweden: 1) strategic, 2) operational, 3) tactical).

issues, strategic calculations on how the organisation should act in a day or a week, administrative questions on how to reach personnel and how operational sustainability should be handled, as well as economic questions. For the London Ambulance Service gold meetings are, for example, about when to withdraw their personnel during a CBRN attack, use of private ambulance companies, whether the capacity plan should be implemented (which can mean that ambulances are sent out even to serious emergency calls), and if the Service's reserve places should be opened. Then there are also more general strategic questions such as: Can we handle this situation? What do we do tomorrow? How does this affect our personnel? How do we find a solution? (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview). The advantage is that strategic thinking starts early in the process and runs parallel to operational activities. There are nevertheless gray zones as to which level various decisions are made; these are dependent on the situation and individuals involved. Many discussions at the gold level need not put into effect, even in the event of a major incident.

A similar structure is in place even within the private sector, primarily for actors involved with critical infrastructure: Companies in the natural gas, water, mobile telephony and transport sectors have their own gold, silver and bronze commanders (Beasley, 2005, personal interview, Bryce, 2005, personal interview, Barr, 2006, personal interview).

The Gold Co-ordination Group

To be able to handle large-scale incidents, several authorities may have to cooperate in a more structured and strategic way. If needed, a Gold Co-ordination Group may therefore be formed between for example the police, fire department, emergency services, military and local authorities. During a crisis the GCG is responsible for developing a strategic response that is coordinated between multiple authorities. The GCG works parallel to, but does not replace, the strategic decision level within the relevant authorities. It is usually the responsibility of the involved police department to organize a GCG and then initiate the group's work. As a crisis goes into a restoration to normality - when police and rescue services play a lesser role - command shifts to local authorities. Response to a terrorist attack is always led by a very senior police commander, however during other crises such as an infectious disease outbreak, health authorities, for example would lead the official effort. Those persons who are designated for inclusion in a GCG are usually top decision makers in their respective organizations. Representatives must have the authority to make decisions without asking their organization first (Cabinet Office 2003, p 20–21; SEP, 2005, p 13-14). The GCG meets in a pre-determined location, usually Hendon in north London (Waspé, 2005, personal interview).

Managing terrorism politically

The Home Office is responsible for fighting terrorism inside national borders, while the Foreign and Commonwealth Office handles terrorist attacks that target British interests outside of the United Kingdom. The Home Secretary is responsible for counter-terrorism policy and legislation, as well as for the police and the internal security and intelligence service MI5 (Home Office 2003).

Terrorism is treated as a crime in Great Britain and is primarily a law enforcement issue. This is both an organizational division of responsibility where the police- rather than the military- is responsible, and a conscious political strategy: since terrorist attacks are seen as criminal activities, Great Britain officially avoids giving terrorist organizations the status they usually

strive for. Jailed members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) have usually seen themselves as “political prisoners”, while they are officially considered criminals (Smith 2004, personal interview).

Anti-terrorism legislation

Until a few years ago, legislation relating to terrorism has been considered provisional in Great Britain. The Emergency Powers Act, which only covered the relationship with Northern Ireland, was established in 1920. This legislation was complemented in 1974 with the Prevention of Terrorism Act, where terrorism was defined as a criminal offense, not a politically motivated act. This view lived on in the additional laws established in the 1980s and 1990s. All terrorism-related British legislation until 2000 was in a formal sense temporary, and was reviewed every year. This relationship remained, despite the long-term conflict in Northern Ireland. On July 10th, 2000 Parliament approved the Terrorism Act, which replaced earlier terrorism-related legislation and made permanent most provisional measures from previous laws. The Terrorist Act went into effect in January 2001 (Taylor, T. 2000, p 188–189). The existence of more modern legislation in the related area- the peace process in Northern Ireland- together with the fact that the existing temporary legislation would expire in the year 2000 are some of the reasons given that the permanent Terrorism Act was established at that point in time (Newburn, m fl, 2003, p 479).

As a consequence of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, Parliament enacted the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act in the autumn of 2001. This new law can be seen as a complement to the Terrorist Act, and is intended to hinder the financing of terrorist organizations, facilitate cooperation between security and intelligence services, and improve security at airports and nuclear power plants (Taylor, T. 2000, p 221). The Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act also allow authorities to detain suspects, non-British citizens that are suspected for terrorism for an unlimited amount of time without a trial. This legislation has therefore been heavily criticized by human rights organizations (Newburn, m fl, 2003, p 479). Another heavily criticized bill passed Parliament’s lower house on February 28th, 2005. The Prevention of Terrorism Bill would replace legislation introduced after September 11 and would give courts increased powers with lower demands on evidence. Courts can, if the bill goes through, put suspected terrorists under house arrest. The new law would also place limits on suspects’ freedom of movement by confiscating passports, and would also restrict their use of telephones and computers. It will also be possible to use in court intelligence material that neither the suspect nor his or her lawyer would be allowed to see (Dyer 2005).

The new terrorism bill was voted down in Parliament on November 10, 2005. A large number of Labour MP’s turned against the government, and the proposals to hold terrorist suspects for 90 days without charge (resulting in an increase from today’s 14 days to 28) (The Economist, 2005-11-12). New legislation was proposed on August 24th to make it possible to deport people who “foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence” (Cox 2005). This legislation was passed by the House of Commons in February 2006, but was voted down by the House of Lords on February 28th (Tempest 2006).

Central Actors

The Law Enforcement Sector in Great Britain

The law enforcement sector in England and Wales is divided into approximately 50 different police districts and several national units, separate from the police forces in Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is no national coordinating authority comparable to the Swedish National Police Board. Special competencies are instead located in the country's largest police department, the Metropolitan Police in London. The Metropolitan Police therefore often support other police forces when particular operations are required.

Metropolitan Police

London's law enforcement sector consists of the Metropolitan Police, the City of London Police, the British Transport Police and the MoD (Ministry of Defence) Police. The Metropolitan Police are by far the largest police force with over 30,000 police officers employed. It is also the force that usually handles terrorist attacks in London (Metropolitan Police 2005a, c). The City of London Police is responsible for downtown London, sometimes referred to as "the square mile", where many banks and financial institutions are located. Cooperation in terrorist cases between the Metropolitan Police and other forces - whether in London or elsewhere in England or Wales - happens through the head of SO13 formally asking that the department be invited to support the affected police force. The police chiefs can formally refuse, but that has not happened for the past 15 years (Sloper 2004a, personal interview, Metropolitan Police 2005b).

The London police forces, as is British custom, are usually unarmed. Since 1991, armed officers of the Metropolitan Police, Force Firearms Unit (previously known as SO19, now CO19) have been called upon in actions against more dangerous criminals. In 2001, the Metropolitan Police had 1750 armed officers (Yardley 2001). The CO19 usually patrols in an Armed Response Vehicle with three officers, two of which carry automatic weapons, giving police in London access to armed reinforcement within minutes. If a mission is deemed too serious for a three-man team to handle, additional reinforcement is called in, in the form of Specialist Firearms Teams consisting of additional officers with extensive training and equipment (Metropolitan Police 2005d).

British police also have a great deal of responsibility in crisis recovery, for example coordination and reporting death and damage, as well as transporting dead bodies to the mortuary (Beasley, 2005, personal interview, Bryce, 2005, personal interview). After an incident that leads to 20-30 deaths, identifying victims can be done in several of the 30-40 existing locations in London. In cases where the death toll is higher, a temporary structure is built for handling dead bodies in pre-determined military areas (Gordon, 2005, personal interview).

British Transport Police

The British Transport Police are a force employing 2280 officers and 700 administrators (BTP, 2006) tasked with law enforcement on the national railway network, the London subway system, the driverless Docklands Light Railways and a number of tramlines. There is an occasional investigation on whether there should be a particular British transport police authority. The question was investigated in 2004, at which time it was concluded that this would be a good solution. Despite this finding, there is currently a new investigation ongoing (Trendall, 2005 personal interview).

City of London Police

The City of London Police is responsible for general security in London's city center, sometimes called "the square mile", where there are many banks and financial institutions. Only 6000 people live in the area, but the City of London Police also work to protect the 350,000 people who every day stream in to work or visit the area. There are approximately 1200 officers in the force's two police stations in the square mile; two-thirds of the officers work in an operative capacity (CoLP, 2006).

For the past few years the British police have run a number of projects on cooperation between private and public actors. Since 2004, the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police have run Project Griffin, a cooperative effort between security personnel and the police. In a one-day training session, security company personnel are taught security work, threat analysis and counter-terrorism skills. The project also includes a conference call called the Bridge Call: Every Friday night private security company chiefs are given the latest updates on crime fighting and threat scenarios (CoLP, 2004). In the case of the City of London Police, approximately 95 large firms receive such information. In exchange for the information and training, the City of London Police can call upon the companies' resources during large-scale incidents and accidents; they can direct and use the companies' security personnel for sealing off and guarding areas. The security guards, however, are not granted police powers in these cases. The advantage is that this frees up police resources for more demanding tasks. An additional cooperation project that the City of London Police are involved with- a pilot project called Cab Watch- disseminates and collects information through taxi companies (Beasley, 2005, personal interview, Bryce, 2005, personal interview).

Ministry of Defence Police

Ministry of Defence Police is the interior police unit within the MoD. The unit consists of 3500 police officers, protecting around 100 military facilities. The Headquarters is in East Anglia (MDP, 2005).

British security and intelligence services

The work of the intelligence and security services is guided at the ministerial level.¹⁰ **The Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator** is a Permanent Secretary in the Cabinet Office responsible to the Prime Minister for co-ordinator security, intelligence and emergency related issues. **The Joint Intelligence Committee** is a part of the Cabinet Office, responsible for providing ministers and officials with co-ordinated inter-departmental intelligence assessments, primarily concerning security, defence and foreign affairs.

The British interior **Security Service, MI5**, has seen large reforms during the last years. They have expanded their staff with more than 1 000 people. The main focus has shifted from countering Russian spies during the cold war, over IRA terrorists, to radical Islamist groups. To give an idea of how the MI5 prioritise, their allocation of resources was as follows in December 2005: International counter-terrorism, 52%; Irish counter-terrorism, 21%; security advice, 12%; counter-espionage, 6.5% (while 8.5 % were allocated to proliferation, serious crime, and other areas) (MI5 homepage, Ranstorp, 2005). After the bombings in London, the MI5 has opened

¹⁰ This section is largely based on "National Intelligence Machinery".

eight regional offices in UK cities, including Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham. The aim of the reform is to increase the surveillance of terrorist suspects and to try to penetrate radical networks with informants (Clarke and Geraghty, 2005-07-24).

Secret Intelligence Service, SIS, sometimes known as **MI6**, works with international threats against the UK, such as security, defence, serious crime, foreign and economic policies. SIS works with human and technical sources, and liaises with a large number of foreign intelligence and security services.

Government Communications Headquarters, GCHQ, has two main missions: Signals Intelligence (Sigint) and Information Assurance. Intercepting communications and other signals collects signals intelligence. GCHQ also provides services and advice on the security of communications and information systems, to government departments, the armed forces, security and the other intelligence and security services.

Defence Intelligence Staff, DIS, is a part of the Ministry of Defence and conducts all-source intelligence analysis from both overt and covert sources. DIS gives intelligence assessments to Ministry of Defence, military commands and deployed forces, as well as to other government departments. DIS also collects intelligence during military operations.

Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, JTAC: As part of the development of coordinated arrangements for handling and disseminating intelligence in response to the international terrorist threat, a new multi-agency unit, JTAC, was set up in June 2003. JTAC is staffed by members of MI5, SIS, GCHQ, the DIS and representatives from other relevant departments including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office, and from the Police.

London Fire Brigade

The London Fire Brigade is the third largest in the world and handles fire protection and fire fighting in all of greater London. The brigade employs 6800 people, including 5700 fire fighters and commanders who serve at the city's 112 fire stations (LfB, 2006). The main office is in Lambeth and the command centre is in Docklands (Massey, 2005, personal interview).

London Ambulance Service

The London Ambulance Service (LAS) employs 4000- of which 750 are paramedics- divided across 70 ambulance stations. There are always at least 50 people on duty at the command center, taking approximately 3000 calls per day (Edmondson, 2005). The London Ambulance Service has training and continuing education programs that stretch across five levels: the first two are basic training for technicians and paramedics; the three higher levels are for personnel with bronze, silver and gold assignments (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

Transport for London

Transport for London (TfL) is responsible for the London transport system, which is led by the Commissioner of Transport who is appointed by the mayor. Areas of responsibility include buses, subway, the Docklands Light Railway and Croydon Tramlink, the city's 580 km long street network and 4600 traffic lights. The mayor appoints the TfL board and also serves as its chairman (TfL, 2006).

London Resilience Team

The London Resilience Team (LRT) is an organized partnership between key authorities within the rescue service and emergency management planning sector. The London Resilience Team was established after September 11th, 2001 to serve as a link between the “blue light” sector and the government. Participants are government authorities, organizations and private companies including actors within police, fire, ambulance, military, local authorities, health, transport, critical infrastructure, industry and volunteer organizations as well as government on the local, regional and national level. At the national level, the Home Secretary and the National Resilience Committee lead such efforts. All regions in Great Britain have their own regional Resilience Teams for regional cooperation and command. Representatives of various participating authorities work for the London Resilience Team (Leonard, 2005, personal interview, Bryce, 2005, personal interview, Beasley, 2005, personal interview).

Since London is a city of many different cultures and ethnicities, a structure for handling crises with victims from various religions and origins exists. For this purpose, the London Resilience Team has a special working group that works with questions concerning religious groups and multiculturalism, known as the Multi Faith Working Group, whose work is led by the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army has been given this task since most religious groups accept them, because they are seen as a church not connected to the establishment, the state and the Church of England (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview).

Earlier experience with terrorist attacks

Great Britain has suffered many terrorist attacks the past few decades. Most have had their origin in the Northern Ireland conflict, the modern incarnation of which has been ongoing since 1969 and has cost over 3600 people their lives. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) ceased their “military operations” on August 31st, 1994. Several “unionist” terrorist groups followed PIRA’s lead several months later. However, on February 9th 1996 a message was delivered to the mass media that PIRA’s cease-fire was over. An hour later a powerful bomb exploded in the Docklands neighbourhood of London. Additional terror attacks were carried out before PIRA declared another cease-fire in July 1997. That same spring Tony Blair had won parliamentary elections as head of the Labour Party. With a new Prime Minister and PIRA’s cease-fire, it became possible for new peace talks to begin. These culminated in the spring of 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement. The peace agreement was approved by referendum in North Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and was accepted by most of the northern Irish terrorist groups. Since the peace agreement went into effect, occasional rounds of talks for disarming terrorist groups have been held. Despite this, terrorist attacks have been carried out; for example, the wave of attacks in 2000-2001 that primarily affected London, including the London Post Office in Hendon and the BBC office in Ealing Broadway (Mulholland 2002, p 93–94, Taylor, P. 2002, p 335-373, Evans, R. 2002, Millar, P. 1996).

Besides PIRA’s bombing campaign, London’s blue light authorities have been challenged by a bomb campaign carried out by right wing extremists. In April 1999, a nail bomb exploded in a crowded pub in the SoHo district of London, killing three people. Similar attacks had been carried out in the weeks before in the largely immigrant neighbourhoods of Brick Lane and Brixton. A young man who was an outspoken Nazi was sentenced to six life sentences for the crime (BBC, 2006e).

Incidents of terrorism in other countries have also influenced the state’s preparedness. Serious terror attacks that struck the United States on September 11th, 2001 and the explosions in

Madrid on March 11th, 2004 are examples of events that British authorities have studied and drawn conclusions from. In the latter case, 199 people were killed and 1400 injured when ten bombs exploded in a short amount of time on four commuter trains in the Spanish capital; three additional bombs that did not detonate were found during rescue operations.

A fundamental part of London's planning is a direct lesson from McKinsey's report on September 11th. The report established that crisis management suffered during the September 11th terrorist attacks because arriving forces initially rushed in with too many resources. London's plans instead instruct ambulance personnel to stand back while the first-arriving forces inspect the scene and establish a command structure (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview). The lessons from September 11th have had a great impact in operative routines since a number of commanders from the Metropolitan Police went on an observer mission to New York after the events of September 11th, 2001. A senior Metropolitan Police officer has also had a special assignment to gather all the lessons that were taken from New York (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview).

Suicide terrorism

The traditional bomb attacks that have affected London over the years are to a certain extent different than so-called suicide terrorism. The attack in London on July 7th, the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11th, 2001, as well as several attacks in for example Israel and Iraq in recent years can be classified as suicide terrorism. A common method used in Israel and Palestine has been that the attacker fastens explosives to his or her body and detonates them onboard a bus, at a café or at a roadblock. Driving a car filled with explosives and detonating them in a group of people or near police and soldiers is another procedure where the attacker dies with his or her victims. No known attack of this type has been carried out in the Northern Ireland conflict; bomb attacks in connection to that conflict usually involve timed or remote detonation of explosives. Another clear difference between terrorism in the Middle East and Northern Ireland (as well as for example ETA attacks in Spain) is that many bomb attacks in Northern Ireland have been preceded by warnings. Attacks in above all the Middle East strive for maximum casualties, thus no warnings are given. In attacks in Northern Ireland against soldiers, police and other symbols of British "occupation", no warnings have usually been given since these are seen as "legitimate targets". On the other hand, some form of warning has usually been given before bomb attacks against more "civilian" targets during the past ten years (Taylor, P. 2002, p 372, *The Guardian* 2001b, Mockett 2004, personal interview).

Experience of train accidents and other crises

Besides bomb attacks, blue light authorities in London also have relatively extensive experience in handling train accidents. The worst in recent years took place at Clapham Junction in south London in 1988. Thirty-five people died and 100 were injured in a train accident involving three trains in a complicated area of tracks during rush hour. Two crowded passenger trains collided and shortly thereafter a third train crashed into the wreckage (BBC, 2006c). The next worst happened in west London's Ladbroke Grove nearby Paddington Station in October 1999 when two crowded trains collided during a multi-track shifting manoeuvre on a accident-prone section of track. One of the trains caught on fire. Thirty-one people perished and approximately 160 were injured in the accident that was caused by one of the trains running a red light (BBC, 2006d).

Serious subway accidents are however less common. The last subway accident that led to a large number of casualties happened at Moregate station in 1975. Forty-three people died when a

crowded train inexplicably drove past the station and into a wall (Trendall, 2005, personal interview). Other serious incidents have occurred in London's subway. In November 1984, 1000 passengers were stuck for three hours when a fire broke out in London's busiest subway station Oxford Circus. The fire, however, did not lead to any deaths. After the incident, smoking- which four months earlier was allowed in the subway cars- was banned in all stations under ground. The investigation criticized the lack of fire protection and warned, "Luck has a habit of running out" (BBC, 2006a). Three years later, in November 1987, the result was not as lucky: A burning match ended up under a wooden escalator at King's Cross. Thirty-one people died in the intense fire, after which wooden escalators were replaced (BBC, 2006b).

Besides terror attacks and train accidents, other types of incidents of late have had an influence on preparedness planning in London. One such was the August 2003 blackout in London, which struck at 6:15 PM when thousands of people were on their way home from work. Traffic chaos followed, and hundreds of passengers were stuck in the subway. The British Transport Police classified the event as a major incident, despite the fact that it was not a primarily a police issue. Electricity suddenly returned within an hour (CNN.com, 2006). Structures for cooperation and management were established at Scotland Yard, which was a useful experience (Trendall, 2005, personal interview).

Great Britain's handling of the Southeast Asian tsunami on Boxing Day in 2004 has also influenced plans: After the tsunami, which took 155 British lives (BBC, 2006f), a provisional facility for handling dead bodies in a major disaster was established in London (Gordon, 2005, personal interview).

Chronology

This chapter gives a chronological overview of the London bombings, concerning mostly the day of the bombings, but also some of the events before and after the terror attack.

Before 7 July

First half of June The British Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, JTAC, lowered the threat assessment from “severe general” (third highest) to “substantial”. The decision was based on the assessment that there was no single “group with both the current intent and the capability to attack the UK” (Norton-Taylor, August 22, 2005).

22 June (on or about): A police officer from the Special Branch noticed a Pakistani who was about to enter the country at the ferry terminal in Felixstowe. The man was on a watch list with potential al-Qaeda members. The police officer notified MI5 who decided to not follow the man, since he was seen as a limited threat. The Pakistani left the UK via Stanstead airport on 5 July (Moreton 2005-07-17, Burke et al 2005-07-17). This event was later reported to have never occurred (The Observer 2005-07-24).

4 July: Magdy El-Nashar- an Egyptian citizen and PhD. chemist at the University of Leeds- left Britain for Egypt (Burke et al, 2005).

6 July: It was announced that London was chosen to host the Olympic games in 2012. At the same time, the G8 summit started in Gleneagles, meaning that many politically and operatively key persons were in Scotland. Among them were British Prime Minister Tony Blair and 1500 police officers from the Metropolitan Police (Doward et al, 2005, Moreton 2005-07-10).

The police and the security services in England were monitoring more than 200 suspected Islamist extremists during the **summer of 2005**. At least ten of these monitoring operations included round-the-clock surveillance (Leppard and Calvert, 2005).

7 July

Early morning Shehzad Tanweer, Mohammad Sidique Khan, and Hasi Hussain left Leeds in a hired Nissan Micra. They met Germaine Lindsay (a.k.a. Abdullah Shaheed Jamal) in Luton, northwest of London, who had driven there in a red Fiat. The four men met at 07:21. The police later found nine bombs in the boot of the Fiat (Moreton, 2005-07-17, Leppard and Calvert, 2005-07-17, Burke et al 2005-07-17, Leppard 2005-07-17).

07:48 The four young men, now carrying backpacks, boarded a Thameslink train heading for London from Luton station. The train arrived at King’s Cross in north London at 08:20. The men spoke with each other for a few minutes and then left to board trains in different directions (Bennetto and Herbert 2005-07-13).

Approximately 08:50 Three bombs were detonated within 50 seconds of each other. One bomb exploded at a Circle Line train close to Aldgate station in the City of London. Another bomb was detonated when a train left the station at Edgware Road. Both these bombings were carried out

when the trains were close to surface level, which slightly limited the effect of the blasts, given the wider tunnels there. The third terrorist attack occurred on a Piccadilly Line train, between King's Cross and Russel Square. The narrower tunnel there made the effect of the explosion much worse. Since the tunnel is located 30 metres below ground, the rescue work was also much more complicated. Seven people were killed by the blasts at Aldgate, six at Edgware Road, 13 at Tavistock Square, and 26 at Russel Square – plus the suicide bombers themselves (Bennetto and Herbert 2005-07-13).

08:51 The managing director of London Underground, Tim O'Toole, was alerted of a power surge in the underground. It is common that loud bangs and explosions occur in connection with power outages in the subway system, something that had happened that Thursday morning (Freeman, 2005, Barr, 2006).

08:56 The Metropolitan Police notified the London Fire Brigade of an explosion and fire at Aldgate station (LFB Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

08:58 The London Fire Brigade was alerted of fires at Edgware Road by members of the public (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:00 Two units from the London Fire Brigade's Whitechapel station arrived at Aldgate (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:00 The government met in a regularly scheduled Thursday morning meeting at Downing Street, number 10. Vice PM John Prescott led the meeting in Tony Blair's absence (Moreton 2005-07-10, Kowalczyk 2006, interview).

09:02 The London Fire Brigade was alerted of smoke in a tunnel at King's Cross (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:04 The first appliances from London Fire Brigade arrived at Edgware Road (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:05 Prime Minister Tony Blair reportedly sat in a meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister Gleneagles in Scotland. Blair's staff received word of events in London, and followed news broadcast. They were, however, according to press reports, not allowed to interrupt the meeting (Moreton 2005-07-10).

09:05 The events in at Aldgate underground station were declared a "major incident" by the London Fire Brigade, and more resources were called upon (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29). (The other blue light services declared various sites as "major incident" at different times. For example, the London Ambulance Service declared four different incident sites as major incidents at 09:21-09:38, LAS Incident Summary Sheet, 2005).

09:07 The command and control centre of the London Fire Brigade received information on the actual place where one of the incidents had occurred (Edgware Road) (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:07 Appliances from the London Fire Brigade's station at Euston arrived at Euston Square (three vehicles) and King's Cross (one vehicle), following the routine of "split attendance" (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:10 Personnel at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington received the message "Major incident please attend". Julia Dent was chief executive at South West Strategic Health Authority. On 7 July she served as "Gold lead", in other words the person responsible for the National Health Service's strategic response in the event of a disaster (Moreton, 2005-07-10).

09:13 The first fire engine from Soho arrived at King's Cross (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:15 The story of the bombings broke when the Press Association reported that emergency services had been called to London's Liverpool Street station following reports of an explosion. Over the next hour, broadcasters and online news services mobilized staff and invited eyewitnesses (Day et al, 2005a).

09:15 London Underground decided to evacuate the entire underground system. To stop all traffic was not an easy call to make, according to the managing director: "We knew that this was off the chart and that it was most likely the worst nightmare of a terrorist incident [...] It was plain to us this was not a conventional situation and we had to secure the network, check all the trains and make sure they were safe" (Freeman, 2005). The underground was then evacuated in 44 minutes (Barr, 2006, personal interview).

09:35 Blair finished the meeting with China's Prime Minister and was informed about a traffic lock down in London, due to several serious and suspicious incidents (Moreton, 2005-07-10).

09:47 The fourth bomb was detonated in the upper part of a double-decker bus at Tavistock Square (Leppard and Calvert, 2005-07-17). A member of the public alerted the command and control centre at the London Fire Brigade (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

09:54 The first appliance from the fire brigade arrived at Tavistock Square (LFB's Information Bulletin Special, 2005-07-29).

A few minutes before 10:00 BBC News 24 had already broadcast from the locations where the bombings were carried out. At this time, a news broadcast is aired on BBC1 as well. There was still talk of a power outage in the underground. When the bus bombing at Tavistock Square was confirmed, BBC1 cleared their program tableau and co-aired news of the events with BBC News 24. The news coverage lasted until 7:00pm (Mosey, 2005). BBC avoided the term "terrorism" for quite a while in their news coverage of the London bombings (Baker 2005).

10:00 During the first hour of the crisis the Metropolitan Police casualty bureau had received 44 000 calls (HoC, 2005).

10.45 Sky news TV broadcaster was running pictures of the scenes of carnage at Tavistock Square, where the top deck of a double-decker bus had been blown off (Day, et al, 2005a).

11:00 The police described the events as a coordinated attack. Signs at the highways close to London gave the message "Avoid London. Area closed. Turn on radio" (Moreton, 2005-07-10).

During the morning When information of the events reached the government, they cancelled meetings. Home Secretary Charles Clarke called for a meeting of COBR (Cabinet Office Briefing Room), the ministry-level crisis management committee. At this stage, the key figures were Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt, Transport Secretary Allistar Darling and vice Prime Minister John Prescott, as well as commanders from the intelligence service and the police. There are three levels of emergency within the British cabinet; the events in London were seen as category three, the most severe, a potential catastrophic emergency, like September 11 and Chernobyl. The entire country could be under attack, with the events in London a first strike (Doward et al, 2005).

11:34 BBC was reporting the possibility that al-Qaida could be responsible for the blasts (Day, et al, 2005a).

12:00 Tony Blair called the events in London a terrorist attack, and announced that he was leaving the G8 summit for London (Moreton 2005-07-10).

During the day After the terrorist attack the firearms units, CO19, at Metropolitan Police were mobilized. The police officers were told they should expect a "Kratos call", meaning that the police should work after guidelines directed towards suicide terrorists. Police officers are then ordered to shoot in the head, to kill (Leppard and Calvert, The Sunday Times, 2005-07-17).

George Galloway, Member of Parliament for "Respect - the Unity Coalition" (that opposes the Iraq war) made a connection between the participation of the UK in the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and the terrorist attacks in London. He argued that the underground bombings were predictable and that the "global war against terrorism" had generated bitterness and hatred, increasing the support for Usama bin Laden (Doward et al, 2005).

During the day Witnesses had told police that a man with olive-coloured skin had fumbled with his backpack prior to the explosion on bus 30. The police found a decapitated body close to the seat of the blast (suicide bombings almost always leads to decapitation of the perpetrator, given the force of the explosives close to the bomber). Peter Clarke, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch at Metropolitan Police, had inspected the bus at Tavistock Square. After this, Clarke strongly suspected that it was an act of suicide terrorism that struck London in the rush hours of July 7. Therefore, the entire focus of the investigation shifted (Leppard and Calvert, 2005-07-17).

Rumors reached the government that the terrorist attacks had been carried out by suicide bombers. At the same time, other rumors were spread: that a sniper from the police had shot a potential suicide bomber at the Canary Warf in east London; that military units had been ordered to patrol the streets; and that the death toll in London was higher than after the Madrid train bombings in 2004 (Doward et al, 2005).

The index at the London Stock Market (FTSE) fell by more than 200 points, mostly affecting the transport and tourism industries (Moreton, 2005-07-10).

15:00 The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, had campaigned in Singapore for London to be awarded the 2012 Olympics. Before he headed back to London, he made an announcement for the press, an impassionate speech that was very well received by the public (Moreton, 2005-07-10).

16:25 The police issue a number to call for relatives missing their loved ones (CNN.com, 2005).

16:32 Some public transport starts again. Bus traffic, the Docklands Light Railway in East London, and the mainline rail services began working (except at King's Cross and Victoria station). The London underground continued to be shut down (CNN.com, 2005).

17:30 Tony Blair led a new meeting with COBR at Downing Street (Moreton, 2005-07-10).

19:00 The official death toll was 37. At least 20 people were missing (Moreton, 2005-07-10). The decision was taken to start the underground Friday morning (Barr, 2006, personal interview).

22:20 The parents of Hasib Hussain call the Police Casualty Bureau to report him missing. A family liaison officer from the police visits Hussain's home in Leeds. The police brought pictures and the names of Hussain's friends. These names soon turned out to match the credit cards and the driver's licenses that police had found in the bombed trains and in the bus (Burke et al 2005).

The days after 7 July

8 July The police assumed that the perpetrators had been *clean skins*, persons without a criminal past, and thus unknown to the security service and to the police. Sir Ian Blair, Metropolitan Police commissioner, said at a press conference that there was so far "absolutely nothing" to suggest the Tavistock Square bus bomb was carried out by a suicide bomber, though he added: "We cannot rule it out, it may have been, but it [the device] may have been left on a seat, it may have gone off in transit." (Norton-Taylor and Cowan 2005, Sherwood, et al, 2005-07-14).

8 July The Home Office called for a meeting with leaders from larger religious communities in the UK (Doward et al, 2005).

9 July The official death toll reached 49. It was anticipated to rise even more. Two silent minutes were held to remember the victims (Johnston 2005).

9-10 July The police investigation showed that there were, both at Edgware Road and at Aldgate, victims of Asian origin with the same wounds as the man in bus number 30. The police now had the names of three of the suspected suicide bombers (Leppard and Calvert, 2005). Experts from the intelligence service in Spain arrived in Britain to give advice to the investigators (Doward et al, 2005).

10 July Media reports that Davinia survived her wounds. She became a symbol of terrorists' victims as the bloody, burned and barefoot woman shown on front pages around the world (Bloomfield, 2005). The media still assumed, based on police sources, that London had not been

the victim of suicide bombers. Instead, the perpetrators were believed to have placed the explosives and probably escaped unharmed (Whitaker, et al 2005).

11 July, approximately 20:00 Hundreds of police officers had scanned through CCTV footage (Closed Circuit Television) to find three to four young men of Asian origin with backpacks. One police officer found the critical sequence showing four men during the morning rush hour at King's Cross underground station. At least one person was possible to identify, Hasi Hussain, already a central name in the investigation (Leppard and Calvert, 2005).

12 July The official death toll reached 52, and the first victims were named (Gillian and Bowcott, 2005).

12 July, at 17:00, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch, held a press conference and revealed that the UK had been a victim of suicide terrorists for the first time. Three of the suspected terrorists were named, all three born in the UK. By the 12 July, they were still seen as "clean skins" or "lily whites", persons without previous criminal record. The police raided their houses, and other buildings. 11 and 12 July seems to have been a breakthrough for the police investigation (Bennetto and Herbert, *The Independent*, 2005-07-13, McGrory, *The Times*, 2005-07-13, Studeman 2005). The police raided an apartment in 18 Alexandra Grove in Leeds, where they found ten kilos of "potentially dangerous" chemicals stored in a bathtub. All four suicide bombers had been linked to that flat, as well as the Egypt chemistry PhD, Magdi Mahmoud el-Nashar (Moreton, 2005-07-17, Burke et al 2005-07-17).

One week after 7 July, and onwards

14 July The fourth terrorist was named, Germaine Lindsey, a Jamaica-born Muslim convert living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire (Fresco et al 2005).

15 July Egypt authorities arrested Magdi Mahmoud el-Nashar, a chemist suspected for cooperation with the suicide bombers (McAllister, 2005). Media speculation, that the terrorists had used military explosives, like Semtex, proved to be wrong. All bombs were made of Triacetone Triperoxide, TATP, which is made of common chemicals (like nail varnish remover), available in any supermarket or drug store (Jha, 2005-07-16, *the Guardian*, Burns and Cookson, 2005-07-16, *Financial Times*).

17 July The press reported that the belief that the suspects were previously unknown to the police had proved to be wrong. The police and the security services in Britain and in the US came across the name of one of the suspects, possibly two, a year ago. Mohammed Sidique Khan was a peripheral figure in a police investigation concerning suspects constructing a large bomb of nitrate fertilizer, but also recognized by an al-Qaida suspect. The security services might also have been interested in Germaine Lindsay, reported to have had links with terror suspects in New Jersey, USA. Both Khan and Lindsay escaped close surveillance. The press reported that Shehzad Tanweer went to Pakistan on at least two occasions and met with radical Islamist groups (Leppard and Calvert, 2005, Burke et al 2005-07-17, Elliot et al 2005-07-17).

21 July New bombings in the London subway were carried out. Four men with explosives packed in backpacks entered three underground trains at Oval, Shepherd's Bush and Warren Street, and one bus, No 26 in Hackney. The men tried to detonate their bombs, but failed; only the detonators worked, and only one person was injured (Sharick and Carsen, 2005). The four men escaped, but were soon identified by surveillance cameras.

22 July A Brazilian man was shot dead by a Special Firearms police unit. Jean Charles de Menezes was shot in an underground train, taking seven shots in the head and one in the shoulder. This was seen as part of the shoot-to-kill policy to counter would-be suicide bombers. After the shooting, the police suggested the suspect had been acting suspiciously, wearing a large coat and trying to escape from police officers following him (Thompson et al 2005-08-14).

23 July The police said de Menezes was not connected to the terrorist inquiry. The police apologize (Thompson 2005-07-24).

23 July The police raided areas in Stockwell in south London in the hunt for the suspected perpetrators of the attempted July 21st bombing, arresting two men (The Observer 2005-07-24).

27 July The police arrested four men suspected of the July 21st bombing attempts (Blitz, 2005-07-27).

27 July The police description of both de Menezes' clothing and of his behavior prior to the shooting were changed. The Brazilian was dressed in a jeans jacket, not bulky winter clothing that could have concealed a bomb. He used a travel card to pass the ticket barrier; he did not vault the barrier (Honigsbaum, 2005).

7 August One month after the first terrorist attack, and 14 days after the second, 6-10 000 police officers were ordered to provide security in and around public transport systems.

24 August Given that no timing devices or mobile phones (that can work like timers, or be phoned to detonate a bomb) had been found by the police, they drew the conclusion that the bombs were set off by the four men carrying them. Some media reports suggested that the men were tricked into the attacks, but it seems clear that they were actually suicide bombers. The bombs found after the failed attempts on July 21st were found rather intact. These devices were also manually activated (although no connections between the bombings of July 7th and 21st have been found) (Dodd and Cowan, the Guardian, 2005-08-24). New legislation was proposed to expel persons who "foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence" (Cox 2005).

1 September The TV network al-Jazeera aired a video where the supposed ringleader for the 7/7-bombings, Mohammed Sidique Khan, explained the reasons for the suicide attacks. That video was followed by another, where Ayman al-Zawahri- said to be Osama bin Laden's second-in-command- confirmed that al-Qaeda was behind the terrorist attacks against London (Russel, The Independent, 2005-09-02).

1 November A ceremony was held in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack. Relatives of the victims gathered in St Paul's Cathedral, alongside the Prime Minister, the Queen, the Mayor

of London and other dignitaries. The ceremony was projected on a large white screen at Trafalgar Square (Laville, 2005).

10 November The new terrorism bill was voted down in the Parliament. A large number of Labour MP's turned against the government, and the proposals to hold terrorist suspects for 90 days without charge (resulting in an increase from today's 14 days to 28) (The Economist, 2005-11-12). New legislations were proposed on August 24 to make possible to deport people who "foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence" (Cox 2005). This legislation was passed the House of Commons in February 2006, but turned down by the House of Lords on February 28 (Tempest 2006).

13 December The Home Secretary decided that there should be no public inquiry concerning the bombings of July 7. Instead, a "narrative" about the events should be compiled, based on materiel from the security service and from the police (Guardian, December 14, 2005).

Occasions for Decision

1. What is going on?

First alarms received at 8:50 – power failure or deliberate act?

2. It's a terrorist attack – have they used CBRN?

3. Would more incidents follow?

Need to deploy large forces, but must consider endurance.

4. What to do with 100s of casualties?

5. Assessing the threat to Public Transportation

Should we stop the transport system? - Stop the transport system July 7.

6. The show must go on

7. What is the scope of the Threat?

Are Other Parts of the Country at Risk?

8. Resuming public transportation

9. Pressure from public to find missing loved ones

10. Was it a suicide attack?

11. What impact could the bombings have on communities across the country?

12. Not again – the second attack

13. An innocent man is killed

Initial response to the crisis...

1. What is going on?

First alarms received at 8:50 – power failure or deliberate act? (ca. 8:50 to 9:05)

The first occasion for decision was when alarms came flooding in the morning of July 7 and it became clear that something was terribly awry on the subway stations in London. A great deal of uncertainty shrouded the situation initially. While it was apparent that something was terribly wrong at a number of subway locations, reports from Londoners regarding explosions and injured persons flooded in, it was at first unclear what had happened and what had caused the problems.

Because of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, the command and control structure for a major operation was in place at the morning of 7th of July at the Metropolitan Police in London. Both the usual command center was up and running, coordinating the day-to-day police work, as well as the Specialist Operations Room, dealing with the events in Scotland. During the last ten days, London had seen the Live 8 events, as well as four other large concerts, in Hyde Park, the

Gay Pride festival, and the celebrations after the decision to give London the Olympics 2012 (Wasp, 2005, personal interview, Gomm 2006, personal interview, MPS Presentation).

The traffic started in the London Underground as usual at 05:15. At 06:29, a traction motor on a train blew up, causing a bang and smoke at Stockwell Underground Station. A couple of minutes after 8 o'clock in the morning, the Network Co-ordination Manager Andy Barr was in the control room at London Underground and got reports of a pneumatic air bang in the Tube. Some passengers initially interpreted these smaller incidents, and a couple of others during the Thursday morning, as bombs, as they often do. Regular reports were sent to the rescue services (Barr, 2006 personal interview).

At 08:50, Superintendent Roger Gomm at the Metropolitan Police Service finished a meeting. He was reached by indications that something was not right in the tube network. Gomm contacted Andy Barr at London Underground, and found out that three trains were stuck in a tunnel (Gomm, 2006 personal interview). At 08:50, the London Underground knew that something was going on between Liverpool Street and Aldgate. Emergency services were alerted to both stations. There were also reports of a suicide at Edgware Road, which caused a train to derail (Barr, 2006 personal interview). The situation was initially punctuated by uncertainty as to what had actually happened.

At 08.51 the British Transport Police reported, "believed explosion, station being evacuated" at Liverpool Street Station to the London Ambulance Service. An ambulance was activated to that area. A couple of minutes later, an explosion at Aldgate Underground Station were reported, and then, the London Fire brigade reported an explosion near to Paddington Station (LAS Incident Summary Sheet, LAS response to the 7th July explosions). Safety and Contingency Planning Manager of the London Resilience Team, seconded from Transport for London Nick Agnew, received a page 8:59 that said "Major power failure." (Agnew, 2005). In some cases, people walked from a bombed train to two different subway stations, stations that sometimes had more than one entrance. Given these circumstances, there were initially reporting about up to ten incidents (Gomm, 2006, personal interview, Smith, 2006, personal interview).

At the same time as people started to emerge in the streets from the attacked trains, the mass media coverage started to catch up speed and the first police officers started to arrive to the incident sites. People were also sending pictures of the attacks from their mobile phones. Taken together, this resulted in a large amount of alarms reaching the command and control centers of the blue light organizations. Within only a couple of minutes – particularly in the case of Edgware Road, where people, many of them injured, were walking from the station – it became apparent that it was no power failure (Gomm, 2006, personal interview, Agnew, 2005, personal interview). The London Ambulance Service refers the same kind of short time-span; in their command center, they received reports from different incident sites within minutes after the events, and drew the conclusion that the incidents were, in fact, terrorist attacks (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview). On the other hand, for some of the police officers dispatched to the incident sites, things were unclear until they arrived. Chief Inspector Elaine Van-Orden from the Metropolitan Police had got information about an explosion at the Liverpool Street Station. She arrived there at 09:15. Details were vague about the reason for the explosion; it could have been a power surge. When she got to the scene, there were a lot of casualties, people walking around with blast wounds, and it became apparent that so many injuries could not be a result of a power black out (Van-Orden, 2006, personal interview).

At 09:00, the government met in a regularly scheduled Thursday morning meeting at Downing Street, number 10 and was thus coincidentally assembled at the time of the bombings (Kowalczyk, 2006, personal interview). Vice PM John Prescott led the meeting in Tony Blair's

absence. Five minutes later, Tony Blair was in a meeting with the Prime Minister of China at Gleneagles in Scotland. Blair's staff members got initial reports about the disturbances in the London underground, and followed the news broadcasts. On the basis of these preliminary reports, it was decided not to interrupt the meeting: "At that stage there was genuine confusion" one staff aide told the Independent on Sunday (Moreton 2005-07-10).

Borough commander Graham Howgate was at his fire station in Hackney, north of the city center. A couple of minutes after 9 o'clock, he got the initial news via the radio broadcast that a power surge had hit the Tube. Ten minutes later, the radio reported that a terrorist attack had occurred (Howgate, 2006, personal interview). At about the same time, divisional commander Peter Marshall at the Westminster fire station heard a news flash on the radio, concerning two trains in a collision in a tunnel (Marshall, 2006, personal interview).

The story about the London bombings broke at 9.15 Thursday morning when the Press Association reported that emergency services had been called to London's Liverpool Street station following reports of an explosion. Over the next hour, broadcasters and online news services mobilized staff and invited eyewitnesses to call in to cover the situation at multiple scenes across the capital. Sky News' rolling headline immediately snapped with news of emergency services being called to Liverpool Street and dispatched its helicopter to get aerial footage of the scene (Day et al 2005a).

Thus, a number of the key decision makers within the blue light services and the transport sector knew something major was going on. The initial reports about a power failure had quickly been replaced by the much more alarming news about a large-scale terrorist attack against a number of subway trains. What to do?

2. It's a terrorist attack – have they used CBRN? (9:05-9:30/10:00)

During Thursday morning, more and more indications pointed towards that a large terrorist attack had hit London. Had the terrorists also used chemical or biological weapons? One reason for emergency personnel to be cautious was the uncertainty of what kind of situation they were going to face. Although the cases of CBRN-terrorism have been extremely rare, it's a scenario that is part of the planning process, as well as discussed and trained during exercises. The risk of CBRN-attacks is thus also a part of the LESLP Major Incident Procedure Manual (LESLP 2004, Appendix A, p 61-62, Marshall, 2006, personal interview, Waspe, 2005, personal interview).

When the first blue light personnel started arriving at the incident sites, they had few ideas of what they should expect. The information had been contradictory and they strived to get there as quickly as possible. In some cases police officers were very close to the underground stations when the bombs onboard the trains exploded. Chief Inspector Elaine Van-Orden from the Metropolitan Police had got information about an explosion at the Liverpool Street Station. She arrived there at 09:15. Details were vague about the reason for the explosion; it could have been a power surge. As the first senior police officer at the scene, she became bronze officer, and started to co-ordinate the work.¹¹ When she arrived, there were already personnel there from the Metropolitan Police, the Ambulance Service and from the City of London Police, in large numbers. There were a lot of wounded people wandering around. Policemen had arrived at the

¹¹ Although the Metropolitan Police are using the same Gold – Silver – Bronze system as the other blue light services, they apply it slightly different: At 7/7, the Metropolitan Police had one Gold officer, one Silver officer, working at the Headquarters (Roger Gomm), and several Bronze officers, each leading their part of the work at each incident site (Gomm, 2006, personal interview, MPS presentation).

scene and started to assist people. As part of that, some of them, including a police sergeant, had also gone down into the tunnels – they were “self-deploying” (Van-Orden, 2006, personal interview).

The first paramedics and technicians from the London Ambulance Service who attend an incident site are supposed to “take a step back”, evaluate the situation, and communicate with the command center. However, the ambulance crews were faced with a very chaotic situation: People with explosion injuries, coming out from the tube stations, overwhelmed the rescue workers: “...you’re the bloke standing in front of the station and you suddenly have got 25 seriously injured people surrounding you...” (Waspe, 2005, personal interview). The first responders from the London Ambulance Service on the scene of an incident are clinicians, not incident managers. This was also the case during the 7th July. Hence, their primary role was to save lives, as is the Strand One for all blue light services (LESLP 2004, p 12-13, Gomm, 2006, personal interview, Waspe, 2005, personal interview). The considerations about an attack with chemical or biological weapons, was on the one hand dwarfed by the professional instincts of the emergency workers to save lives.

On the other hand, some fire crews, and especially their fire officers (as well as police and ambulance personnel), seem to have relied on a few quick estimations: no people collapsing without visible injuries, no blisters, no people vomiting and no disoriented people without wounds. These are the usual signs of a chemical attack, and they were not present. The dosimeters used by fire crews and specialists within the ambulance service were not going off, meaning that no radioactive agents had been used (Trendall, 2005, personal interview, Marshall, 2006, personal interview).

Whether or not there were any initial assumptions about a CBRN-attack, the result was the same: The rescue personnel were not standing back, waiting for CBRN-experts to arrive, or for specialist equipment to be deployed. Faced with a large number of injured people, they reacted according to their major experience, their basic training, and the ethos within the blue light services; their primary role is to save lives. The fire crews, the police and the ambulance personnel started immediately to take care of wounded people (Waspe, 2005, personal interview, Edmondson, 2005, personal interview, Marshall, 2006, personal interview).

3. Would more incidents follow?

Need to deploy large forces, but must consider endurance (09:15-09:47-11:00)

It soon started to emerge that London had been hit by several deliberate attacks. The number of sites, and the amount casualties were still unclear. The emergency services had started to arrive to the incident sites. At about 09:15, the Metropolitan Police feared that up to nine underground stations had been hit (Gomm, 2006, personal interview). The first ambulance that arrived at Edgware Road reported “An explosion on train. Anything up to 1000 casualties. Send as many ambulances as possible.” This first report sent the control room at the London Ambulance Service into “a complete spin”. At that time, it was known that several underground stations had been hit. Given that, and the first report from the ambulances on site, the senior controller in the ambulance command and control center decided to alert all hospitals in London, to make them ready for large amounts of casualties (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

At the same time as it became clearer that London was under attack, a troubling thought emerged: Is there more to come? The fear of more attacks was in the back of the minds of several blue light officers, as well as a question of strategic concern for the Gold group within the London Ambulance Service. The rescue services had, on the one hand, to mobilize large numbers

to deal with the incidents, but, on the other hand, they had to consider the risk of overstretching their personnel: How to deal with this one specific incident site - the other sites might need our attention as well? What if a new series of bombs hits London in the afternoon? Are the terrorists planning to strike again next week? How should we sustain the endurance of our personnel, if they are so heavily engaged in dealing with the previous incidents? At the same, the ordinary work of the police, ambulance and fire services had to be carried out (although on a restricted scale) (Howgate, 2006, personal interview, Marshall, 2006, personal interview, Smith, 2006, personal interview, Edmondson, 2005, personal interview, Waspe 2005, personal interview).

Chief Inspector Elaine Van-Orden from the Metropolitan Police worked at the Russell Square incident site. Policemen gathered to get some rest at Holiday Inn, a hotel close to the site. A lot of personnel from the Metropolitan Police sat in a large room, many of them covered in debris and in blood. Some of them seemed to be in a state of chock, in a condition often referred to as “shell chock”. At that moment, Van-Orden realized how many officers that had been badly affected by the terrorist attack (Van-Orden, 2006, personal interview). Would these police officers be able to deploy to another incident site?

Divisional commander Peter Marshall at the London Fire Brigade was mobilized to Edgware Road at about 9:30. The mobile phone systems went down shortly after his arrival, as did the pager system. According to Marshall, the same thing also happened to the police units at the site. When he started to consider the long-term management of resources, he had no way of contacting the fire service headquarters. Marshall assumed that they were not going to get any more resources to Edgware Road. On the contrary, he knew that he had to release as many resources as he could, as quickly as he could. This was partially based on the early information about the events; Marshall had heard that six underground trains and three buses had been hit. The fire brigade had not got enough resources to deal with all of them. (That this actually was not the case did not matter at that time – Marshall could not communicate with his command center). He describes a sense of “isolation”, where he had to make decisions based on very limited information. Another reason for freeing up resources, was the previous experience of the level of “paranoia” that hits London when a major incident had occurred – Marshall and his team expected that the general public would react strongly to minor issues, and call the emergency services a lot. Thus, every resource Marshall could free would count. Another issue of endurance was how to deal with the personnel: Should the new fire crews that arrived at the incident site be used to replace those who had worked hard in the underground to free severely wounded people, or should the extra fire units go to another incident site, or to a “normal” emergency call? It would take some time to get the crews and their equipment assembled in the underground, and Marshall decided to let the new rescue teams go (Marshall, 2006, personal interview, Bruff, 2006, personal interview).

Another way to maintain endurance was to rotate the fire crews. The normal fire fighter crews did a lot of the heavy lifting of debris and of casualties, and were relieved after 20 minutes. Those who worked with special cutting equipment, to release the stuck casualties, worked for half an hour. After some rest, the personnel started working again. Marshall used two fire officers to look after the fire crews; one at the train to rotate people, and one with the spare resources, to look after them, making sure people had something to eat and drink, and getting rest. The fire fighters wanted to stay with the trapped victims, and were in many cases hard to get out of the train to get food and rest (Marshall, 2006, personal interview, Bruff, 2006, personal interview). That willingness to work seems to have been very frequent during the day (Gomm, 2006, personal interview, Howgate, 2006, personal interview, Marshall, 2006, personal interview,

Smith, 2006, personal interview, Edmondson, 2005, personal interview, Waspe 2005, personal interview).

The blue light services were heavily involved in dealing with the three bombed trains when, **at 09:47, a red double-decker bus at Tavistock Square** was ripped apart by an explosion. The previous, uncertain reports were about people emerging from underground stations, but there had not been that many pictures from where the terrorists had struck. Now, one of the strongest symbols for London had been hit, and if there had been any doubts of what had happened, they disappeared. The bus was only a few hundred metres from Russell Square underground station, one of the previous incident sites. By passers were photographing the wreck and send their pictures to nation-wide media. The news of the terror attack spread fast. By 10.45am Sky was running pictures of the scenes of carnage at Tavistock Square. Sky news producer Bob Mills gave an eyewitness account from Russell Square after hearing a blast on the way to work. BBC cleared their tableau and started their rolling coverage of the bombings, which lasted until 19:00 (Day, et al, 2005a, Day, et al, 2005b, Mosey, 2005). The bus bomb **confirmed** that terrorists had hit London. The previous speculations about a possible power surge faded away quickly. The need for endurance was underpinned. The event also affected the rescue workers' sense of vulnerability as many of them clearly heard that another explosion had occurred nearby (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

The concerns of overstressing the personnel led to decisions, throughout the day, to minimizing the crews engaged at the different incident sites, and also to try to close the sites as quickly as possible. Thus, London Ambulance Service left Aldgate after 1 hour and 20 minutes, while the fire service stayed a couple of hours longer there (Howgate, 2006, personal interview, Waspe, 2005, personal interview, Smith, 2006, personal interview). Trying to free fire crews and ambulance personnel was one way of increasing the endurance. Different kind of specialist teams were also released as quickly as possible, such as forensic teams from the Metropolitan Police Anti Terrorist Branch, as well as the inter-service CBRN-teams called Multi-Agency Initial Assessment Team (Smith, 2006, personal interview, Waspe, 2006, personal interview).

4. What to do with 100s of casualties? (ca 9.15-10:00)

The situation on Thursday morning was to a large extent unclear, among other things concerning what had happened, the number of incident sites, and what was going to happen next. In one aspect, however, much information pointed to the frightening fact that a large number of people had been badly injured. How were first responders to deal with them?

Three of the bombings occurred at the same time in the morning rush hours. At Russell Square, the train was hit between stations, meaning that both uninjured and walking wounded people were heading in both directions, ending up at both King's Cross and Russell Square. To make things even more chaotic, King's Cross is a large subway and train station, with lots of exits. Hence, the passengers from the bombed trains were spread over a large area around a number of stations. When the rescue services started to arrive to the incident sites, there were a lot of people in motion. Given that the terrorists had hit several trains and one bus, this taken together, put severe restraints on the blue light services (Waspe, 2005, personal interview, Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

The ambulance personnel had to deal with a lot of people in one area, some with severe injuries, other with lighter wounds, and many without physical injuries, but heavily psychologically affected. Previous experience tells the paramedics and the technicians that people

with less serious injuries, that can walk about in an incident area, are the ones that are most likely to start wandering around and interfering with the blue light responders, while they try to treat people with the most severe injuries. Another issue with victims that are walking wounded, is that they could decide to go home by themselves, and then, at home suddenly gets worse. At that stage, they might not be able to contact a hospital, and the ambulance service might not be able to send any resources (Waspe, 2005, personal interview). Thus, there were a lot of people around, and many of them were in need of hospital treatment.

The usual way of dealing with casualties is, obviously, to take the most critically injured ones to hospital as quickly as possible. During a larger incident, with many injuries, a casualty clearing station is organized to sort wounded people in categories (triage). The large amount of people, injured and uninjured, had to be dealt with. The problem was solved in an unorthodox manner. A doctor from the Royal London Hospital came running to personnel from the London Ambulance Service and cried out “Get rid of the P3s first!”. The P3s are the walking wounded, the people with light injuries, and a “key decision” was made very quickly (Waspe, 2005, personal interview, Edmondson, 2005, personal interview). Just as they had done in some previous major incidents, for example in dealing with the train crashes at Ladbroke Grove in 1988 or at Paddington Station in 1999, the ambulance personnel took the decision to put people on passenger buses. CBRN-co-ordinator Steve Waspe from the London Ambulance Service describes the decision: “And we commandeered the buses, so we took 200 casualties to the London Hospital by bus. We went up to the bus driver and said, ‘Do you know how to get to the Royal London Hospital, mate?’ ‘Yeah, I do’. Here’s 80 people, take them” (Waspe, 2005, personal interview).

In that way, the rescue services were able to “get rid of” a huge amount of people, and then they could concentrate on the people with severe wounds. Lightly injured people were put on a number of buses, with a paramedic and sometimes a policeman onboard, and then driven to a hospital. In this way, a large number of people could be transported to hospital, without using the strained resources of the blue light services. Usually, injured people are taken to hospital with ambulance, manned by one paramedic and one technician each. However, this fast way of transporting people to hospitals was brought to an abrupt halt by the bus bomb at Tavistock Square at 9:47. After that attack, Transport for London ordered all their buses back to the bus stations (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

After the London bombings, the London Ambulance Service has started a reform process, where non-emergency personnel, the Patient Transport Service, should be involved in a major incident. They are supposed to specifically deal with patients with minor injuries, and transport them to hospitals. In that way, the paramedics and the technicians can concentrate their work on taking care of people with severe injuries. Another goal is to standardize the use of buses during a major incident: alongside with a predetermined number of ambulances, officers and specialist vehicles, two passenger buses should be included (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview).

5. Assessing the threat to Public Transportation

This section describes the reaction of public transport authorities in the Greater London area, primarily the London Underground, to the multiple explosions of 7 July in the subway and later the explosion on the bus at Tavistock Square. In reaction to the damage and overall assessment of vulnerability, first the Underground trains and then the buses were taken out of operation on the morning of 7 July. The shutting down of the London Underground was, according to Inspector Gary Buttercase of the London Resilience Team (LRT) seconded from Metropolitan Police

“[o]ne of the most important strategic decisions that were made” during the crisis, and was in large part a decision “made on the strength of the lessons from Madrid” where trains were bombed by terrorists in 2004 (Buttercase 2005, personal interview).

A widespread unanimous and publicized consensus that the explosions were related terrorist attacks was not reached until some time after the explosion on the bus in Tavistock Square. A number of central decision makers were however operating on the assumption that the tube explosions were likely the consequence of terrorist attacks long before the bus explosion. Network Coordination Manager and Gold control for London Underground Andy Barr explained that at about three minutes past nine it was apparent that the explosions in the underground were caused by terrorism. According to Barr, the types of injuries observed at that time appeared to be the result of bombings and were both consistent and numerous (Barr, 2006, personal interview). Whereas suicides and other assorted injuries are not foreign to London Underground and British Transport Police staffs that have their offices adjacent to those of London Underground, the types of injuries reported minutes after the blasts in the subway the morning of 7 July were unique in both severity and number.

Safety and Contingency Planning Manager from Transport for London and LRT Nick Agnew also explained that within minutes of the blasts, while not proven, it was apparent that a terrorist attack was the most likely cause of the explosions and subsequent injuries:

We started with the reports coming in from the train sites on the Circle and Hammersmith lines and then of course on the Piccadilly Line with the train at Russell Square. And it is true to say that the initial report was not such that you would confirm that it was a terrorist act. It could have been a power failure caused by something else. But very, very quickly, we’re talking five, ten minutes, it was clear from the subsequent report that it was a terrorist attack (Agnew 2005, personal interview).

This information came flooding in from large numbers of people who took pictures with their cellular telephones, pictures that were within a very short time posted on websites or gathered by media and published.¹² Agnew received confirmation of the credibility of such pictures and reports from the Group Station Manager at Edgware Road who had recently worked with Agnew at the LRT representing London Underground (Agnew 2005, personal interview).

Based on the rapidly incoming information about the injuries and incidents and in consultation with London Underground’s Chief Executive Officer and Network Security Manager, Barr decided at about eight or nine minutes past nine in the morning that all underground trains in all directions would be stopped and the approximately 250,000 people in stations throughout London evacuated. Barr emphasized that a decision to shut down the London Underground has to be done with careful consideration and knowledge of how such a decision will affect other parts of the public transport system (Barr, 2006, personal interview).

I know that if I put a quarter of a million people out on the streets, then there is a significant impact on other transport modes, because at the moment, buses and Docklands and Croydon and other parts of the system are not actually going to be affected. As soon as I put a quarter of a million people on the streets, I’m going to have a very, very dramatic effect on buses in particular, and on heavy rail, and I have to get communications out to other systems that say, ‘If you’re coming into London, there isn’t any Underground’ (Barr, 2006, personal interview).

While the bus companies and other trains operating within the London area are private companies not affiliated with London Underground, all public transportation in London is under the

¹² Information circulation of this magnitude has not been witnessed prior to the 7 July London bombings.

jurisdiction of Transport for London, the British Transport Police and the Department for Transport. Since 2000, all trains in Britain, including London Underground are moreover, due to their particular safety concerns, governed by Railway (Safety Case) regulations (Barr 2006, personal interview, Health and Safety Executive, 2005).

London Underground, like the London rescue services, models their contingency planning on that of the London Emergency Service Liaison Panel (LESLP). At 9:15 in the morning, after conferring with other senior staff at London Underground, Andy Barr gave instructions using the code word “Code Amber”, which signaled personnel to “get trains into stations and wait for further information”. “Almost simultaneously” Barr noted, “I then gave the instruction to evacuate” (Barr, 2006, personal interview). A “Code Red, the immediate shutdown of the network was never called as this would have left many passengers trapped in trains which would have been stalled across the network” (BBC July 12, 2005b). The Code Amber action was chosen by London Underground management as the best possible action under the circumstances as “it allowed the majority of passengers to be de-trained at stations rather than proceeding through tunnels which is a slow and dangerous process” (BBC July 12, 2005b). The evacuation of all the Underground trains and stations was complete within just under an hour of the evacuation order. London underground emergency teams had some difficulty in evacuating the sites affected by the bombings, as these stations were also part of the police investigation and had been cordoned off. Traffic wardens used to patrol the cordoned areas denied access even to Underground emergency workers (BBC July 12, 2005b). This problem is representative of the dual nature of crises scenes as sites for rescue as well as crime investigation identified in other cases as well and warranting further comparative analysis.¹³

Following the explosion on the number 26 route 30 bus at Tavistock Square owned and operated by the largest local bus operator in the London area, Arriva (Clark, 2006) the decision was made to cancel bus travel and evacuate passengers. “We pulled all buses out of central London... we did take a conscious decision to pull buses out” (Agnew, 2005, personal interview). Transport for London also communicated this to national Rail, Docklands, light Railway and the taxi control offices (Barr, 2006, personal interview). This decision was taken because of the realization that they were “in such trouble that we [could] not maintain the network safely” and “an hour into the incident [they] still...could not forecast was how many more attacks there would be” (Agnew, 2005, personal interview).

6. The show must go on

In the morning, information was gradually making its way up to the ministerial level. When Prime Minister Tony Blair stepped out of the G8 meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister he was instantly briefed by his staff. It was thought critical that a public statement be delivered from the highest level as quickly as possible. At the time, uncertainty about the events was still widespread. For instance, it was then thought that six major incidents had occurred. However, the dust began to settle in time to prepare the PM’s first short statement about the events given in the morning at Gleneagles (G8, 2005). When it became clear that the incidents were terrorist related Blair apparently “was shocked, but equally he very quickly made clear his determination that the G8 would not be disrupted”. He also conveyed that view to the other members of the G8 (10 Downing Street, 7 July, 2005). Speaking from Gleneagles at 12:00, Blair in his first public

¹³ Moreover, in the London bombings, the rescue/investigation scene duality was further complicated by the need for engineering staff to ensure infrastructural stability and technical soundness of the tunnels, cables and tracks following the blasts.

statement about the incident said that “[j]ust as it is reasonably clear that this is a terrorist attack, or a series of terrorist attacks, it is also reasonably clear that it is designed and aimed to coincide with the opening of the G8” (G8, 2005). For Blair a dilemma arose. On the one hand, it was imperative that the G8 conference should not be stopped or disrupted by the events. On the other, it was essential to be appropriately briefed with reliable information about what was going on, i.e. to hear for himself the views of his ministerial team of what the departments were doing as well as being briefed about the emergency agencies, police and intelligence activities (BBC, 7, July, 2005a). All this information was required to be able to make essential crisis decisions. In addition, the symbolic dimensions of actually being in London, coping with the crisis and sharing the ordeals of the Londoners was not to be underestimated.

After the statement at the G8 Summit, Blair flew to London to chair the next COBR meeting. Blair and the other leaders had agreed to carry on the G8 meetings without him. In Blair’s absence Foreign Secretary Jack Straw chaired the talks (BBC, 7, July, 2005a). After the COBR meeting, Blair spoke to the Leader of the Opposition and to Charles Kennedy. He also made a private visit to the command center at Scotland Yard for an emergency authorities’ briefing (10 Downing Street, 7 July, 2005). Blair rejoined the talks in Gleneagles in the evening (BBC, 7, July, 2005a).

COBR was staffed throughout the night. On the morning of July 8, the Home Secretary chaired the first COBR meeting of the day while Blair was in Scotland for the last day of the G8 summit. Symbolic crisis management, such as visiting casualties, was then initially handled by the Queen and Prince Charles as Blair had to follow through the G8 talks. Blair, however, did return to London on July 8 to chair a COBR meeting in the evening (10 Downing Street, 7 July, 2005; BBC, 8 July, 2005). When the G8 summit was concluded, Blair also took part in symbolic aspects of crisis management. On 13 July, he joined thousands of mourners at London’s City Hall to sign a book of condolence for the victims (10 Downing Street, July 13, 2005b). Two days later, at the annual Police Bravery Awards, he gave a tribute to the police officers that responded to the bombings and saluted them in the garden of 10 Downing Street (10 Downing Street, July 15, 2005). In the immediate aftermath of the bombings Blair’s political position was strengthened and his rating was his second highest (Riddell, July 26, 2005). The momentum was broken and the political advantage lost in the following months, however, possibly due to the government losing the initiative over its proposals for anti-terrorist legislation and because of the police shooting of the Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes (Riddell, 8 September, 2005).

7. What is the scope of the Threat?

Are Other Parts of the Country at Risk?

A great deal of uncertainty ensued in the aftermath of the bombings. It was not known if further attacks would be initiated or what, in such a case the targets would be. Other cities across England raised their state of alert immediately following the attacks; Manchester, Edinburgh, Brighton, Sheffield, Portsmouth, and Hereford all saw bomb scares during the Thursday or the next days (Ward 2005). With respect to the Manchester area, Greater Manchester Police Assistant Chief Constable Ian Seabridge did issue the statement however that they “would like to reassure our local communities that there is no intelligence to suggest any threat to the area”. Close contacts with the Metropolitan police were reportedly kept by all areas and established emergency plans activated (BBC July 7, 2005c).

There are eight other regions in Britain in addition to that of London and each of them has similar arrangements linking the local level to the central government in terms of emergency

planning (UK Resilience, 2006). Major cities within England also cooperate with one another and the central government in a project formed in 1995 called “Core Cities”. Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, and Sheffield form the core city group with Birmingham providing the secretariat (Core Cities Group 2005). Emergency and continuity planning are part of the core city profile; Manchester City Council’s emergency planning team notes that they work “in partnership with emergency planners from other major cities in England” (Manchester City Council 2005).

In the aftermath of the 7 July attacks, critique has been raised against the government and intelligence services for not being adequately prepared, even reducing the level of warning a couple of weeks before the attacks (The Guardian, December 14, 2005). Despite such claims, currently subject to parliamentary investigation by the Intelligence and Security Commission (ISC) (Evans, 2006), levels of preparedness in certain parts of the country appear to have been high following the 7 July attacks. When Birmingham for example experienced a, according to the police unconnected, security threat two days after the 7 July bombings, actions taken were highly precautionary. Birmingham city centre was evacuated, roads to the centre closed down and emergency resources elevated (BBC July 10, 2005a).

Bomb scares were also reported from Brighton, Edinburgh, and Sheffield, to name a few. In Brighton, police were alerted to examine a suspected briefcase, and carried out a controlled explosion to destroy a potential bomb. In Edinburgh, suspected packages on a double-decker bus led to alerts, cordons, examinations and two controlled explosions onboard the bus. However, neither contained any explosives (Ward, 2005).

The Chair of the Policy and Strategy Committee of West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority later commended the actions of the operator Centro, the West Midlands Police and the public transport operators for their heightened service and professionalism in responding to the potential security threat (WMPTA 2005).

8. Resuming public transportation

With the subway closed down, all city busses rerouted to the depots and roads gridlocked. It was virtually impossible to get from one part of town to the other. The situation affected the mobility of the rescue service as well as citizens trying to get home from work. It was a difficult situation indeed for Transport for London executives. They had to consider the trade off between peoples’ safety and returning to normality. As long as restrictions of the public transportation systems were kept in place the chaos in the city streets would prevail. On the other hand, if there were more bombs placed on buses or trains the consequences could be unbearable. Transport for London held a number of discussions during the day with other representatives of public transport and transporting companies like for instance National Rail, Docklands Light Railway and the taxi control offices to make sure they understood what transport for London was doing in response to the crisis (Agnew, 2005, personal interview). In the meantime there were scenes of chaos on the streets of London. Neil McIntosh at the Guardian gave an eyewitness account:

Londoners are now streaming home on foot - we can see them outside the Guardian offices here in Farringdon road. The scenes are somewhat reminiscent of those after 9/11, when New Yorkers flowed out of Manhattan across the Brooklyn bridge (McIntosh, 2005).

The public was seriously affected by the congestion. Countermeasures were put in place. Several decisions were taken to limit the number of visitors to the city. A sign on the M6 motorway

advised motorists to avoid London. The home secretary, Charles Clarke, urged people to stay at home until further notice. The police and other authorities advised people to stay away, if they were not key staff (CoLP, 7 July, 2005). Police also asked people working in central London to begin making their way home early to avoid the usual rush hour (Left and Oliver, 2005). Many firms were arranging shuttle buses and taxis to get people to their offices (Fenton et al, 2005). Network rail, despite being a private company, did not enforce their contracts. Hence passengers traveled for free (Agnew 2005, personal interview). The congestion charge was suspended for two days. Local borough councils made sure that schools kept open long enough so parents could pick up their children (LFBIB, 2005).

The mainland rail service was also affected. Several mainline stations were closed and many mainline train companies canceled services or terminated the routes before the capital (Fenton et al, 2005). Network Rail kept its network running, though there were disruptions. Disruptions were particularly bad where stations were used by both the underground and Network Rail. Those stations closed (Agnew 2005, personal interview). The traffic situation affected all manner of the public, as well as emergency services. London Ambulance Services, for example, had difficulty getting supplies into London due to the untenable traffic situation. "With large parts of London gridlocked, the Logistics department arranged for essential supplies to be flown into the capital by helicopter" (LAS News August 2005:6).

Peter Beasley in the City of London Police Counter-Terrorism unit noted that many people contacted them wanting to know when public transportation would again be available.

For a lot of people, the information they wanted was: how am I going to get home? Because most people live outside of London. So, how are we going to get home? Are the buses running? What about the tubes? The railway stations? They are obviously the important issues (interview, Beasley, 2005).

While provision of such information is not a direct responsibility of the City of London Police, officers Peter Beasley and John Bryce, the latter Head of the Counter-Terrorism branch of City of London Police, stress that due to the secondary issues which emerge in crises situations such as the London bombings, it is important that the police cooperate with other authorities and corporations (Beasley 2005, personal interview, Bryce 2005, personal interview). Information regarding the public transportation situation in London was published on the police website, as well as on that of the local authority and provided to the media. Inspector Bryce explained:

Let's say people normally use Aldgate and King's Cross for their travel and they're closed, we then have a public order situation outside the stations, with thousands of people stranded. So by getting the information from the underground and the network rail about which stations are open, which are closed, which services running, which aren't, where the buses are, we can point people in the right direction to get home (Bryce, 2005, personal interview).

As long as the image that was being portrayed was one of the capital plunged into chaos, the hard journey back to normality would possibly be postponed. It was vital for authorities and transportation companies to get the bus-services, and in a long-term perspective, the underground, back up and running (Agnew 2005, personal interview). Agnew described how the Transport for London executives viewed the situation:

And we felt we had no choice but to put bus services back other than where the roads were physically closed. [b]y three o'clock we'd [Transport for London] taken the decision to put buses back into central London, because of the difficulty of getting people home.

The decision was however, informed by information provided by foremost, the operators, and other authorities operating in the Gold Co-ordination Group (Pike, 2006, personal interview). The decision to again operate bus travel in the London downtown was a decision that was made based primarily on the inability of people to travel from the city to their homes; many people were essentially trapped in central London. Later in the day, it was also important for some people to be able to travel into the city for work, such as London Underground staff (Barr, 2006, personal interview), something that was complicated by messages repeatedly broadcast in the media not to travel to London.

About an hour later local and public transportation that had been terminated earlier in the day, such as London city buses and Docklands Light Railway, were in operation. Moreover, the mainland rail network was in service except at King's Cross and Victoria Station (Morton, 2005-07-10). The Heathrow Express from Paddington station to the airport also resumed service (Guardian, 7 July, 2005). Restarting parts of the public transportation system meant that the gridlocked traffic decreased in the afternoon. In addition, the fact that buses and trains were already running in the afternoon and in the evening made it easier for Transport for London to resume the traffic on the underground. However, the underground remained closed for the rest of the day (Agnew 2005, personal interview). Transport for London discussed the issue of restarting services with trade union representatives as many staffers were worried about going back to work after the bombings (Agnew 2005 personal interview). The trade unions wanted the police to search all trains for exploding devices before resuming the traffic, but the police could not muster resources for such an operation (Trendall 2005, personal interview). Nevertheless, at about 19:00, the decision was taken to restart the tube network again next morning (Barr 2006, personal interview). Nick Agnew described how the events unfolded:

It was a considered process taking advice from security services, from police, and really talking to other transport operators. But it was felt that the sooner we could get the network running again, except the pieces of the network that were very badly damaged, then the sooner we could deal with the personal or the emotional side of the incident for the massive people who now where thinking; do I really want to come to work today? Am I prepared to take the risk? (Agnew 2005, personal interview).

As soon as the decision that the trains would be running the next day was made, transport for London and the authorities went public with the information (Barr 2006, personal interview). According to Andy Barr, there were no negative consequences regarding the decision (Barr 2006, personal interview). Apparently the strategy worked as planned. When passengers traveled home late in the evening of July 7, there were not many signs of the dreadful events that had taken place earlier in the day. Nick Agnew described his impressions:

It was as if nothing had happened. People were sitting there and they were reading the paper or they were making a short phone call. But they were not showing any signs of being severely inconvenienced or concerned about what was in their minds, which was the potential for attack on the Network Rail in the evening, having hit the underground (Agnew, 2005).

Meanwhile security checks and searches were conducted on trains in depots overnight. Services were resumed at 5:00 the next morning (Barr 2006, personal interview). Whereas the operator-led decisions to close the London Underground and suspend bus service in central London following the terrorist attacks were not questioned, the decision not to re-open the London Underground on

the evening of the 7th was apparently a matter for discussion which is currently under review at the Department for Transport (Kowalczyk, 2006, personal interview).

Britain's trade union for train drivers, the Associated Society of Locomotive Steam Enginemen and Firemen (ASLEF) defended London Underground's decision not to run the tube again on 7 July. Regarding driver reluctance ASLEF's General Secretary Keith Norman stated,

Some elements of management and the media had the gall to criticize London Underground drivers for being reluctant to take out trains when the extent of the attacks remained unknown...[o]n the contrary, I applaud them for it. ASLEF members are the underground's undisputed safety professionals. If any ASLEF driver says it is not safe for a train to run, we will back that member in [that] decision up to the hilt (Norman, 2005).

Despite the fact that the underground was again running Friday, 8 July and buses had been reinstated in the afternoon of 7 July, "[a]necdotal evidence suggests that many organizations advised non-critical staff to remain at home on Friday 8th July, using remote access technology where possible" (Financial Services Authority, HM Treasury and Bank of England, 2005:6). Many employees elected to not go into work on Friday whether their employers had sanctioned their absence or not. The tripartite authorities survey showed that "16% of respondents reported unscheduled staff absences of greater than 20% on the Friday" (Ibid.). The reluctance of people to return to London to work has been attributed by several decision-makers as resulting from messages repeated in the media declaring London unsafe.

9. Pressure from public to find missing loved ones

In the aftermath of the bombings confusion was widespread. The London Ambulance Service had not achieved its task to track the casualties (Edmondson, 2005, personal interview). People did not know if their loved ones were in hospital. At the hospitals there was also an element of confusion, as staff did not know who the patients were (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview). Within the first days after the attacks the Scotland Yard casualty hotline received more than 120,000 calls (BBC, July 10, 2005b). Meanwhile, there were a lot of reports in the newspapers and on the television of families standing around railway and subway stations and going from hospital to hospital with photographs of their loved ones trying to find where they were. As a result of those pictures political pressure came down to bare on to the Cabinet Office to solve the situation. Kevin Gordon, who was seconded from the British Transport Police to London Resilience team to work with the Mass Fatality Group, explained how the Family Assistance Center came about, especially regarding lessons from New York on 9/11: "The business of people on the streets with photographs. Certainly the political people did not want that to happen over here. You know people wailing in the streets that nobody was helping them. So that's why the family assistance centre..." (Gordon, 2005, personal interview).

The political pressure was heightened by the G8 conference, which was underway at the time of the bombing. Muriel McClenahan, who was seconded from the Salvation Army to assist London Resilience Team's Mass Fatality Group, presumed that the Prime Minister was "the guidance behind that".¹⁴ At any rate, to mitigate the suffering of primary and secondary victims of the bombings, the London Resilience Team, the Metropolitan Police and the Westminster City Council, among others, set up a meeting to discuss how they could establish a Family Assistance

¹⁴ The same view is shared by Donohoe at CCS and Payne at DCMS (Donohoe, 2006, personal interview, Payne, 2006, personal interview).

Center. A Family Assistance Center had never been set up following an emergency in the UK. The planning grew out of what was set up following 9/11 in the U.S. But there were no actual plans in place to set up a family assistance center, although guidance was being written. A few drafts had gone out. But that was not on general release at the time of the bombings (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview).

At about 12 o'clock on Friday night, 8 July the meeting was held at Westminster City Hall. The first point on the agenda was to find premises that could open quickly for visitors so that they had a focal point where they could go. The local authority suggested a sports center nearby. The venue seemed good enough for a temporary center and, as the local authority had the keys to the premises, they were able to access the building in the middle of the night (McClenahan, 2005 personal interview). A temporary 24-hour family assistance center was then set up at the Queen Mother Sports Centre on Vauxhall Bridge Road, near Victoria station in London (BBC, July 10, 2005b). The main aims of the center was to "provide face to face contact for those experiencing distress; offer a central location for information and humanitarian assistance; and gather information and intelligence that will help police inquiries" (Culture.gov.uk, July 9, 2005).

Although the centre was open and operational around the clock on July 9 at 14:00, the local authority sought to find another building that they could use for a long-term use. This was not an easy task as there are not many large buildings in London's 33 boroughs that are empty for half of the year. As part of London's future planning a suggestion is to look into whether or not a demountable structure like the mortuary could be built (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview). The center was relocated on July 12 to the Royal Horticultural Conference Hall at Vincent Square in Westminster. The new premises were open from 08:00 to 22:00 daily (Cnn.com, 11 July, 2005).

The Family Assistance Center was a multi-organizational facility. It brought together public agencies, private companies and NGO's. The local authority was responsible for finding premises for the center. The Metropolitan Police had done a lot of work in the guidance document for setting up the center.¹⁵ Moreover, the Metropolitan Police family liaison officers were there to speak with the families. The Coroner's Office was there to explain how the death certificates and related legal issues such as the release of the body worked. There were representatives from the Criminal Compensation Group, the Department of Work and Pensions, the Social Services were there and the National Health Service. The latter provided pointers as to where to go for psychological support. There were representatives from the transport companies. London Underground provided support for the people visiting from out of town such as travel tickets. Transport companies provided visiting families with hotel accommodation. In addition, IKEA provided all the furniture and also put the furnishings up (McClenahan, 2005 personal interview). Finally, there were faith representatives present and voluntaries from the Red Cross, the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, and the Samaritans helped staff the center (Cnn.com, 11 July, 2005). Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell was put in charge of government support for the families. She was also responsible for supporting British victims of the September 11 attacks and the Asian tsunami. The role of the Culture Secretary was basically to liaise with the Metropolitan Police and voluntary agencies (BBC, July 10, 2005b). The Culture Secretary also visited the center at its reopening on July 12 (BBC, July 12, 2005a).

The actual facility was open from July 9 until the end of August (McClenahan, 2005 personal interview). Among the facilities on offer at the improved center was a multi-faith quiet

¹⁵ In the future it is likely that the local authority will have far more input into what actually goes into a family assistance center as well as providing the facilities (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview).

room, private family rooms, children's play areas, an Internet café, aromatherapy and head and neck massages (Guardian 5 August, 2005; BBC, July 12, 2005a). Relatives who visited the center were asked to bring identification and a maximum of three other family members.

Some 50 families visited the first center (BBC, July 12, 2005a). By early August, 600 people had made use of the centre, and around 1,000 had called the help line also set up in the aftermath of the July 7 attacks (Guardian 5 August, 2005). The reason the Family Assistance Center had to close was because the second building that was used was booked for the autumn. Although, the center continued its work in a much smaller premises, an apartment in Victoria (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview).

According to Muriel McClenahan, the center "was the most use within the first long weekend after the bombings, those first five days when people did not know if their loved ones had died." But as soon as it was identified who has lost loved ones and who was in hospital, the take up was less (McClenahan, 2005).¹⁶ However, the center's uptake peaked again after the failed suicide bombing attempts on July 21, and when there were anniversaries, such as at the time of the memorial service on 1 November (McClenahan, 2005, personal interview).

10. Was it a suicide attack?

At almost the same time as the rescue response started, the police launched their investigation in what had happened during the Thursday. Very early on in this investigation, the police had information pointing towards the conclusion that the UK had been hit by a suicide attack. What to do with that information?

The police had an early breakthrough at 22:20, July 7. The parents of Hasib Hussain called the Police Casualty Bureau to report him missing. A family liaison officer from the police visited Hussain's home in Leeds. The police brought pictures and the names of Hussain's friends. During the first days of the forensic investigation, the police found several identity documents belonging to the terrorists. At Tavistock Square, the driving license and other documents from Hasib Hussain was found. Credit cards belonging to Shehzad Tanweer were discovered at Aldgate, and in the wreckage of the Edgware Road train, documents from both Mohammed Sidique Khan and Tanweer were found by the police (Sherwood, et al, Financial Times, 2005-07-14). The information provided by the relatives soon turned out to match the credit cards and the driving licenses the police had found in the bombed trains and in the bus. Leaving identity documents behind would mean that the perpetrators would soon be caught. Why had the suspects left such a clear trail?

The police forensic investigation team at Tavistock Square tried to reconstruct what had happened on the bus. They found credit cards and a driving license close to a decapitated body close to the seat of the blast. The finding rose suspicion. Based on experience from Israel, the police knew that suicide bombings almost always leads to decapitation of the perpetrator, given the force of the bomb detonating very close to the bomber, either in the form of explosives strapped to the body, or from a bag carried by the bomber. The information given in the call from the parents of Hasib Hussain to the police matched the documents from the bus when a cross reference was made. Thus, the police started to suppose that the killers had died alongside with their victims. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch at Metropolitan Police, had visited the bus at Tavistock Square. After this, Clarke strongly

¹⁶ All 56 people were formally identified within 12 days (Gordon, 2005, personal interview).

suspected that it was an act of suicide terrorism that struck London in the rush hours of July 7.¹⁷ Therefore, the entire focus of the investigation shifted (Leppard and Calvert, *The Sunday Times*, 2005-07-17, Burke et al 2005). Out of fear of more terrorist attacks, the police internally launched Operation Kratos (see below), with the clear aim to target would-be suicide bombers. Thus, the police had in an early stage of the investigation found strong evidence that suicide bombers had struck London. How should the politicians and the authorities handle this information?

By Friday the 8th of July, the police said that they had no evidence that the terrorist attack had been carried out by suicide bombers. Sir Ian Blair, Metropolitan Police commissioner, said at a press conference that there was so far “absolutely nothing” to suggest the Tavistock Square bus bomb was carried out by a suicide bomber, though he added: “We cannot rule it out, it may have been, but it [the device] may have been left on a seat, it may have gone off in transit.” (Norton-Taylor and Cowan 2005, Sherwood, et al, 2005-07-14). A few days later, the police still hesitated to call the London bombings a suicide attack. At July 11th, Peter Clarke, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch, said that it was “very likely” that at least one suspect died in an attack near Aldgate tube station. Furthermore, the police said that they were working on the possibility that all suspects had died in the bombings (Burns and Sherwood, 2005). The same day, Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke in the House of Commons. He said nothing about suicide bombers. On the contrary, by speaking of “tracking down those who carried out these acts of terrorism”, the Prime Minister implied that at least some of the perpetrators, or the supporting organizations behind them, were still at large (10 Downing Street, 11 July 2005A). Also on July 11th, the Prime Minister’s Official Spokesman held a press briefing about the London bombings. The Spokesman discussed the high priority of “catching those responsible, both to bring them to justice and to allow us to prevent further attacks.” (10 Downing Street, 11 July 2005B). Again, that’s an indication from the top political level that the UK had not suffered a suicide attack.

12 July, at 17:00, Peter Clarke, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch, held a press conference and revealed that the UK had been a victim of suicide terrorists for the first time. Three of the suspected terrorists were named, all three born in the UK (Bennetto and Herbert, 2005). A few weeks later, new details emerged, strengthening the many indicators of suicide terrorism. Given that no timing devices or mobile phones (may work like timers, or be phoned, and thus detonating the bomb) had been found by the police, they drew the conclusion that the bombs were set off by the four men carrying them. Some media reporting has suggested that the men were tricked into the attacks, but it seems clear that they were actually suicide bombers. The bombs found after the failed attempts 21 July, were found rather intact. These devices were also manually activated (although no connections between the bombing of the 7 and 21 of July has been found) (Dodd and Cowan, 2005-08-24).

11. What impact could the bombings have on communities across the country?

For the first few hours after the bombings, the discussions in COBR focused on security-related issues and consequence management was not the priority. Later in the day, through the night and into the next day, however, issues of consequence management and making sure that there would not be a repeat of the incident started to take up more attention. One of the most prioritized questions was the issue of community cohesion, i.e., what impact could the bombings have on

¹⁷ It’s a bit unclear when this visit was carried out. Given the mass media reporting, it was either July 7th or 8th (Leppard and Calvert, *The Sunday Times*, 2005-07-17, Burke et al 2005).

communities across the country? (Taylor, A. interview, 2006). There were several aspects to this. As it was relatively early on assumed that the terrorist attacks were an al Qaeda hit (Edmondson, J. interview, 2005), agencies needed to address communities such as the Asian community and the Muslim community generally, who felt that they were vulnerable to racist attacks in the aftermath of the suicide bombings (Trendall, P. interview, 2005).

In the evening, the first real breakthrough of the investigation came as the mother of the suicide bomber Hasib Hussain called the police and reported her son missing (McAllister, July 25, 2005). This early breakthrough suggested that the terrorist cell was home grown, which required a new set of consequence management plans for long-term integration of ethnic communities and battling extremism at home. The politicians and the British society had to deal with the value conflict of condemning radical Islamists, and at the same time cooperating with moderate Muslims. In many ways these short term and long term issues had to be managed in one integrated strategy.

A few days after the bombings, Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke before the Parliament. It was clear that he intended to make sure that the Muslim community would not feel alienated. His statement included a section specifically addressed to the Muslim community: “We were proud of your contribution to Britain before last Thursday. We remain proud of it today. Fanaticism is not a state of religion but a state of mind. We will work with you to make the moderate and true voice of Islam heard as it should be” (10 Downing Street, July 11, 2005a).

Muslim leaders were reported to be “shocked” that British Muslims were behind the attacks (BBC, 14 July, 2005). Interestingly enough, so was Tony Blair, at least according to the Prime Minister’s Office. The fact that the attacks seemed to be home grown was also seen as an incentive to take on the extremism at home and address the root cause of the problem. The government’s strategy included taking security measures and “harnessing the views of the rest of the community, including the Muslim community, in putting forward that not only has this kind of extremism no place in this country” (10 Downing Street, July 13, 2005a). This endeavor entailed working in cooperation with the Muslim community while harshly criticizing every attempt of lenience. On July 13, Tony Blair met Muslim MPs to discuss how to tackle “this evil within the Muslim community”. He also stressed that “In the end, this can only be taken on and defeated by the community itself” (BBC, 14 July, 2005). Prime Minister Tony Blair seemed to be a bit disappointed by the lack of support from certain parts of society. About a month after the attacks he stressed that: “Time and again over the past few weeks I’ve been asked to deal firmly with those prepared to engage in such extremism, and most particularly with those who incite it or proselytise for it. [...] The action I am talking about has in the past been controversial, each tightening of the law has met fierce opposition, regularly we have a defeat in parliament or in the courts” (10 Downing Street, August 5, 2005).

In the immediate aftermath of the bombings the Home Secretary set up seven working groups to look at issues around integration and tackling extremism. The “Preventing Extremism Together” Working Groups were in effect an approach to seek a national debate on what was behind the London bombings. The aim was to come up with practical proposals for a community-led response to extremism (Home Office, November 10, 2005), ideas to help to prevent British Muslims turning to terrorism, which would also counter a sense of alienation some Muslims feel from British society and institutions. The task forces consisted of seven groups of Muslim MPs, peers, academics and community leaders (Webster and Gledhill, September 20, 2005). As part of this work seven meetings and workshops were held in the summer around the country where Home Office Ministers Hazel Blears and Paul Goggins consulted the Muslim working groups (Home Office, November 10, 2005). The efforts to curb Muslim fundamentalism was then further

institutionalized on September 21 when Charles Clarke unveiled plans on for a new commission to look at ways Muslims and other faiths can better integrate into the community. Home Office Minister Hazel Blears was assigned to head the commission on integration (Webster & Gledhill, September 20, 2005). The final report of “Preventing Extremism Together” was released in November 2005. The report set out practical actions toward a longer-term partnership between Government and Muslim communities. The final proposals focused on building capacity among Muslim communities and developing ways to promote partnership and engagement with wider society (Home office, November 10, 2005).

Aftermath...the days and weeks following the bombings

12. Not again – the second attack

On 21 July, four new suicide attacks occurred. In much the same way as the July 7-bombings, four men carried backpacks with explosives onboard the subway and a bus. The men tried to detonate their homemade bombs, but only the detonators went off, not the main charge. The attacks did not cause any serious harm. The detonators caused small blasts and only one person was slightly injured as a result of asthma. The bombers managed to flee unharmed, but were identified by CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) and arrested a few days later.

Although the devices included fragmentation (Trendall, 2005, personal interview), they would not have had the same density of casualties as the attacks appeared outside the rush hour. The first attack occurred on a train at Shepherd’s Bush tube station in West London at 12:26 as Hussain Osman tried to detonate a bomb on the Hammersmith and City Line. At 12:30 the second attack took place when Ramzi Mohamed tried to detonate a bomb on a train at Oval tube station on the Northern Line. Then at 12:45, Yasin Hassan Omar attempted to detonate a device on a Victoria Line train at Warren Street tube station. The last suicide attack attempt occurred at 13:30 as Muktar Said Ibrahim tried to detonate a bomb on the Number 26 bus on Hackney Road in Shoreditch in East London.

The attacks were surrounded by confusion. Initially the media relied only on eyewitness accounts talking about loud bangs, smoke and the smell of burning rubber. Yet police spoke of no casualties. For organizations that were already under stress, the failed suicide attempts were a challenge. The striking similarity between the incidents caused initial panic among passengers on the underground. Mobile phone networks were overloaded and Londoners were urged to avoid making long mobile telephone calls, and to use text messages instead if possible (Naughton, 2005). At just before 13:00, the Underground was placed on amber alert and the Hammersmith & City, Victoria and Northern line were evacuated. Roads were closed around three stations and a 400-meter cordon was established at Hackney Road, which is normal procedure (Freeman, 2005). Businesses, shops and homes in the area were evacuated for more than eight hours and surrounding roads were closed for much of the day (BBC, July 22, 2005a).

Emergency personnel were on the safe side and shortly after the attacks tests for chemical, biological and radiological weapons were taken at several sights. Two weeks earlier witnesses were moved away from the scenes quickly. This time the police tried to gather people together who might have seen what happened (BBC July 21, 2005b).

Uncertainty about the attacks was still rife. Police, media and the public wondered whether amateur copycats inspired by the July 7 bombings carried out the attacks, or if there was more of a connection between the groups. In the hunt for perpetrators, the University College Hospital and Whitehall were cordoned off. But within two hours it became clear that the four coordinated

attacks were not on the same scale as July 7 when Scotland Yard informed the public that the incidents were not major terrorist attacks (Freeman, 2005).¹⁸ The Yard confirmed that officers had been deployed at Warren Street in order to carry out an investigation in full protective equipment and that an initial investigation at the Oval showed that there were no traces of chemical agents. Around 15:00 media reports mentioned that there might not have been many casualties and that possibly only the detonators had gone off (BBC, July 21, 2005b).

Prime Minister Tony Blair heard about the events when he was in a lunch meeting with the Prime Minister of Australia. He then chaired the COBR meeting at 14:30.¹⁹ The PM spoke to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner on several occasions (10 Downing Street, July 21, 2005). While the police did not try to downplay the events, the political level appealed for the public to keep it's calm. Tony Blair urged Londoners to go about their business as normal, saying: "We have just got to react calmly" (BBC, July 22, 2005b).

Around 16:00 it was declared that four incidents had happened with bombs that had not gone off properly. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner said: "the message going out to Londoners tonight is it's time to get back on the Tubes and buses and to get London moving again". Cordons were reduced in the afternoon and main roads were opened around 18:00 (BBC, July 21, 2005b). The sense of relief was palpable as services on the Tubes began to return to normal (Freeman, 2005). However, Five Tube lines (the Victoria, Northern, Hammersmith and City, Bakerloo and Piccadilly) were suspended or partly suspended (Naughton, 2005). Scientific experts and police assisted the return to normality. They informed the media and the public that the attacks were not part of a suicide bombings campaign, and that the bombings were not connected. As interviewees at the City of London Police stressed: "There weren't the same team, the same terrorist cell. They were just copycats. And that was very quickly proved. And then it was business as usual" (Beasley, 2005; Bryce, 2005). However, the police was keeping the information flow very much to themselves and even late in the evening events were unclear (BBC, July 21, 2005b).

Although the attacks did not work, the police did not try to downplay the events. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair said to the media: "At each of these scenes an attempt has been made to set off an explosive device. [...] There can be only one intention here, and that is to kill. This time the intention of the terrorists has not been fulfilled" (Sky.com, July 21, 2005). Moreover, the commissioner stressed that there was no sign of any chemical or biological attack. He also appealed to Londoners to stay off the transport system, but to go about their normal business (Naughton, 2005). A week into the hunt for the offenders Ian Blair said: "This is not the B team, these were not the amateurs, they only made one mistake and we're very, very lucky" (BBC, July 28, 2005).

The following day services were running on all Tube lines except where they remained suspended after the 7 July bombings. Transport for London service director Nigel Holness said to the BBC: "We have the maximum deployment possible of the British Transport Police. [...] We have started to use sniffer dogs around the Underground. And we are looking at deploying staff in different ways. It would be impossible to search and scan all Tube passengers. We have three million journeys on the Tube every day and half a million people using the Tube during peak periods. We have to keep moving" (BBC, July 22, 2005b).

¹⁸ Scotland Yard put out their first bulletin, which was reported in the media around 14:50 (BBC, July 21, 2005b).

¹⁹ Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Sir Ian Blair, Lord Chancellor Lord Falconer, Attorney General Lord Goldsmith, Immigration Minister Des Browne and Transport Secretary Alistair Darling attended Downing Street for a [COBR?] meeting with the prime minister (BBC, July 21, 2005a).

Meanwhile the Metropolitan Police launched its largest ever operation in the hunt for the would-be bombers (BBC, January 27, 2006). Hundreds of police and MI5 agents were involved in the hunt. Since the four devices were contained in rucksacks at the four sites of the attempted explosions, the police had a lot of evidence to work with. In addition the four bombers were captured on CCTV and the pictures were distributed in the media. And on July 25, police named two of the suspects, Yasin Hassan Omar and Muktar Said Ibrahim. Both men were legally resident in the UK for more than 10 years, having arrived as child dependents of Somali and Eritrean asylum seekers respectively (BBC, July 27, 2005). Meanwhile, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, of the Metropolitan Police, confirmed that a device found in a rucksack hidden in Little Wormwood Scrubs, west London, on July 23 was similar to those used by the four would-be bombers (BBC, July 25, 2005). Hence, there were possibly five bombers at large. It was imperative to capture the perpetrators, not least to make sure that they would not make a second attempt. The Metropolitan Police chief Sir Ian Blair said to the media: "They are capable of killing again. [...] We must find them. We are flat out and we are getting a great deal of intelligence" (BBC, July 27, 2005a).

Several arrests were made in the hunt for the bombers. On July 22-25 at least five people were arrested in connection with the inquiry as raids were carried out in Stockwell and Tulse Hill, south London, and Curtis House, north London (BBC, July 27, 2005). On July 27, police arrested three women in Stockwell on suspicion of harboring offenders. In addition, suspected offender Yassin Hassan Omar was arrested in Small Heath, Birmingham. Additional raids were carried out on another location in Birmingham (BBC, July 27, 2005b). On 28 July, police planned for the big showdown. The Anti-Terrorist Branch, SO13, called in hundreds of officers for a top-level briefing on the investigation (McGrory et al, 2005). Then on 29 July raids continued in two locations in west London. Two suspects, Muktar Said Ibrahim and Ramzi Mohamed, were held after a raid on a flat in Dalgarno Gardens, North Kensington (BBC, July 30, 2005). At the same time in Notting Hill, Manfo Kwaku Asiedu was held in connection with the explosives found in Little Wormwood Scrubs. On the same day, the suspect of the Shepherd's Bush incident Osman Hussain, was held by Italian authorities in Rome (BBC, 2005 "Raids"). Hussain left the UK on July 26 from Waterloo station on Eurostar, travelling to Paris and Milan before arriving in Rome (Sky.com, July 31, 2005). Duncan Manners of the Metropolitan Police admits: "There was more criticism though over the individual going off to Italy via France. That was seen as a bit of a lapse" (Manners, 2005, personal interview). Somali-born naturalized British citizen Osman Hussain was arrested in his brother's flat on the outskirts of Rome. Police was able to track him by tracing calls on a mobile phone. He was then extradited to Britain. The arrest was carried out as part of a joint investigation between Rome and Scotland Yard (Oliver, 2005). In sum, some 43 people were detained under the Terrorism Act in the UK and 17 people were charged (BBC, January 27, 2006). Five men (Y. H. Omar, I. M. Said, R. Mohamed, H. Osman, and M. K. Asiedu) were accused of plotting to murder passengers on London's transport network on 21 July 2005. They are set to face trial in September 2006 (BBC, 2005, "The suspects").

13. An innocent man is killed

London had fallen victim of possible suicide bombers. Would terrorists strike again? How should the police deal with the threat of highly motivated perpetrators, willing to die together with their victims?

Most English police officers work unarmed. There are specialized firearms units, called CO19, within the Metropolitan Police Service, to be called upon when necessary. In directing the

work of the armed police officers, the Association of Chief Police Officers has adopted a “Manual of Guidance on Police use of Firearms”. The manual was updated in February 2005. Under “Circumstances when weapons may be fired”, the manual states:

You may open fire against a person only when absolutely necessary after traditional methods have tried and failed, or must, by the very nature of the circumstances, be unlikely to succeed if tried. To sum up, a police officer should not decide to open fire unless that officer is satisfied that nothing short of opening fire could protect the officer or another person from imminent danger to life or serious injury (ACPO 2005, Chapter 3-11).

Armed police officers should, according to the manual, identify themselves and give a warning, unless it “would unduly place any person at a risk of death or serious harm” (ACPO 2005, Chapter 3-11). These guidelines are openly circulated within the police forces in the UK, and available on the Internet. However, they do not specifically concern suicide terrorism. After the terrorist attacks in the US in September 11, 2001, and after the widespread use of suicide bombers in Israel, Sri Lanka and Iraq, the English police had started to adjust to the new circumstances. In 2002, media reports emerged that representatives from the Metropolitan Police had visited Israel. David Veness, then head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch, SO13, at the Metropolitan Police was asked about the Israeli experience. He said that the police had to draw upon the knowledge in Israel, but that some of the measures that had been taken in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would not be suitable in the UK (Burns, 2005).

To learn how to deal with potential suicide bombers, police officers from London went to Israel and Sri Lanka for training. They wrote a confidential report on how the police in the UK should deal with an al-Qaeda threat. The material was shared with a limited number of people within the police forces: anti-terrorist police officers, protection and surveillance units, and a small group of senior police officers. Specific instructions for armed police officers were circulated in 2003, though never made public. The guidelines should be followed only after approval from an operational senior officer. The instructions are believed to have covered the necessity of disabling the central nervous system with shots in the head, as well as instructions to shoot the driver of a car loaded with explosives (Burns 2005). The reason for aiming at the head of the suspect is that otherwise a determined suicide bomber might be able to explode his bomb, although he is wounded or dying. Police officers are trained to look for “precursor activities” indicating a suicide bomber about to detonate explosives. This training is based on studying of footage and interviews with failed suicide bombers. Such a behavior is thought to include “a look of agitation combined with a sense of disconnection from the world” (Thompson and Hinsliff, 2005, Thompson and Phillips, 2005). Lord Stevens was head of the Metropolitan Police at the time of implementing the new guidelines. He described the policy to counter suicide bombers as “shoot to kill to protect”, in order to save innocent lives in a “time of unique evil”, and added: “I have no doubt that now, more than ever, the principle is right despite the chance, tragically, of error” (Calvert and Leppard, 2005).

Then suicide bombers hit UK and CO19, the firearms units at Metropolitan Police, were mobilized. The police officers were called to a briefing, where they were told to expect a “Kratos call”. Operation Kratos is the codename for guidelines directed towards suicide terrorists. An internal e-mail went out to specialized police units, to remind them of the separate secret instructions for how to deal with potential suicide bombers. The action had to be based on intelligence, and the police officers were allowed to shoot in the head, if the criteria for suspecting a suicide bomber were met. The police officers were sent out in the streets of London,

in some cases riding their Jankel armored vehicles (Leppard and Calvert, 2005-07-17, Burns 2005).

The day after the attempted bombings of the 21st of July, police officers were watching an address in south London, were some of the suspects from the attempts might live. A man left his apartment and was followed by plain-cloth police officers. He went on a bus, and then to a subway station in Stockwell. The police officers had called for back up, and up to twenty police officers followed the man down in the underground. He rushed onboard a train, got caught by police officers and shot with seven shots in the head, and one in the shoulder. The Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes died immediately (Thompson and Phillips, 2005).

After the shooting of the Brazilian man, both the police and several witnesses suggested that he had been acting suspiciously, wearing thick winter clothing in the summer heat and vaulting the barrier, trying to escape from police officers following him. Sir Ian Blair, commissioner for the Metropolitan Police, said the shooting was “directly linked to the ongoing and expanding anti-terrorist operation” (Brown et al, 2005-07-23). However, the day after the shooting of de Menezes, Metropolitan Police issued a statement where they admitted that he had no connections with the bombing attempts on July 21: “We are now satisfied that he was not connected with the incidents on Thursday 21 July 2005, [...] For somebody to lose their life in such circumstances is a tragedy and one that the Metropolitan Police Service regrets.” The police had found no weapons or explosives on the man (Thompson and Hinsliff, 2005-07-24).

Nevertheless, the police were supported by both the Prime Minister, and by the Mayor of London. Tony Blair said he was “desperately sorry” for the death of Jean Charles de Menezes, but that the police were working under very difficult circumstances:

I think it is important that we give them every support and that we understand that had the circumstances been different and, for example, this had turned out to be a terrorist and they had failed to take that action, they would have been criticised the other way, [...] At the same time therefore, in expressing our sorrow and deep sympathy for the death that has happened, it is important that we allow the police and support them in doing the job they have to do in order to protect people in this country (Honigsbaum and Dodd, 2005).

Ken Livingstone said that the terrorists should be blamed for the “human tragedy”: “The police acted to do what they believed necessary to protect the lives of the public. This tragedy has added another victim to the toll of deaths for which the terrorists bear responsibility.” (Thompson and Hinsliff, 2005-07-24). The commissioner for the Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair, said there would be no changes for in the orders for the armed police officers. Both politicians and police chiefs were said to believe that the risk of another terrorist attack was larger, than another fatal police mistake (McGrory, et al, 2005). Between July 7 and July 26, the police had had 250 incidents where they had considered if they were seeing a suicide bomber. On seven separate occasions during this period, police officers had come close to being order to shoot a suspect dead, said Sir Ian Blair, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police (Ford and Syal, 2005).

On July 27, the description of both de Menezes’ clothing and of his behavior where changed. The Brazilian was dressed in a jeans jacket, not bulky winter clothing that could have concealed a bomb. He used a travel card to pass the ticket barrier; he did not vault the barrier (Honigsbaum, 2005). A couple of weeks later, new information surfaced, information that questioned the initial reports on the Stockwell shooting. Jean Charles de Menezes had left his apartment, followed by the unarmed, plain-clothed police. The police surveillance team had strict orders to not let him board a train. He was, however, allowed to take a bus to the Stockwell underground station. When armed police officers arrived at the station, de Menezes had already

passed the ticket barriers, walking casually down the escalator to the platform. The surveillance unit informed the armed police officers, who run after de Menezes. They caught up with him onboard the train, and shot him (Thompson et al 2005-08-14). According to media reporting, a unit from the army Special Reconnaissance Regiment took part in the surveillance operation directed towards the house where de Menezes lived (Norton-Taylor, August 4, 2005). The Independent Police Complaints Commission investigated the shooting in Stockwell, and submitted its investigation report to the Crown Prosecution Service on January 19th, 2006 (IPCC, 2006). Later, Sir Ian Blair, head of the Metropolitan Police, has said that the police made a “serious mistake” in handling the aftermath of the shooting. He said that the false reports about de Menezes’ actions and clothing should have been corrected. The Independent Police Complaints Commission report says that a log was changed by police officers, to hide the fact that de Menezes had been wrongly identified (Dodd and Katz, 2006).

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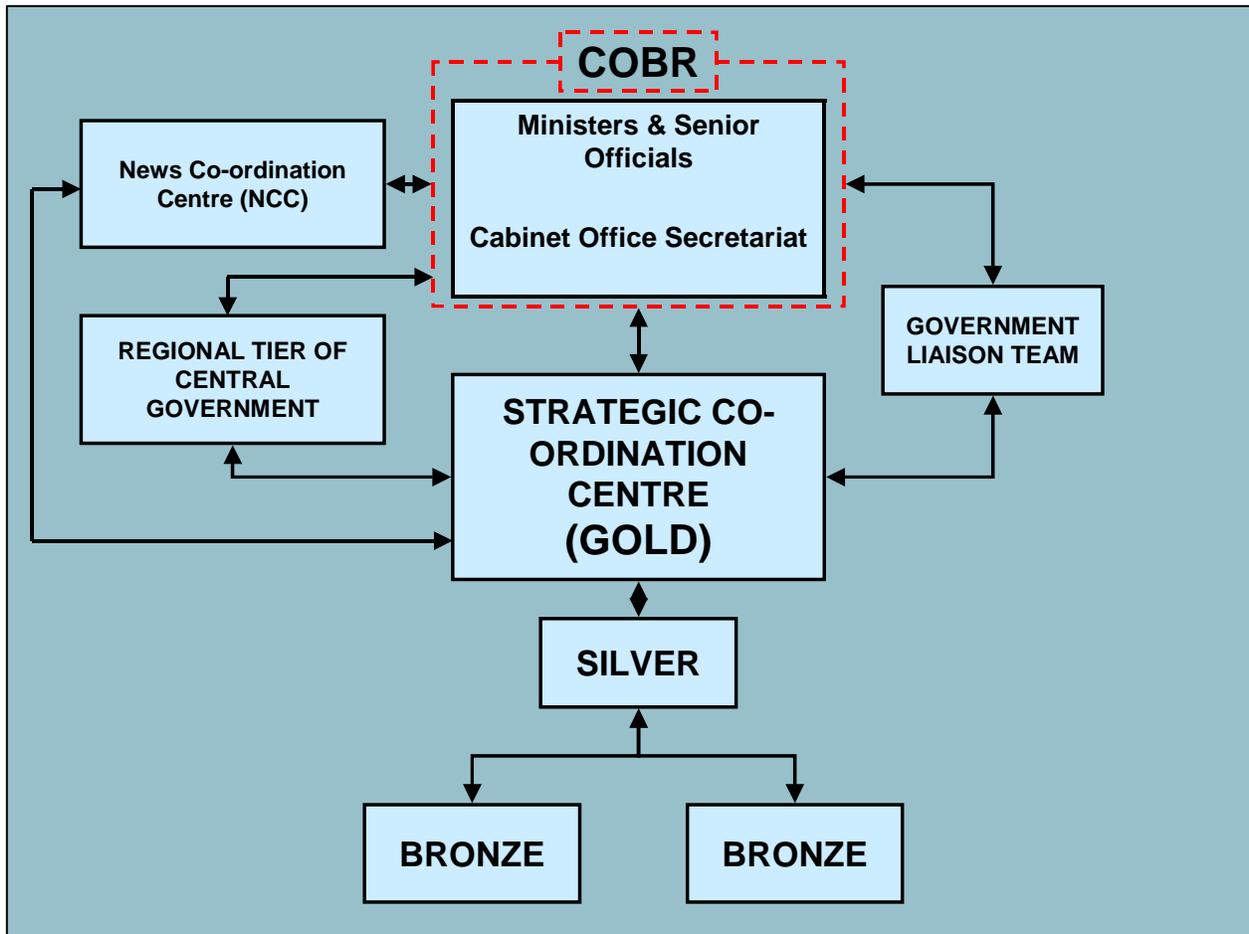
"Resilience 05 – Sharing London's lessons." October 5, 2005. Seminar in Guildhall, London, arranged by London Resilience.

Appendix A – map of the London bombings²⁰



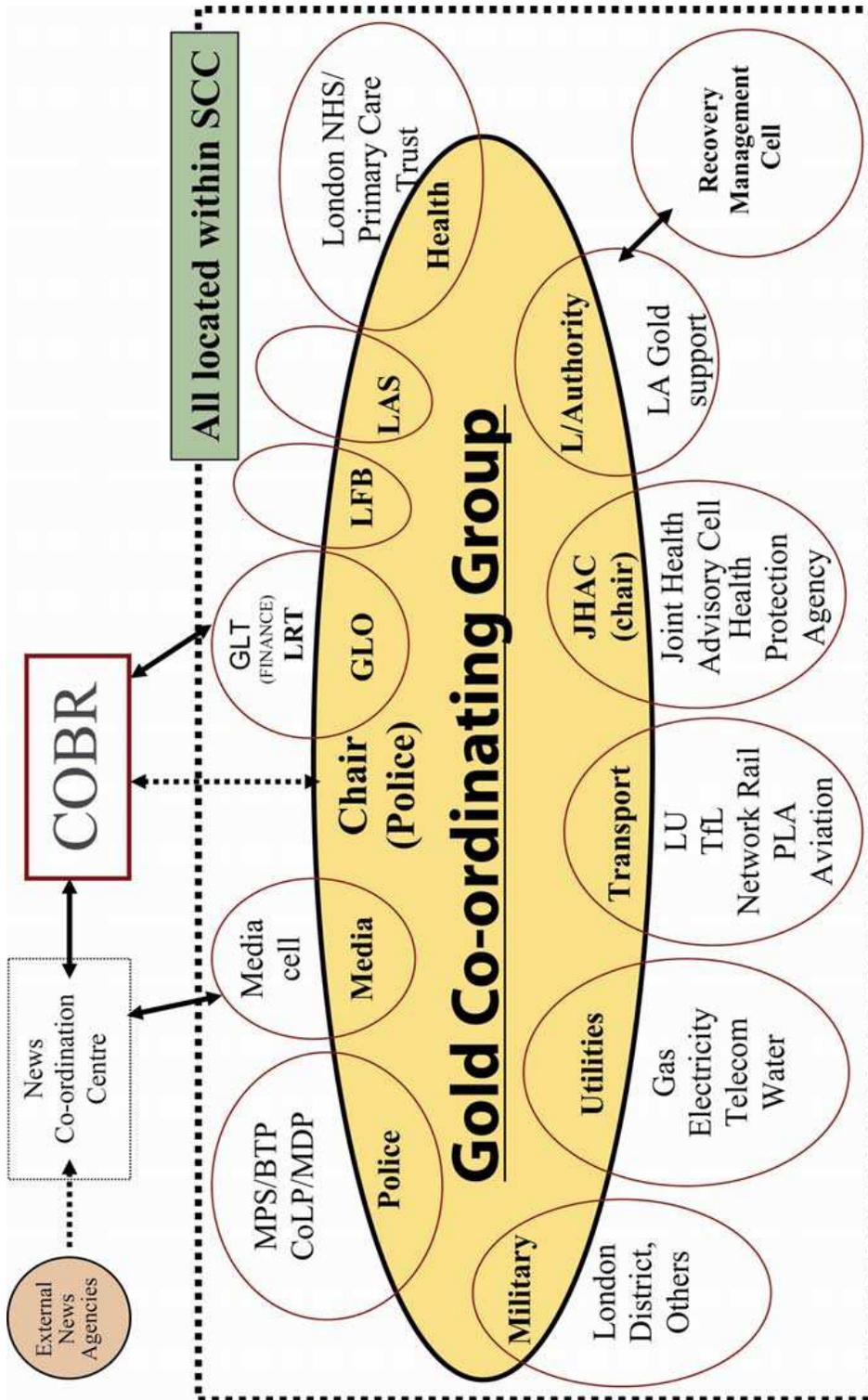
²⁰ BBC, July 7, 2005b.

Appendix B – National level crisis management structure²¹



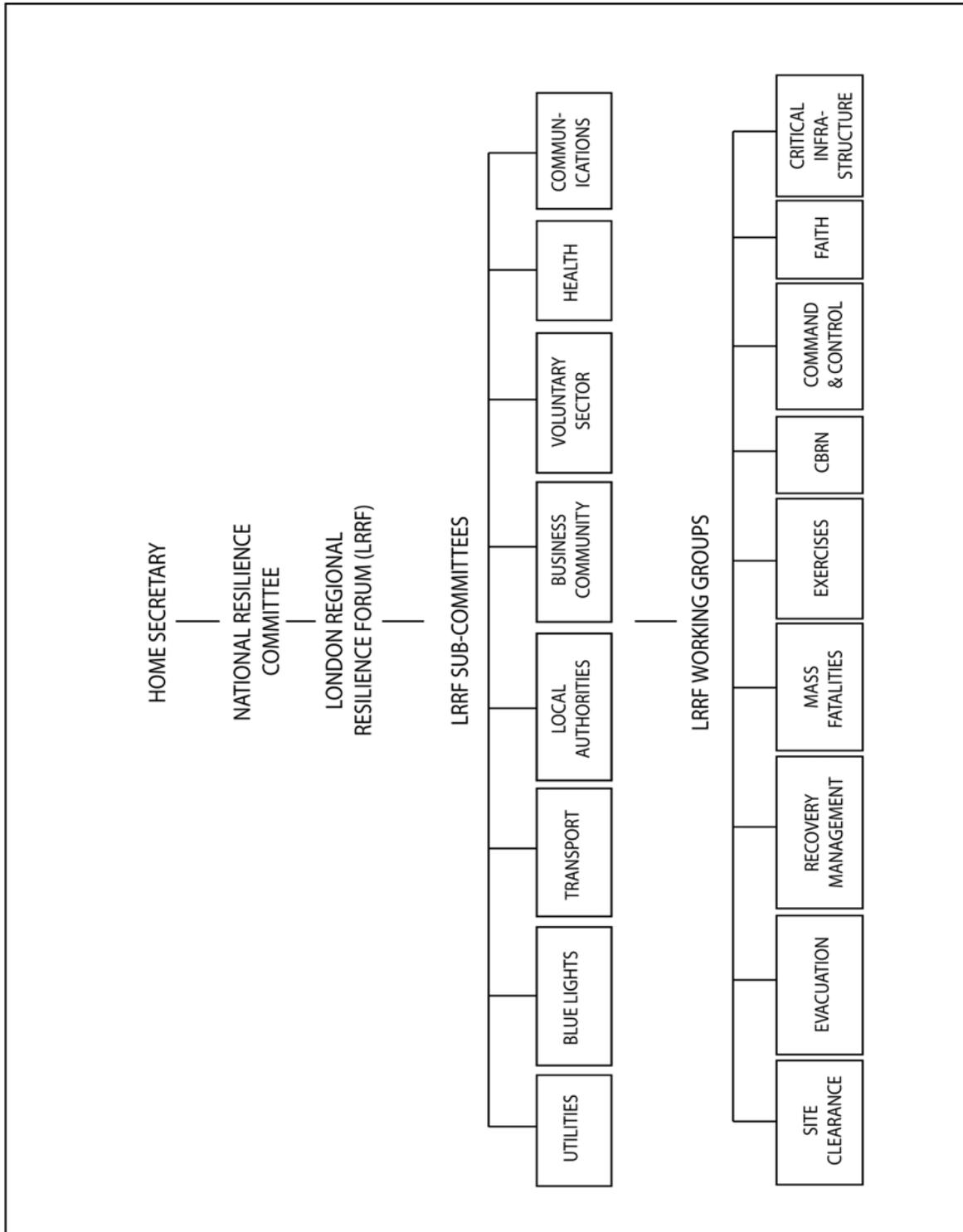
²¹ Marshall, Greg, December 2005.

Appendix C - Representation of the Gold Coordinating Group²²



²² Strategic Emergency Plan (2005), section 2, page 8.

Appendix D - London's Strategic Emergency Planning Structure²³



²³ Strategic Emergency Plan (2005), section 2, page 16.

Appendix E - Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
BTP	British Transport Police
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
CCS	Civil Contingencies Secretariat
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CO19	Force Firearms Unit - Specialist Firearms Teams (previously SO19)
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Room
CoLP	City of London Police
GCG	Gold Co-ordination Group (also known as Strategic Co-ordination Group)
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters
IPCC	Independent Police Complaints Commission
JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre
LAS	London Ambulance Service
LESLP	London Emergency Services Liaison Panel
LFB	London Fire Brigade
LRT	London Resilience Team
MI5	Security Service
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NCC	News Co-ordination Centre
SEP	Strategic Emergency Plan
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (also known as MI6)
SO13	Special Operations 13/Anti-Terrorist Branch
TfL	Transport for London