



# Threat Analysis

Subject: Failed VBIEDs in London  
(update)

Information Cutoff Date: 6/29/07, 1800 hours

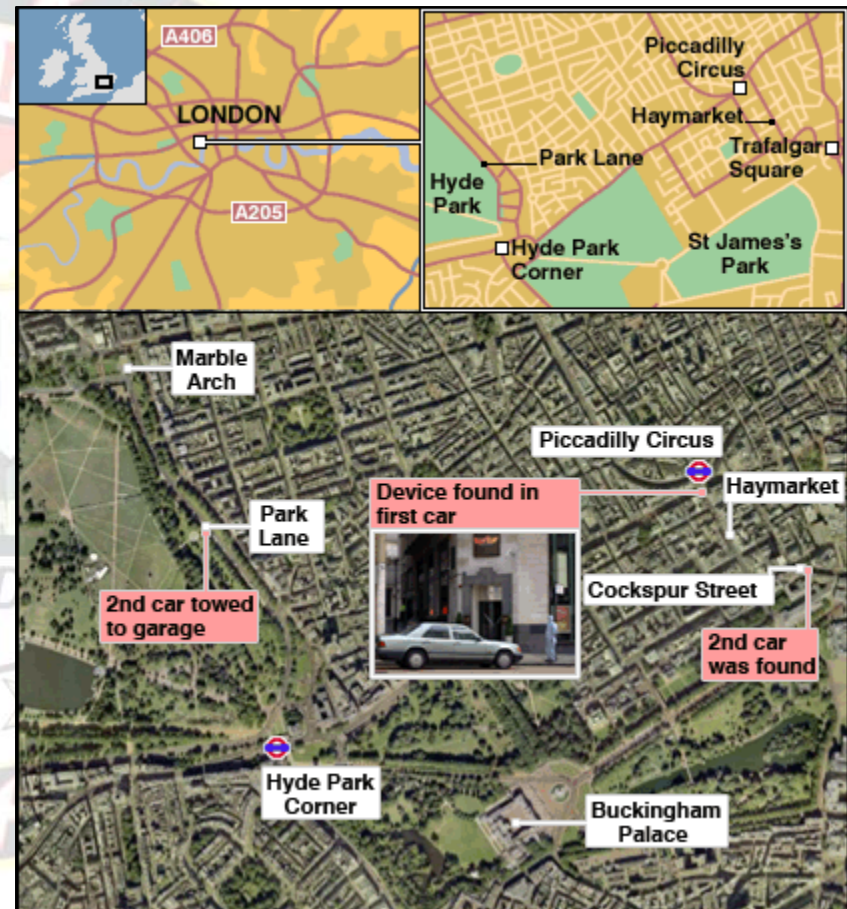
*NYPD SHIELD intelligence briefs are current as of the information cutoff date. The information is therefore preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision.*

*NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau*



## Overview

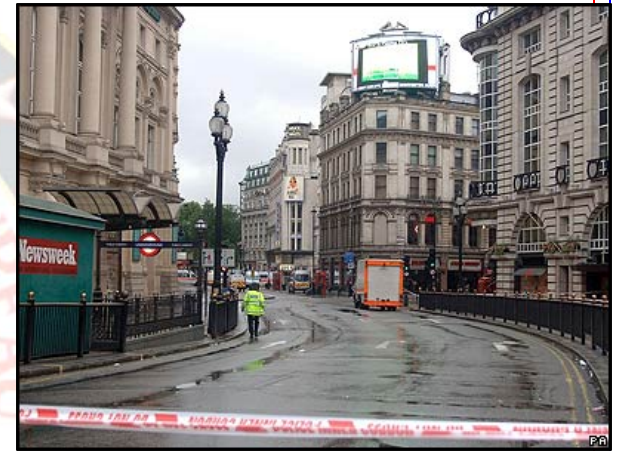
- VBIEDs found in Haymarket, near Piccadilly Circus, and in the Park Lane car pound after having been towed from Trafalgar Square
- “Crude explosive device” in the first vehicle failed to detonate; similar components in the second
- No evidence of high explosives
- Authorities currently reviewing CCTV and license plate readers positioned around London





## Details of the Haymarket Incident

- At 0125 hours, ambulance crew responding to an unrelated incident reported smoke from a metallic green Mercedes located outside the American Express foreign exchange, near the Tiger Tiger Nightclub
- Police responded and disabled the bomb
- Haymarket is a busy retail and entertainment hub in the vicinity of Piccadilly Circus, which is similar to Times Square in NYC
- Nightclub had approximately 1,700 people in attendance, some of whom were outside
- One witness saw the car being driven “erratically” and colliding with trash cans; the driver ran from the car, leaving the lights on
- No prior warnings were received



*NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau*



## Details of the Trafalgar Square Incident

- The second car was a blue 280E model Mercedes, which was ticketed at 0230 hours for being parked illegally on Cockspur Street, near Trafalgar Square
- It was then towed to the Park Lane car pound about one hour later
- After seeing news of first VBIED, staff there alerted police that the second vehicle “smelled of gas”
- Vehicle had similar bomb materials and components inside





## Details of the Devices

- The first bomb was composed of at least 50 liters of fuel, propane gas cylinders, and nails linked to a triggering mechanism; the second bomb is said to be identical
  - At this time, there is no evidence of high-explosives being employed
- The first device was initially described as “potentially viable” and “relatively crude,” but both devices were later considered by police to be “viable” and “clearly linked”
- Such devices, though unlikely to cause significant structural damage, were still designed to inflict mass casualties



## Timing of the Incidents

- Two months after leaked intelligence report of planned “Hiroshima”-type attack by al-Qaeda in Iraq against Britain and other Western targets
  - Approximately 150 Britons have traveled to fight in Iraq; a number are believed to have returned and formed “sleeper cells”
  - Letter by Abdul al-Hadi al-Iraqi (former senior al-Qaeda operational leader) called for attacks during the transfer of power in Britain
    - Former Prime Minister Tony Blair yielded power to current PM Gordon Brown days ago
- Almost one week before the second anniversary of the 7/7 London Underground Bombings



## Attribution

Responsibility has not been claimed and authorities have not identified suspects, but potential suspects include:

- AQ, its affiliates and AQ-inspired groups most likely; similar to other AQ plots:
  - Dhiren Barot's plot to use fuel-packed limousines as VBIEDs against British and American targets
  - The "fertilizer plot" that targeted the Bluewater Shopping Center and the Ministry of Sound nightclub with ammonium nitrate bombs
  - Multiple or simultaneous bombings are key characteristics of AQ attacks
- Independent, homegrown actors motivated by jihadi cause, or other factor
- The Irish Republican Army (IRA) has used VBIEDs in past attacks, though usually with prior warning and claims of responsibility
  - IRA has declared a ceasefire, but certain IRA splinter groups have not agreed to ceasefire at this time

***Whitehall sources believe that "international elements" are involved, according to the BBC.***



## Scenes of the Incidents



*NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau*



## Implications for New York City

- Attacks on soft targets such as nightclubs have long been considered a vulnerability in the U.S., particularly after the 2002 Bali nightclub attack and 2004 British fertilizer plot
- Media reports indicate that these VBIEDs are very similar to those being utilized in Afghanistan and Iraq, suggesting terrorist tactics are migrating abroad. VBIEDs have also been long regarded as a viable threat in NYC. Potential indicators of a VBIED include:
  - Vehicle sags noticeably or the vehicle's tires are "bulging" from the excess weight
  - Recent welding or unusual modifications
  - Excessively tinted/darkened windows
  - Unusual items can be observed within vehicle, such as gas cylinders, wires, and/or additional batteries
- Use of luxury sedans as VBIEDs allowed vehicles to blend into target neighborhoods, similar to Barot's plan to use limos to access corporate targets; VBIEDs are not limited to vans or trucks.
- Potential heightened threat against British interests exists in NYC and around the world
- In both instances, public vigilance may have saved lives. Suspicious activity should be reported to **1-888-NYC-SAFE**