



**INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE**  
35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ

19 May 2009

Could 7/7 have been prevented?

The Intelligence and Security Committee has, today, published its *Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*. The Chairman of the Committee, the Rt. Hon. Dr Kim Howells MP, opened this morning's Press Conference with the following statement:

“When the trial of those involved in the fertiliser bomb (CREVICE) plot concluded in April 2007, it was reported that the plotters had been seen in contact with two of the men who, on 7 July 2005, detonated bombs on the London transport system in the single largest terrorist attack on these shores. The question many were therefore asking was – *if these men had been seen before, why weren't they stopped?*”

“The Prime Minister asked the Intelligence and Security Committee to look at this question, and related matters, and to re-examine all the evidence. The review published today is the result of that investigation – into the links between the CREVICE plotters and the 7/7 bombers.

“It was a lengthy and detailed investigation. The Committee started from scratch, leaving aside its 2006 Report on the bombings – which was broader and far more wide-ranging – and concentrating solely on the links between the CREVICE group (as those involved in the fertiliser bomb plot were known) and Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shazad Tanweer (two of the four London bombers). We have gone back to original source material: reviewing operational documents, transcripts, police action logs, recordings and photographs, and then we have questioned those involved, repeatedly, and on even the smallest points of detail.

“This Report is the result of that work. In writing it we have tried to explain how the intelligence Agencies work, what terms they use, and what they can and can't do – this latter point is particularly important given the myths and misconceptions that have

sprung up as a result of spy films and television programmes. The Report therefore contains an unprecedented amount of sensitive material.

“However, there is some information which we have been given, but which we cannot publish – for very good reasons. For example, we cannot publish the exact numbers of people that MI5 can keep under surveillance at any one time, as this would tell our enemies the extent of MI5’s capability and they might be able to use this information to their advantage. Similarly, for example, we cannot publish the name of an individual if it could lead to one of MI5’s sources being identified, as this might put lives in danger. I can assure you however that our intention throughout has been to publish as full and detailed an account as possible – information has only been blanked out where the Committee has agreed that to publish it would cause serious damage to national security. I would like to put on record that there are no instances where this blanked out information alters the main facts, views or comments.

“It is, as I have said, a detailed narrative – over 100 pages which took over 14 months to produce – and it may surprise some to see that there is no summary, or list of conclusions. Our Report gives the full facts, with all the accompanying and background detail – to summarise it would risk misrepresentation of the facts.

“I would like to emphasise that this report is about the facts – what actually happened. There has been so much speculation, much of it wrong - misinformed articles and conspiracy theories - which have caused confusion to the general public and genuine distress to the families of those killed and the survivors. We have every sympathy with those who were affected personally and it is our hope that, by sticking to the facts, there will be some comfort in enabling them to put aside the many myths, misconceptions and errors.

“There will inevitably be those who do not like what we have written, who will criticise the report because it does not say what they want it to say, but we cannot alter the facts to suit the story.

“This Committee has a duty to hold the security and intelligence Agencies to account – we act completely independently and our job is to question everything we hear and are told. We have considered every aspect of what MI5 and the police knew and what they did, and whether the judgements they made, and the actions they took, were reasonable. The Report contains explanations where they are relevant, but it also contains criticisms where they are justified. We have been objective and independent, assessing the evidence on its merits and, I hope, answering the questions in the public’s mind.”

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) was established under the Intelligence Services Act 1994 to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the UK's three intelligence and security Agencies: the Security Service, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). The ISC also takes evidence from Cabinet Ministers, the Permanent Secretary Intelligence Security & Resilience, and the Defence Intelligence Staff.
2. The Committee is a cross-party Committee. The Prime Minister appoints the ISC Members after considering nominations from Parliament and consulting with the leaders of the two main opposition parties. It reports to the Prime Minister, for reasons of national security, and the Prime Minister then publishes the Reports. The published version of the Report may contain some redactions, where the Committee has agreed that to publish the material would harm national security.

3. The Committee's membership is:

Rt. Hon. Dr Kim Howells MP (Chairman)

Rt. Hon. Michael Ancram QC DL MP

Rt. Hon. Sir Menzies Campbell QC MP

Mr Ben Chapman MP

Rt. Hon. Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

Rt. Hon. George Howarth MP

Rt. Hon. Michael Mates MP

Mr Richard Ottaway MP

Ms Dari Taylor MP

(The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy MP was Chairman of the ISC until 24 January 2008 when he was appointed Secretary of State for Wales. The Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, MP was Chairman from 29 January to 3 October 2008 when she was appointed Minister for Housing. The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Beith MP stood down as a Member of the Committee on 28 October 2008, and was replaced by The Rt. Hon. Sir Menzies Campbell QC MP on 4 December 2008.)

4. Copies of the Committee's *Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005* (Cm 7617) can be purchased from TSO for £19.15. The Report can also be found on the ISC's website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/intelligence>