

## **Operation Kratos**

Operation Kratos has been the subject of many media reports, some of which have been misleading. In order to ensure that Londoners are properly informed the MPS is starting a process of public information regarding Kratos and the laws within which police officers must work.

There has been no extension to what has been wrongly called a MPS shoot to kill policy. Police officers have always had to take whatever action was necessary in the circumstances that they face to protect the public.

In the modern era of suicide terrorism it is essential that the MPS is able to deploy an appropriate police response when necessary to safeguard the public from mass murder.

MPS tactics are in line with those used nationally by all other police forces.

### **What is Operation Kratos?**

Operation Kratos was developed by the MPS after the terrorist attacks in America on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 (9/11), in partnership with the national body for policing in the UK, the Association of Chief Police Officers. 9/11 brought home to police services around the world that the boundaries of terrorism had changed forever and that police planning had to take this new type of suicide bombing into account.

Kratos is the operational name for a wide range of tactics that the MPS could use to protect the public from the potential threat posed by a suicide bomber, either on foot or in a vehicle. It is not a shoot to kill policy. These tactics range from an unarmed uniformed police officer stopping someone through to the need to deploy specialist armed officers. Underlying our tactics is the fact that we must work within the law, on behalf of the public, to protect the public.

These tactics are based on those available to police forces nationally.

### **When would armed officers be used?**

The tactics available to the MPS, and other forces, have been developed and thought through after extensive consultation and research around the world, learning from the experience of our counterparts. This has also taught us that someone who is intent on taking their own life as a way of killing others will detonate immediately if they become aware that police are nearby. We also know that the types of explosives used by suicide bombers are often extremely volatile, and that the use of something like a taser would be dangerous as it might cause the explosives to detonate.

These factors may leave the police with no other option than to deploy firearms officers to take very positive action as the only way available to us of

saving the lives of the public nearby. Thankfully, the likelihood of police needing to do this is rare.

When it is necessary for the MPS to deploy armed officers, it is only done within a tightly controlled framework, with clear guidelines and authorisation levels. A senior officer, referred to as the Designated Senior Officer (DSO), would authorise the use of armed officers and oversee the operation. These officers receive regular and thorough training.

In the MPS we recognise the unique nature of this decision making process and have set the level at ACPO rank, an officer of the rank of Commander or above.

The individual armed officers who would be involved are also fully and specially trained. Their training is regularly refreshed and officers are routinely tested to make sure they keep such high standards. These are officers who on a daily basis face scenarios that are so dangerous they require the attendance of armed officers.

The strict way in which firearms officers are deployed is shown by looking at police action taken in response to calls from the public. From midday on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2005 until midnight on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2005 the MPS 999 call handling system (Information Room – IR) took 763 calls from the public reporting that they had seen someone suspicious, someone that perhaps could be a suicide bomber. Every one of these calls was assessed by an officer within IR as to their credibility. Only on eleven occasions was it necessary to inform the DSO and only on six occasions were armed officers deployed to a rendezvous point.

### **Do police officers have to act within the law?**

Every police officer is fully accountable and anyone involved in using these tactics will be subject to full and proper scrutiny and investigation. Every officer within the MPS knows that they face this level of accountability and would not want it any other way.

Police use of force is governed by the Criminal Law Act, 1967 (section 3). This lays down the legal requirement that force used must be reasonable in the circumstances to prevent crime or arrest criminals.

The MPS has taken expert legal advice throughout the development of Operation Kratos.

### **What racial profile for suicide bombers do you issue to police officers?**

There is no particular profile of a suicide bomber circulated to MPS officers. Our research and learning from around the world, re-enforced by our own experiences in London, bears out there is no one profile. For police to rely on

a profile would make our response less effective and could also put the public at risk.

## **Conclusion**

Operation Kratos is currently being reviewed by a senior officer within the MPS (Assistant Commissioner Steve House). This review is working closely with the national review.

The nature of the terrorist threat continues to change and evolve and it is the duty of the police to develop tactics to respond effectively. The MPS acknowledges the importance of keeping Londoners and the authorities who we answer to informed about any further development to these tactics.

At this stage the MPS believes that Operation Kratos contains the best available set of tactics to protect the public in the face of an imminent attack by a suicide bomber.