



[MPS Home](#) > [News Bulletins](#) > News Article

## [MPS Home](#) > Latest News

### **Cmsr's Urban Age Summit Speech**

**Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair gave the following speech at the Urban Age Summit in Berlin today:**

I am delighted to be in Berlin this weekend. I chose to come because, with the imminent German presidency of both the European Union and G8, Berlin seems a very appropriate place to be as we consider the future of cities in relation to the current threat of international terrorism.

In Britain, that threat is very real. All here will remember the bombings of July 2005, in which 52 innocent people lost their lives in London, in the greatest single act of murder in recent English criminal history. You may also know we have had other attempted bombings, together with allegations involving ricin and ammonium nitrate and now you may have seen this week the full horror of what Dhiren Barot was planning: a dirty bomb, for which he was sentenced to a minimum of 40 years imprisonment.

The response of the West to the threat of international terrorism has been characterised by the United States and by many other governments as "a war on terror". In the United Kingdom, this weekend is Remembrance weekend, when the country remembers its war dead of the last century and now of this. Britain and Germany were on opposite sides in the most bitter and terrible of those conflicts but now we face a war as allies. Remembrance weekend in Berlin - perhaps particularly after the US mid term elections - seems a good time to reflect on quite what that means.

There is a war on terror and it has various constituent parts. This morning, I want to consider its components and to discuss one of them fairly fully. But above all, I want to consider mainstream policing and distinguish it from that war. I want to do so, not because it is unconnected, but because the language and concepts of conflict are unhelpful in the overall context of preserving safety in civil and civic society.

The war on terror has three parts. There is a real war, there is a war of intelligence and there is what can be called a war of ideas. Then, connected to the other three but not a war, there is terrorist criminality.

First, no one can doubt that what is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan at present is a real war of armies and tanks and bombs, of liberation, of victory and of conquest. But that is not what is happening in London or Berlin or Paris.

Secondly, there is an intelligence war: an asymmetric conflict between states and small groups, increasingly co-ordinated behind the banner of Al Qaeda. Diego Gambetta of Oxford

University is an expert on suicide bombers. His analysis of organisations, which use this method, makes clear that Al Qaeda is different in two ways. First, it usually targets civilians rather than military or police personnel and, secondly, even if one removes 9/11 from the statistics, Al Qaeda missions normally cause - and are intended to cause - far more severe casualties than those of, say Hizbollah, Hamas or even the horrors inflicted by the Tamil Tigers.

Al Qaeda poses a global threat of mass casualty terrorism, without warning, without negotiating position, with constantly evolving tactics. They are active. This summer, Al Qaeda appears to have been directly involved, from the Indian sub-continent, in the alleged plot to blow up airlines, flying out of the United Kingdom to the United States. Al Qaeda existed before 9/11, with the attack on the World Trade Centre in 1993 and the bombing of the American embassies in East Africa in 1998 as part of its early footprint. Together with MI5 (the British Security Service), the Metropolitan Police Service, which is Britain's national lead for police counter terrorist activity as well as London's police, is engaged in this intelligence war and, with every passing week, the number of targets against which our services are operating in Britain increases. The people we are watching have compatriots here in Germany and in dozens of countries round the world. The sky is dark.

Thirdly, there is a war of ideas going on, certainly in Britain. Again, Gambetta is interesting here. He has analysed suicide bombing in Iraq and has pointed out some early conclusions about bombings in Britain. His analysis of Iraq - based on figures supplied by the US led coalition - indicates that most of those dying in suicide missions there are not Iraqi. They are mainly citizens of other Middle East countries and they are deliberately going to Iraq to die for a cause. However, even if they are not Iraqi, many of them have direct or familial experience of the intafadas or of perceived oppression in other Middle Eastern countries.

That is Iraq. The position in Britain is different. When I heard Gambetta talk, the bombings of July 2005 had recently happened in London and he had only thirteen people involved in bombings connected to Britain to talk about. What he was able to point out, however, was that, shocked as we were that the four men who carried out the July 7 atrocities were effectively British born (one arrived in Britain in his first year of life) and the five accused of planning further atrocities on 21 July had lived in Britain for most of their lives, we should have foreseen that that would be the case. We should have already taken notice that one of the two young men who went to Israel to carry out a suicide bombing in 2003 was raised in Britain and one was British born, as were the two attempted shoe-bombers, involved in plots to blow up airliners in mid-Atlantic, shortly after 9/11. In contrast to the situation in Iraq, none of these have experienced real oppression. They were willing to die for an idea: and this is a phenomenon we have not seen, en masse, since the Spanish Civil War and the battle against fascism.

So these were thirteen. I can now tell you that there are nearly 100 people, either on or awaiting trial in the United Kingdom on terrorist related offences, including five of these thirteen. Of those, a significant majority are either British born or have spent most of their lives in Britain. Dhiren Barot came to Britain as a small child born to a Hindu family. He was educated in Britain and converted to Islam in Britain.

The idea for which these people will do such things is a very particular one: a coherent narrative of oppression, war and jihad: listen to the words, in his so called martyrdom video, of Mohammad Sadique Khan, one of the 7/7 bombers:-

'Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation.'

Ideas like this arise from an extreme view of one austere strand - wahabism - of the great faith of Islam. And yet it seems to be very potent. One of the truly shocking things - in addition to their intent - about the recent alleged plot to blow up airliners is the apparent speed with which young, reasonably affluent, some reasonably well-educated, British born people were converted from what appeared to be ordinary lives - in a matter of some weeks and months, not years - to a position where some were allegedly prepared to commit suicide and murder thousands of people at the same time.

In June 2006, a survey of worldwide cultural attitudes reported that the British were almost the most tolerant people in Europe towards Muslims and yet British Muslims held far more negative views of westerners than Islamic minorities elsewhere on the continent. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has no view on the foreign policy of the United Kingdom or its allies but my officers and I would be failing in our duty not to take note of the fact that many Muslims (and others) in Britain do and have very negative ones.

Even after recent events, there is no evidence of a significant rise in islamophobic attacks in Britain. Opinion polls show that Muslims do not feel any less safe, in terms of general crime, than other communities. However, polls also show that very considerable numbers of Muslims believe life in Britain has got worse for them since 2001 and they attribute that worsening to the war on terror and perceived islamophobia. The most concerning issue is support - in principle at least - for terrorist action. Three recent polls - one of Muslim students and two of Muslims generally - have suggested that four, six and two per cent respectively of those surveyed believed the July bombings to be justified. These figures extrapolate into 80,000, 120,000, and 40,000 people holding this opinion. I am not suggesting this means that there are this many terrorists. We should remember, for instance, that a 1971 poll showed significant tacit support for the Baader-Meinhoff group among young people in West Germany, which never translated into active support. It does, however, indicate the power of the ideology involved.

In order to overcome this view of the world, I therefore absolutely back the United Kingdom Government's intent to build a clear narrative of "Britishness", based on values of tolerance, fairness, inclusivity and respect for the traditions and the faiths of others. This may well be, in fact, a statement adaptable to a Europe wide position. The heated discussions over the veil in the UK are, I understand, mirrored by debates in Germany over the tension between respect for religious belief and free speech. What we have to get over is the message that this is not a clash of civilisations, because tolerant and compassionate ideas are the fundamental underpinnings of all three of the Abrahamic faiths, including Islam and, indeed, of all the other great religions of the world. What we have to do is to isolate the purveyors of a single, biased, unrepresentative view of a particular religion.

So a real war, an intelligence war and a war of ideas. What I want to concentrate mainly upon this morning, however, is something connected to but not part of the war on terror: the struggle to stop the terrorists getting through, particularly, in my role and in the context of this

conference, within the liberal democracies in which we live and work. Counter terrorism operations are clearly connected to the other three components of the war, which I have described but I have separated this activity - and we should separate it - because the concept and the language of conflict in this context is unhelpful and counter-productive. I am not making the mistake of de-politicising those involved in terror in Europe: although Irish terrorism has now degenerated almost completely into gangsterism, those involved in ETA, the Baader Meinhof, the Red Brigade, in the early days of Irish republicanism and loyalism or, indeed, those now affected by the ideology of Al Qaeda are not common criminals. They are largely not motivated by greed but by politics of a twisted sort.

Nonetheless, they are criminals and we should call them criminals and not dignify them with the name of soldiers, which Sadique Khan and others claim to be. They are not. They are murderers: murderers and those that help in murder by planning, by supply, by encouragement and by financing (usually through fraud). It is easy but it is mistaken to treat terrorism as separate from crime, to slip into the language of war and soldiering: it gives credence to these criminals which they do not deserve. More importantly, to do so may lead us away from rather than towards solutions. In particular, it will only further alienate communities who are already under pressure.

It is thus important, both in our actions and our language, to concentrate on treating terrorism as a crime, one which is both unlike and like other crimes. We do need to examine in what ways we should treat it differently but, much more importantly, if we are to defeat it, in what ways we need to treat terrorism in the same way as we treat other crimes.

There are things about terror - particularly its current variety - that are different and which have led, in Britain, to a recognition that different legal approaches need to be taken to combat it.

Let us consider what these are. The first change is in the length of detention by police before charge. The United Kingdom spent over 30 years dealing with Irish terrorism and yet did not need an exceptionally different legal framework in this area. However, particularly at the end of their 30 year campaign, the IRA could be characterised in four ways: with the odd exception, they did not want to cause mass casualties, they gave warnings, they themselves did not want to die in attacks and they were heavily penetrated by British Intelligence. This meant that the police in Britain could take a certain degree of risk with Irish active service units, letting them get very close to carrying out a bombing before they were arrested, so that the evidence available against them was maximised. None of these four conditions exist at present in relation to the international terrorist threat. The risk of what these people are planning is so horrific that the police have to move in early, with the result that arrests provide huge amounts of information but not necessarily immediately available evidence. In just one recent case, the Met arrested a small number of people for terrorism offence, and seized evidence that appeared to represent 100,000 identities. At the time of these arrests, computers, hard drives and other data storage media were seized, which together amounted to three terabytes of data, much of which was encrypted. To put this into visual perspective, one terabyte can be described as 50,000 trees made into paper and then printed. Ten terabytes represents the contents of the US Library of Congress. It takes time to examine and to assess the nature of the evidence found and determine the varying degrees of culpability of those arrested.

For other serious crimes, British police can but rarely do hold suspects for up to four days.

After long and very heated parliamentary debates, that has currently been changed in Britain to 28 days in terrorist cases. Of course, whether it is 28, 4 or 1, suspects have access to full legal advice in custody. In the recent alleged airline plot, we needed all the 28 days in respect of some of the 24 suspects: if there had been more people, we would probably have run out of time. I believe that an extension to the 28 days time for detention will have to be examined again in the near future.

Secondly, I am certain that we should introduce a procedure to question suspects after they have been charged with a terrorist offence, when new evidence emerges about that offence. This is currently not possible in Britain, except under very restricted circumstances.

Thirdly, I believe that the ban in Britain on the use as evidence in court of material obtained from telephone intercepts is simply not sustainable in the long term. Because of the very adversarial nature of British courtroom practice, there are difficulties here but they cannot be insuperable. In due course, we will have to seek different legal provisions to ensure that the best evidence becomes available.

Fourthly, we have benefited from new legislation about receiving and giving training in terrorist techniques and the glorification of terrorism. We must constantly keep legislation under review. For instance, I believe that we will have to consider anew some of our laws about some forms of public protest, including a ban on the burning of flags or effigies and the covering of faces in any demonstration whatsoever.

Lastly, our own criminal justice system is creaking under the impact of these trials. One major conspiracy will have taken two years and eight months to reach its court date, if it starts then: a current trial is likely to last over twelve months. The contrast with the speed with which the Netherlands dealt with the murderer of Theo van Gogh is striking. British contempt of court laws need to be changed: many terrorist trials are considered to be linked and the courts are reluctant to allow details of convictions in one trial to be published for fear of prejudicing others. This prevents the public - including communities from which the suspects come - from seeing justice done and we must trust juries more, in the broad public interest. The fact that we have now heard details of Barot's intentions only arose through media organisations taking judicial action to prize the information out of a reluctant court system.

The terrorist threat is global and all Europe is involved. Many of the changes I have outlined as being necessary in Britain will have resonance in the rest of Europe and we need to be as coherent and united as possible in our response. Nevertheless, these changes are only part of the answer in Britain and, I would suggest, in Europe as a whole. From a law enforcement perspective, the key to defeating terror, as in all other cases, will also be about traditional police work: good intelligence, accurate surveillance, professionalism in forensic recovery and other aspects of detection, plus one more element, of which we particularly must not lose sight.

And it is this: that in the end, it will not be the police or the intelligence agencies that uncover terrorists and defeat terror, it will be communities. I am absolutely convinced that the single most important component in the domestic defeat of terror in the next decade will be the ability of the police to work with communities to do so. That will require new paradigms of community policing, two of which we are driving forward in London. The first is a deliberate, large-scale investment in community policing. In the course of the last 18 months, the Metropolitan Police Service has invested 10% of its operational staff - more than 3,500 police and community support officers - in what we are describing as our Safer Neighbourhoods

Programme, which allocates six staff to each of London's 630 local authority wards. Each team is composed of three police officers and three community support officers who assist them, all uniformed. These officers do not get taken away from these small areas for almost any purpose. They have a clear mandate: to police the way the people in that ward want to be policed (as long as that does not involve vigilantism), to concentrate not on the targets that the Metropolitan Police Authority and I set for the whole service but upon tackling the kinds of antisocial behaviour that make people's lives a misery, the needles and condoms in stairwells, the neighbours from hell, the smashed bus stops, the louts in the children's playground, the graffiti and the open drugs markets.

And the results are remarkable. Crime is falling across London, with violent crime down by nearly 7%, residential burglary down 8% and total crime down 7% in the last six months, in comparison to the year before: over 40,000 fewer offences. At the same time, public confidence is growing, with significant increases in those believing that local policing is being done satisfactorily or well and expressing the belief that their neighbourhood is safe. These trends appear fairly consistent across London and across different ethnic and age groups.

It is only through providing this kind of quality service, together with every improvement we can make in all other aspects of policing, that we will be able to persuade all communities, including Muslim communities, that the police service is there for them and to persuade them of the desirability and practicality of trusting the police. Because it will be these Safer Neighbourhoods teams officers who will be the eyes and ears of the Met, it will be one of these officers who will be given the first piece of information about a suspicious purchase of peroxide, or telephones, or information about a lock-up garage or a flat with many comings and goings.

Beyond that, however, comes another extension of community policing, perhaps the most difficult but again not an unknown tactic, the involvement of community members in very serious police operations. Fifteen years ago, violent Jamaican criminals began to impact London and the Met did what it traditionally did: set up a separate detective unit to deal with what it then called Jamaican Yardies. I remember speaking to one of the detectives on that unit who said that they weren't getting within solving one in 20 of the murders and shootings, which were occurring as drug turf wars spilled over from the Caribbean into London. Over those 15 years, the Met has pioneered an entirely new approach in combating this sort of crime with the African Caribbean community rather than policing at them, to the point where we are now solving seven out of ten of these drug related murders in this community.

This has been a hugely painful process, of trust and lack of trust, of success and failure over many years, in which dedicated officers and many brave members of the community have stood side by side in the face of derision, hostility and danger, but it has worked. Now, in the far more complex scenario of counter terrorism work, the Met is moving out on that journey again with the Muslim communities of Britain. What we will seek to do is to get together a group of respected Muslims, of different ages, from different parts of Britain and from different strands of Islam. We will be asking them to go with us - and with some members of other communities - on the very difficult journey of trying to find a way in which, without necessarily revealing the absolute details of intelligence, we can give them sufficient information for them to be able to act as spokespeople to reassure their communities that police action is proportionate and justified or, indeed, be in a position to tell us early when they don't think it is.

The analogy is not exact but we need some of it to be: the recognition and vocalisation by significant community leaders that terrorism, radicalisation and extremism is a problem for Muslims, not just for government and others; the significance of the contribution of women to the finding of solutions which will save the lives of their sons and daughters; the need for risk-taking by police and community leaders to cross boundaries in a common cause.

Again, getting the message right is vital. We need the narrative of Britishness, we need to be able to confront the terrible ease with which it can be claimed that disagreement over foreign policy can justify murder but, above all, we need to engage with Muslim communities at the most obvious level, which is providing an excellent police service and using the language of personal and communal safety to connect them to the anti terrorist effort.

It has taken more than a decade to build the trust - even now sometimes fragile - which currently exists between parts of the African Caribbean community in London and the police. We do not have that kind of time with the threat of terror and yet it is a far harder challenge. Nevertheless, it is absolutely crucial that we all understand, in protecting our cities, that it will be our communities and the quality of interaction between the police and those communities, which determines the safety of us all.

Benjamin Franklin said that: "Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both." Almost a century later, an even greater American, Abraham Lincoln, said that: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew."

Too much of the debate about all aspects of terrorism is being confined to and polarised between those two positions. There is an important balance to be maintained between the preservation of hard fought for liberties and acceptance of the proposition that new challenges require new methods.

However important that debate is, it is of less immediate importance, in terms of the subject matter of this conference, in terms of policing, in terms of keeping our cities safe, than the recognition both that terrorism is a crime and that its current critical threat can best be reduced through traditional - or, at least, already tried and proven - approaches in policing.

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