

## LINKS BETWEEN THE 7 JULY BOMBERS AND THE FERTILISER PLOT

### Introduction

This account sets out what the Security Service and Police knew of the links between those involved in the 2004 'fertiliser plot' - the trial of which ended on 30 April 2007 - and two members of the group responsible for the 7 July 2005 terrorist attacks in London. It has not been possible to make this information public until the end of the trial for legal reasons.

The Security Service and Police are publishing this account to provide an answer to the question: "If the Security Service and Police had already come across two of the bombers before 2005, why did they not prevent the attacks in London on 7 July?"

It also explains what the Security Service has done and is continuing to do to prevent further attacks. There is a brief summary at the end of this account to provide an update on our current work.

### Why did the Service and the Police not prevent 7 July?

The Security Service and Police were appalled by the attacks of 7 July, and it is deeply frustrating that we were not able to prevent them. It is true that the Security Service and Police did come across two of the 7 July bombers - Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer - during the earlier investigation into the fertiliser plot. However, even with the benefit of hindsight, it would have been impossible from the available intelligence to conclude that either Khan or Tanweer posed a terrorist threat to the British public.

Khan and Tanweer were never identified during the fertiliser plot investigation because they were not involved in the planned attacks. Rather, they appeared as petty fraudsters in loose contact with members of the plot. There was no indication that they were involved in planning any kind of terrorist attack in the UK.

The intelligence leads generated by the investigation into the 7 July bombings enabled the Security Service and Police to go back over the fertiliser plot records and put names to voices and faces. The details below need to be read with these facts in mind.

### The fertiliser plot

Throughout 2003-4, the Security Service and Police undertook Operation Crevice, a large-scale investigation into a terrorist conspiracy known as the 'fertiliser plot' - so-called because a

#### The fertiliser plotters:

- \* *Omar Khyam*
- \* *Jawad Akbar*
- \* *Salahuddin Amin*
- \* *Anthony Garcia*
- \* *Waheed Mahmood*

group of individuals planned to detonate a fertiliser-based explosive device in the UK. Despite the improvised nature of the device, success of the plot would have resulted in a huge loss of life as the possible targets included a nightclub and a shopping centre.

At the time, this was both the Security Service's and the Police's largest ever counter terrorist operation. The scale of intelligence gathering meant switching resources from other less urgent investigations. It also meant making judgements on a daily basis about where to concentrate resources based on who presented the greatest threat to the UK public.



Omar Khyam with fertiliser intended for use in terrorism  
([Click here for a larger version](#))

It was in the investigation of this conspiracy that Khan and Tanweer first came to the Security Service's attention as unidentified individuals on the periphery of the plot. To give an idea of scale, the links between the fertiliser plot bombers and Khan and Tanweer represent less than 0.1% of all the links on record in relation to the fertiliser plot investigation.

## **Khan and Tanweer links to the fertiliser plot**

### ***1. Two men discuss fraud scams at fund raising meetings***

During February and March 2004, an unknown man subsequently identified as Khan met with members of the fertiliser plot on five occasions. He was accompanied by another unknown man, subsequently identified as Tanweer, on three of these occasions. The meetings took place in Crawley, the home of several of the fertiliser plot conspirators.

There was no indication as a result of the intelligence available at the time on these meetings that either Khan or Tanweer were involved in terrorist plotting. These meetings appeared to centre on the raising of money. Conversations record Khan and Tanweer discussing how to raise cash through a variety of fraud scams, such as purchasing building equipment on credit, defaulting on payment and selling the goods on for cash. There is no record of Khan and Tanweer discussing terrorist activity or bomb building.

The Security Service did record another conversation involving an individual identified after 7 July as Khan. From the context of the recorded conversation it is possible that Khan was talking about going to fight with militia groups in the Pakistani border areas.

### ***2. A man called 'Ibrahim'***

It has become clear since 7 July that Khan was known to detainees held outside the UK in early 2004. Some detainees had mentioned men from the UK, known only by pseudonyms, who

had travelled to Pakistan in 2003 and sought meetings with Al Qaida figures. In the aftermath of the 7 July attacks, Khan was identified by a detainee (who had seen a press photograph) as one of the UK men, known to him only as 'Ibrahim'.

Follow-up investigations in 2004 into the unidentified men on the periphery of the fertiliser plot included the circulation of photographs to foreign intelligence services in an attempt to identify these individuals. Photographs of Khan were shown to two detainees who had provided the earlier information, but without a positive result.

If Khan had been recognised, the Security Service might have allocated more resources to investigating him. However, given the operational priorities at the time, there is no guarantee that Khan would have been seen as a high priority target even then. In the event, the investigation was put on hold due to the need to focus on far more urgent cases posing potential large-scale threats to life.

### ***3. Investigation of Khan and Tanweer post 7/7***

Following the atrocities of 7/7, the Security Service and Police undertook a large-scale investigation into the perpetrators of the attacks. It was only at this point that the identities of Khan and Tanweer became clear.

Painstaking analysis of surveillance records following the attacks, in order to determine what - if anything - of the bombers was known to the Security Service and Police prior to 7/7, revealed their presence on the periphery of the fertiliser plot. Examination of Khan's telephone records showed his contact with Omar Khyam. This, along with a subsequent review of surveillance photographs taken during the fertiliser plot investigations, confirmed his presence in meetings with Khyam and others during February / March 2004.

### **What is the Service doing to prevent further attacks?**

The fertiliser plot, the 7 July attacks, and the other plots the Security Service has either disrupted or investigated all show that the threat from extremists has been growing since 9/11. As the then Director General Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller said [in a speech](#) to students of Queen Mary, University of London, last November: "Because of the sheer scale of what we face the task is daunting." When the fertiliser plot took place it was one of 50 networks of which the Service was aware. By the time of Dame Eliza's speech three years later the Security Service had intelligence on 200 networks involving some 1600 individuals.

***"We conclude that, in light of the other priority investigations being conducted and the limitations on Security Service resources, the decisions not to give greater investigative priority to these two individuals were understandable."***  
*- Intelligence and Security Committee Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005.*

***"My Service is dedicated to tackling the deadly manifestations of terrorism. Tackling its roots is the work of us all."***  
*- Security Service Director General Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, speech at Queen Mary, London, 9 November 2006*

Expansion of the Security Service to counter this threat to the UK has been under way since the attacks in the US in 2001. This has not only meant recruiting more staff and establishing an developing the Security Service's network of UK offices, but also increasing the capability of the organisation to gather and assess intelligence.

This is bringing successes, some public, some not. Most recently, there was extensive coverage of the disruption of an alleged plot to blow up passenger jets over the Atlantic. The increase in the conviction of people for terrorism offences since 7 July is evidence that the Security Service is not, as some have suggested, exaggerating the threat.

The creation of the [Centre for the Protection of the National Infrastructure](#) (CPNI) in February this year will improve the advice we provide to public and private sector industries on how to guard against terrorist attack.

It is only by working with others in this way, as Dame Eliza pointed out in her speech, that the Security Service can succeed against the scale of threat we face. This means working with the Police, other UK agencies, government and the private sector, security and intelligence services internationally - and, more broadly, with the help and support of the UK public.