
OPERATION CREVICE: SUMMARY

Start

Early phase:

1. In early 2003, the Security Service obtained intelligence indicating that an individual called Mohammed Qayum KHAN, from Luton, was the leader of an Al-Qaida facilitation network in the UK.
2. As a result of this intelligence, the Security Service commenced Operation CREVICE. At this stage, the investigation was into extremists providing financial and logistical support to Al Qaeda, rather than being directly involved in terrorist attack planning. In late January 2004 Omar KHYAM was identified as a key member of this network. He appeared to be acting as a courier and was placed under limited surveillance.

Attack intelligence and ELG

3. In early February 2004 the Security Service received intelligence which changed the nature of the investigation; it now had reason to believe that elements of the facilitation network were engaged in a bomb plot probably targeted at the UK, led by KHYAM. The focus of CREVICE switched from MQK and his facilitation network to Omar KHYAM and the bomb plotters.
4. As a result, KHYAM became one of the Security Service's top targets and Operation CREVICE became its top priority.
5. An Executive Liaison Group (ELG) was formed on 11 February 2004. An ELG is a secure forum in which Service and the police work closely together, which enables the Security Service to share intelligence with the police, on the basis of which decisions can be made about how best to gather evidence and prosecute the suspects in courts. The Security Service retained the lead for collecting, assessing and exploiting intelligence, whilst the police took lead responsibility for gathering evidence, obtaining arrests and preventing risks to the public.
6. At this stage, the 3 targets were Omar KHYAM, MQK and FILM CREW.
7. For the purposes of the ELG on 11 February 2004, a list was drawn up of addresses and vehicles that had featured in Operation CREVICE to date. This revealed that the three targets had a combined total of
 - a. 21 telephone numbers
 - b. 29 associated addresses (including 10 Thornhill Park) and
 - c. 51 associated vehicles (including R480 CCA).

8. The list of addresses and vehicles varied over time. A Security Service list dated 19 February 2004 indicated that the following addresses and vehicles had been selected for priority action by the Security Service:
 - a. 19 addresses, including 10 Thornhill Park “associated with Omar KHYAM who met with the driver housed here on 02/02/04”;
 - b. 7 vehicles, including Green Honda Civic R480 CCA “registered to Thornhill Park Avenue – associated with Omar KHYAM 02/02/04”.

Core plotters and associated individuals

9. The core bomb plotters were in due course identified as:
 - a. Omar KHYAM who lived in Hencroft Street, Slough, Berkshire and also at Langley Walk, Crawley, Sussex
 - b. Shujah Ud Din MAHMOOD, KHYAM’s brother, living at Langley Walk, Crawley
 - c. Jawad AKBAR, living in Uxbridge and Juniper Road, Crawley
 - d. Salahuddin AMIN, resident in Pakistan
 - e. Waheed MAHMOOD of Langley Walk, Crawley
 - f. Anthony GARCIA from Ilford, Essex, who also used the name John LEWIS
 - g. Nabeel HUSSAIN of Horley, Sussex
 - h. Mohammed Momin KHAWAJA of Ontario, Canada.
10. The individuals that KHYAM met and spoke to were assessed to see if they were involved in the plan to attack the UK. Some were thought to be involved in criminal activity, others were thought to be in the “facilitation” part of CREVICE, and a few were thought to be actively involved in the fertiliser bomb plot. The Security Service and the police concentrated on those whom they knew, from eavesdropping and other intelligence, were directly involved in the attack plan. Resources to follow up any other individuals were very limited.
11. Security Service records indicate that the following individuals had potentially significant contact with the core CREVICE plotters between early February 2004 and 30 March 2004:
 - a. in the order of 40 individuals referred to either by name or by Security Service nickname;
 - b. Up to 170 other males and females not identified by name or Security Service nickname. This figure includes 13 individuals not identified but referred to by letter (UDM or UDF A, B, C etc).

12. The vast majority of these were eventually assessed not to be related to the bomb plot itself, or even to the wider facilitation network, and were in fact wholly innocent or irrelevant.

Actions during Crevice

13. During the course of Operation CREVICE there were in the order of:

- a. 30 addresses searched
- b. 45,000 man-hours devoted to monitoring and transcription
- c. 20 CCTV operations
- d. 34,000 man-hours of surveillance
- e. ***covert searches of targets' property and baggage
- f. ***eavesdropping devices deployed
- g. 4,020 unique numbers identified as being linked to CREVICE.

14. The technical deployments used during CREVICE, as for all technical deployments, required a very significant amount of detailed planning and constituted a substantial use of Security Service time and resources.

Arrival of Electronics Expert on 20 February 2004

15. On 20 February 2004 an electronics expert arrived from Canada to meet KHYAM. On the way from the airport, KHYAM told KHAWAJA "to behave as a group" (assessed to be a reference to the cell). Surveillance showed that KHAWAJA was advising KHYAM and his associates on the construction and operation of remote detonation devices, confirming that KHYAM was actively planning an attack. KHAWAJA used the internet to show KHYAM images of detonation devices that he had constructed in Canada. On 21 February 2004 there was a meeting at an associate's house, Waseem GULZAR. It is not known what was discussed during the course of that meeting. Reference was made during that day and the next day to planning to go to Pakistan in mid-March, to courses on the capability of electrical equipment, and obtaining of outdoors gear from Canada.

Storage Depot Tip-Off on 20 February 2004

16. Separately, but also on 20 February, the police anti-terrorist hotline received a telephone call from staff at a storage depot saying that someone had been storing a 600kg bag of fertiliser since 11 November 2003 and they felt it was suspicious. The police visited the storage unit later that day and obtained details of the fertiliser and the rental agreement.
17. An inert substance was substituted for the fertiliser and on 10 March 2004 an undercover police officer was introduced as a receptionist at Access Self Storage.

Discussions of Possible targets

18. On 22 February 2004, KHYAM was heard considering a number of possible targets:
- a. A nightclub
 - b. Water or gas utilities
 - c. Targets that could be accessed by extremists who were engaged as water, gas, electricity or alarm engineers.
19. On 1 March 2004 Akbar was anxious to locate two hidden CDs with Transco written on them. Transco owns and operates the high-voltage electricity system in England and Wales and the high-pressure gas system. (CDs were later found which could be used to identify Transco's underground assets and hazardous plants owned by others).
20. On 10 March 2004 Akbar was heard discussing (with a man called Osmim) simultaneous attacks, targeting and gathering information on:
- a. Poisoning water supplies
 - b. Disrupting supplies of electricity and gas
 - c. Utilities
 - d. Gas installations
 - e. Water.
21. Akbar said that it was only a matter of time and that something would succeed, and that they needed to prepare for arrests.
22. On 12 March there was discussions of the "three" bombs.
23. On 14 March consideration was given to the Madrid bombs, and that it would have been better to have carried them out during the summer, with "all these people on holiday, those families going on holiday".
24. On 18 March reference was made to the possible use of fertiliser as an explosive and to "a little action", together with religious justification for the injuring of innocent persons and suicide bombings.
25. On 19 March Waheed Mahmood and KHYAM referred to
- a. Blowing up a police station
 - b. A few quick hits in Pakistan to act as a diversion
 - c. Bluewater in three days time or tomorrow
 - d. AMEC officers or depot
 - e. A car bomb
 - f. A bomb hoax.