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PANORAMA

LONDON UNDER ATTACK

RECORDED FROM TRANSMISSION: BBC-1

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.....
The events in this programme are fictional
Everything else is fact

[News]

KIRSTY: This is BBC News on Tuesday May 25th, it's 8 o'clock – the headlines. The American Secretary of State is due to arrive shortly at Heathrow Airport beginning his official visit to the UK.

GAVIN ESLER: What you are about to see is series of terrorist attacks.

KIRSTY: The Bank of England is due to revue interest rates this afternoon. Experts are saying they could rise.

ESLER: This scenario is well researched but fictional.

KIRSTY: And police in London are on extra alert for the this evening's European Champions League Cup Match between Arsenal and the Turkish side Galatasaray. We're just receiving news of an explosion in the London underground near Hyde Park, this has not yet been confirmed by the police.

Tues May 25 08:27

BREAKING NEWS

There has been a second explosion in the underground, this time close to Oxford Circus. Both explosions appear to have occurred on the trains as they were moving. We've got on further details at this stage but we will bring you more information on this as soon as we get it.

ESLER: This is the kind of terrorist attack the government repeatedly says is going to happen.

November 2002

Tony Blair Prime Minister

Would Al-Qaeda buy weapons of mass destruction if it could? Certainly. Would it use such weapons? Definitely.

June 2003 (Actor's voice)

Eliza Manningham-Buller

Director General MI5

We are faced with the realistic possibility of some form of unconventional attack.

December 2003

David Veness

Assistant Commissione, Metropolitan Police

We need to confront murder on a mass scale.

March 2004

David Blunkett, Home Secretary

We've been absolutely clear we can't guarantee that there will never be an

attack. It's quite likely that they're planning one now.

BLAIR: We must be prepared for them to strike whenever and however they can.

ESLER: This is a mock exercise which exposes failings in official planning for such an attack. Failings the government wants to keep secret.

Tues May 25 08:40

BREAKING NEWS

Third blast at Vauxhall

Reports are coming in that a third explosion has now occurred on an underground train approaching Vauxhall Station.

ESLER: Panorama has asked these advisors, officials and experts to share their extensive experience and knowledge of government, intelligence, emergencies, disasters and planning. They are here to give it to us straight, what would happen if there was a series of attacks across London.

LONDON UNDER ATTACK

(Helicopter poised for takeoff)

[News Room] Is she in the air yet? Okay, well get her up there now. I need something as soon as possible. Okay.

Tues May 25 09:00

TUBE EXPLOSIONS

3 blasts on London Underground

The headlines at 9 o'clock. In the past hour there have been three major explosions on the London underground. The first occurred at 10 past 8 on the Piccadilly line between Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner. The second, at 16 minutes past 8, on the Central Line between Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Circus, and the third at 27 minutes past 8 as a train was arriving at Vauxhall Station in Stockwell on the Victoria line. Emergency services have been called to all three scenes. There are no reports available yet on the number of casualties, and the police have said that it's too early to identify a possible cause. London underground is now closed and the police are asking people not to travel.

DAVID GILBERTSON

Former Commander Metropolitan Police

Commander Metropolitan Police 1995-2001

Queen's Police Medal for Distinguished Service 1999

Gold Ground Commander Southall Rail Disaster 1997

Well it's abundantly clear what we've got here is a major terrorist incident, a major terrorist outrage and

we've got to get going. Three incidents of this size in London would mean effectively that the business of

policing in London would be diminished fairly quickly. You're talking about the deployment of vast

numbers of officers into the centre of London from the outskirts which effectively means that policing in

Barnet and Romford and Bexley Heath comes to a standstill.

CRISPIN BLACK

Former intelligence officer

Intelligence Assessment Staff 1999-2002

Major British Army 1996-1999

Defence Intelligence Officer 1994-1996

We shouldn't assume that necessarily the tube trains on their own were indeed the targets, that there may be a different aim behind this and we've got to keep that in mind as we go along. The intelligence assets would be out and about speaking to their sources trying to get some sense of who these people might be and also liaising abroad.

MICHAEL PORTILLO

Former Secretary of State for Defence

Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer 2000-2001

Secretary of State for Defence 1995-1997

What the government will have to do now, the Cabinet office will summon its secret committee which will

meet that will coordinate all the intelligence and emergency services. In this instance I think it would

probably meet in a secret and secure location. The safety of the Prime Minister might well be

compromised, he would need to be advised whether to go to a secure location himself. On the other hand

the government will have to get on to the media quickly to reassure people that the machinery of government is functioning.

ANNE GALLOP

Deputy Chair London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority

Member Local Government Association Fire Executive

Representative on London Fire & Civil Defence Authority 1997-2000

Councillor London borough, Sutton 1995-present

We would need to get a large number of fire-fighters into the sites, luckily for this event it's happened at

half past eight in the morning, so it will be possible to have the older watch staying on possibly to do

overtime so to speak, so we would have quite a reasonable supply of fire-fighters at the point of time when

the incident happened. Our problem would be getting the second line stations a bit further away from the

central area to send equipment etc which we would need, if the roads are going to be gridlocked.

Tues May 25 09:12

TUBE EXPLOSIONS

3 blasts on London Underground

Well I believe our reporter Ian Manning is close to the Hyde Park police cordon and he's on the line right now. Ian?

IAN MANNING: It's simply impossible to get anywhere near Hyde Park as site of the incident itself. A

cordon is being set up about 400 metres away from the station and right around it, but this is as far as

anyone is permitted to go. In the distance I can hear the clear sound of sirens in the air, I'm not sure if

you're getting that in the studio. There is police activity all around the security cordon and making sure

members of the public are not allowed through. The only people being allowed through are members of the

emergency services and even they are being rigorously checked. It's clear that at the moment...

GILBERTSON: We're going to lose mobile phones soon, I think almost certainly we, the police, would put

in access overload which is basically we will have priority use of the mobile phone system.

Access overload - police block all mobile phones except for selected registered

users

It will cause very severe problems if you're going to take away people's use of mobile phones. I think we'd have to think very carefully about that.

PETER POWER

Crisis management specialist & government adviser

Visor consulting 1995- present

Director BET Group Security 1992-1994

Senior Officer Metropolitan Police 1971-1992

Our research indicates that something like 350,000 people alone are making their way towards the city of

London at this point, and if the access overload system has been triggered and they can't get onto their

mobile telephones, this will have profound indications for them, the next of kin, and the very organisations they're hoping to go to work to.

LANCE PRICE

Former Deputy Director of Communications 10 Downing Street

Director Communications. Labour Party 2000-2001

Special Advisor to Prime Minister 1998-2000

BBC Political Correspondent 1989-1998

I think they have a two pronged issue to deal with. In the first instance it's important that we have officers

from the emergency services at the scene able to reassure the public that everything is being done on the

scene, that has to be the first priority. We need to outside the cordons

establish mobile press areas, and we

must talk immediately with the broadcasters about the possibility of a Prime Ministerial statement later in

the day and putting, I think, the Home Secretary up to talk about it within the next hour or two.

IAN HOULT

Emergency Planning Officer, Hampshire

General Secretary, National Council for Civil Protection

Honorary General Secretary, Emergency Planning Society 1997- 2002

We're going to have hundreds, possibly thousands, even tens of thousands of people on the streets and

we've got to decide what we're going to do. Are we going to shelter them, find places we can look up to

them in the immediate short-term, or are we going to evacuate them out and take them out, and those sort of

decisions need to be taken.

ELSLER: What I want to do now was introduce you to Charles Shoebridge. He's a former ant-terrorism

intelligence officer who has extensive experience of what happens when explosions take place.

CHARLES SHOEBRIDGE

Security Consultant

At rush hour just one well placed charge on a crowded tube train could be expected to kill in excess of a

hundred people and severely injure many if not most of the other approximately 700 people on the train.

There will be smoke, chaos, darkness and a degree of panic, the train will probably have derailed and may

well be ablaze. It's quite likely the only access points to the injured will be from the front and the rear, and

yet if those areas are damaged, access will be severely impeded, particularly if the vital equipment that is

needed to gain access, such as cutting gear, isn't immediately available.

ANNE GALLOP: The fire service, initially, when they would go down to investigate what had actually happened underground would first of all have to decide whether it's a straightforward bomb, or whether there's any chemical attached to it. If these are, as it appears to be from the news programme, straightforward bombs, in a way that's a little bit easier to deal with. I'm not saying it's not going to cause fewer casualties, there'll be hundreds of casualties down there and it'll be extremely difficult, but it doesn't have quite that element of complication.

The rescuers aren't at risk.

ANNE: Well it's easier for the rescuers to rescue...

DAVID BENNETT

Professor Intensive Care, St Georges Hospital, London
30 years at Intensive Care Department, St George's
Involved with Clapham rail disaster, 1988

I'm really concerned, you know.. you've got three train, probably 300 people killed minimum, several hundred people injured, severely burnt, crash injury. I'm concerned about the hospitals. The sort of numbers we're dealing with, I don't think one has ever dealt with such numbers before. I guess if it is 300 and several hundred injured we probably can cope but it's going to be hard, very hard.

ANNE: As far as search and rescue are concerned we still have on order a number of vehicles which haven't been delivered yet.

As part of the Government's investment in new equipment, London Fire Brigade will take delivery of five new Fire Rescue Units In September with updated specialist search and rescue equipment

I think we can go now to our traffic reporter Jenny Martin who is above London as we speak. Jenny, what's it looking like from up there?

Tues May 25 09:29

TUBE EXPLOSIONS

3 blasts on London Underground

JENNY MARTIN: Well the situation looks far from encouraging. We're currently hovering over the M25 and there's a clear picture emerging of traffic chaos throughout the capital. Traffic is backed up into South London and there are queues forming on the North Circular and the A40. Multiple ?? around the incident site are adding to the amount of traffic congestion already in the city, and this situation has been made even worse by people it seems literally abandoning their cars on the street. Police are urging people to stay with their cars. Be patient and if you haven't left yet, police do not travel.

We can now go back to our reporter Ian Manning at the Hyde Park police cordon. Ian, what's the latest?

Tues May 25 09:31

TUBE ATTACK

IAN MANNING, Hyde Park

It's still a very confused picture here but what I can say is that there have no further explosions following the three reported on the Piccadilly, Central and Victoria lines. Extensive police cordons are now in place

at each of the three affected sites like the one you can see behind me here, and all these areas, as I understand, have now been evacuated.

Do you have any indication as to the number of casualties?

IAN: None whatsoever I'm afraid. The numbers of dead and injured have yet to be released, I largely presume, because of the difficulties facing the emergency services in actually getting into the tunnels for search and rescue. Their attempts are being considerably hindered by both the smoke and dust clouds resulting from the explosion and indeed by the lost power to the underground itself.

Ian, thanks for now.

Tues May 25 09:31

TUBE EXPLOSIONS

Emergency Services at all three scenes

ANNE: The fire-fighters will be working, as they do, when they're in the tunnel type situations, really in the dark, feeling their way around, bringing out as many of the casualties as they can. I believe in the first instance they would possibly leave people whom they feel they can't bring out more easily and try and bring out the walking wounded more quickly, and then go back to deal with people who might be trapped and need more specific...

Triage.

DAVID GILBERTSON

Former Commander

Metropolitan Police

The biggest thing from my point of view would be to impose a structure on this.

One of the key elements of

that is communication and a thing that concerns me greatly is how well we would be able to communicate

on the deep underground. I know that the British Transport Police have their own system, but so far as the

Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police are concerned, and the other emergency services, there is

no way that they can use their current radio systems underground, and that will be a severe inhibitor in

terms of the rescue effort. Anne, have you got a few on that?

ANNE: We've dealt with Ladbroke Grove, we've dealt with other over ground crashes and we could well

deal with an over ground bomb, that's easy. In the open air it's much easier than when you're constrained in

a narrow tunnel, very, very deep down so you don't have the communication network down there.

GILBERTSON: Once police officers and fire brigade personnel and ambulance

personnel go underground

their radios will not work and they will not work today.

Metropolitan Police radios do not work in one third of the underground network.

(SOURCE London Resilience)

Police, ambulance and fire services radio communications systems – are not compatible with each

other in London, are not compatible with each other across England & Wales.

Tues May 25 10:10

BREAKING NEWS

Explosion near Liverpool Street

[News] We're just getting reports that there's been a further explosion in the region around Liverpool Street

Station. We will of course bring you more news on that as soon as we can.

Meanwhile traffic problems

continue in central London as the full effects of the emergency police cordons are being felt.

ANNE: The three major incidents we would be really stretched to cope. Planning is usually done on two very major incidents going on at the same time, that's been our traditional position.

GILBERTSON: Just the management of one incident would require.. I don't know, 200, 300, 400, up to 1000 officers by the time you've factored in cordon control, specialists, those that are necessary to ensure that the traffic management is run as best you can. If you think about it, there are 30,000 police officers in London, at any given time there's probably a quarter or a third of that number on duty at most. And they're spread right around London, and as these incidents start to unfold, they'll be drawn in to deal with them. So the centre of town will be filled and filling with people. Now we don't want them there. We need to get them out in some way. But how do we get them out because we won't have a transport infrastructure immediately available to get them out. We can't necessarily turn the round on the roads because the roads will be blocked. We can't necessarily use buses because they'll be caught up in the traffic. There won't be an underground system, there may be a main line system. Our advice has got to be don't come into London, keep out of London, keep away at all costs from the sites of these incidents.

CRISPIN BLACK

Former Intelligence Officer

What we're seeing on film here today, isn't particularly complex or

sophisticated. These are three bombs on

the tube, we're not quite sure what kind of bombs but just three and a line in the city we're still not sure

what's coming out of that. Now to organise these things isn't particularly difficult, remember Madrid had

10-13 bombs, so this is quite.. this is quite a low scenario on the Islamist terrorist capability slide, and even

with this I get a sense that.. you know.. we're being stretched.

Tues May 25 10:14

TUBE ATTACKS

Many casualties feared.

Well we can now go over to the police headquarters where our reporter, Mark Cook, is with Chief Superintendent Sarah Bellew.

MARK COOK: Can you tell us what the latest situation is?

Tues May 25 09:12

BREAKING NEWS

Chief Superintendent SARAH BELLEW

SARAH BELLEW: We are in a serious situation with three separate incidents on the tube. All the trains

were very busy at the time of the explosions and are now stranded between stations which is making search

and rescue slow and difficult.

COOK: Do you have any idea of the number of casualties taken to hospital?

BELLEW: A number of people with serious injuries have been taken to local hospitals and obviously the fire service rescue teams intend to be bringing out as many as they can.

COOK: Are there confirmed deaths at this stage?

BELLEW: Again we can't confirm numbers at this stage, although we are certain that people will have died in all three explosions, as I'm sure you can understand, it will be some time before we have accurate figures.

COOK: Have you confirmed that this is the work of terrorists?

BELLEW: We are investigating all possibilities and are ruling nothing out, and really that's all for now. Thank you.

COOK: Chief Superintendent Bellew, thank you. Back to the studio.

Lance Price

Former Deputy Director of Communications
10 Downing Street

People have been right to be cautious about the number of casualties and necessarily cautious about the number of casualties but the scale of it is now apparent, four attacks in London. I think throughout the country people are going to be drawing conclusions speculating about the cause. I think there is a very real need to give consideration to how individuals are going to be reacting to this. There is the danger of reprisal attacks against Muslim communities up and down the country that has to be countered against and I think we have to look at getting people up on the media who are able to offer some degree of reassurance and try to explain that this isn't a sort of Muslim attack against the west, that people need to be responsible and measured in the way in which they react to it.

GILBERTSON: So we're talking senior church leaders, the Muslim Council... that sort of thing.

PRICE: I'm talking to London Palace and I would phone somebody up from Muslim...

BLACK: There are other decisions that need to be taken about the Euro Star, what do we do at our airports, and in any case we still don't know the ambitions of this attack, it would be sensible to secure and ?? and...

MICHAEL PORTILLO MP

Former Defence Secretary

But I guess from the political point of view, one would want to broaden this out to a national emergency. I mean one would want to think about what facilities would be used outside London hospital facilities, how we could transport people to those places, bringing in ambulance services from outside London, maybe bringing in other sorts of vehicles, alerting the military, I mean there maybe roles for the military in this. For example, we're going to need a lot of people doing quite routine stuff in the near term like cordoning, it's going to put a tremendous strain on your resources.

ESLER: Yes. I just wanted to add something here for what the government has already done because to

help out they have created a support corps called the Civil Contingency Reaction Force, the CCRF. It's made up of territorial army volunteers who've had additional training. What our research shows however is that almost a thousand of them are already committed in Iraq, and of the remaining spread right across the country, we've been told that some have received minimal training, and their availability cannot be guaranteed because of their volunteer status.

PETER POWER

Crisis management specialist

Speaking as an ex-TA soldier, there is this issue about whether or not you can rely on the reservists and the TA because the reservists, as I understand it, are those soldiers who are on call out if they're needed but nobody knows where they are sometimes. But I think it is another example of perhaps putting hope too far above certainty by expecting TA soldiers to come out in I think 6 hours has been talked about. That's a little bit optimistic I think.

The Civil Contingency Reaction Force communications system is not compatible with those of the emergency services.

SOURCE: House of Commons debate, October 2002

It has been estimated that it would take 12 hours to mobilise 100 people.

SOURCE: Evidence to Defence Select Committee 2003

DAVID BENNETT

Professor, Intensive Care

The other thing we haven't talked about, I don't think anybody's mentioned, there are all these tube trains stopped in the middle of tunnels with people in them. What's going to happen to them?

ESLER: Well let me interrupt on exactly that point because what we wanted to do now was to hear from two London underground employees who've spoken to us anonymously because they are frightened if they talk to us openly they would perhaps lose their jobs about the kind of training they have received for incidents like this.

STATION ASSISTANT

London Underground Actor's voice

We receive no training at all. We've received absolutely nothing at all. You cannot train for all things and all circumstances but surely the very basics of training is absolutely necessary given the fact that our staff are there in the immediate situation, you know.. first hand, prior to any of the blue light services turning up. All we're told essentially is remain vigilant. So remain vigilant is one thing. However, not knowing what to do is totally in contrast to the whole purpose of being vigilant. All we're trained in is get them out the nearest exit as quick as possible.

TRAIN DRIVER

London Underground Actor's voice

If something happens now, I've been given no training. You would have to rely on my judgment at the time. You shouldn't have to rely on my judgment and the best decisions I make at the time. I should have some guidelines and I've been given nothing.

ESLER: Okay, those were the words of two London underground employees, and we should say that

London underground has told us that all staff have been briefed about terror attacks but not trained because training would, in their word, be impractical.

GILBERTSON: I think it's deeply worrying, deeply worrying.

POWER: I've got some sympathy with the executive of London Transport because there may be plans there that are beyond the knowledge of awareness or ability of a driver because just how much can you tell a train driver about a terrorist incident. I'm not sure whether we should put too much credibility to the comments we've heard.

GILBERTSON: I'm not sure I entirely agree with you Peter you know. There are issues around large companies like London Underground having a strategy but it's absolutely fundamentally important that those at the cutting edge at least know the general direction that strategy is supposed to take you. So I do feel some sympathy for these drivers. They're responsible for large numbers of people every day when they go out they've got behind them.. I don't know, 3, 4, 5 hundred people. They're responsible for their lives and they're responsible for their safety, so they need to know rather more than they're being told at the moment and that's what it seems.

Tues May 25 10:31

BREAKING NEWS

Hyde Park – first survivors

No clear picture is emerging yet of the numbers of dead or injured at each of the three underground stations but we can now go back to Ian Manning who I believe is with two survivors of the Hyde Park explosion.

MANNING: That's right. I'm joined now by Craig Allen and Nita Sangen. Nita, if I come to you first, can you tell me exactly what happened?

NITA: I was walking towards the platform, it was busy, like it always is. I had quite a heavy bag on me and I remember having to put it down for a minute, and when I bent down to pick the bag up there was this massive bang. It was as though I'd been lifted off my feet. It was terrifying. There were people screaming and yelling. I thought I was going to get trampled on.

And Craig, where were you?

CRAIG: I was actually on the far end of the platform from where the train comes through the tunnel. But it were like.. as she says, it was a fine and normal day and then suddenly there was this almighty blast and the whole platform seemed to just shake. I was thrown forward and I thought I was going to fall on the track, but I landed on top of someone and by the time I knew what had happened, everywhere were full of smoke. At that point I really thought I was going to die, people started coughing and crying and trying to find their way out in the dark, and we didn't know if there was going to be another explosion or what.

IAN: Thanks Nita and Craig. Clearly a very harrowing experience.

Tues May 25 10:33

TUBE ATTACK

Hyde Park – first survivors

Thanks Ian. Well we're now hearing that some survivors are emerging from the explosion at Oxford Circus.

PRICE: It's very difficult of course that people are coming out, but we have to remember people at home are going to be very, very concerned to know whether or not their loved ones, their family members are safe or not, it's going to be impossible to provide them with that kind of information accurately and quickly, but what we do have to set up now are hotline numbers and a sufficient capacity of hotline numbers so that people can get what information we do have.

BENNETT: Well obviously it's good news, we've seen some survivors but they do confirm it filled with smoke immediately after the explosion and I think that doesn't bode particularly well because you've got a lot of smoke around, you get a lot of smoke inhalation injury and burnt lungs and so on, so that's the downside I think.

Tues May 25 10:35

TUBE ATTACKS

Police cordon all large areas

We can now go back to Jenny Martin who's reporting from the air. How's the traffic looking now Jenny?

JENNY MARTIN: We're now over central London and the traffic congestion is showing no signs of easing. Police say that as a result there have been a number of traffic accidents, some quite serious and all adding to the confusion. Police are continuing to clear and to keep clear enough routes for the emergency services, of course they may result to using helicopters to try and get some of the injured out, but without any kind of official airlift out of the capital this will be a difficult task and there is only one air ambulance in the whole of London.

[News Room]: Thank you Jenny, and we also understand that the fire service has no helicopters and that police helicopters are unlikely to be used for rescue as they're needed for reconnaissance.

ESLER: Well our research reveals that the House of Commons Defence Select Committee recommended in 2002 an airlift plan but none has so far been put into place. Any requirement for helicopter rescue in a crisis or attack would rely on civilian helicopters and be apparently on an ad hoc basis on the day.

GILBERTSON: There's a real issue around this because certainly police helicopters are basically platforms for cameras and they're there for surveillance or they're for gauging what's happening on the ground. They're not there for the lift and rescue. The ambulance service clearly haven't got a capability. The fire service
Anne?

ANN: We went into this matter in 1996. It's going to be very expensive to have it, and at that point in time we didn't think we could justify the expense.

PORTILLO: You could use large scale military helicopters but they would need large scale landing places. The landing places would have to be secured and you'd have to get the injured from where they'd been recovered to the helicopter which is no mean feat.

Tues May 25 10:41

LONDON ATTACKS

Chlorine tanker explodes

We can now confirm that a tanker carrying chlorine has exploded at the junction of Shoreditch High Street and Commercial Street. Chlorine is extremely toxic in this form and the police are issuing express warnings to people to stay indoors, close windows and remain there until the all clear is given.

BENNETT: Well that clearly changes the complexion of the whole thing completely. I mean chlorine is a highly toxic gas which causes severe burns if it comes into contact with skin, and more particularly causes very severe damage to the lungs. Now if it's in the area they're saying, the London hospital is in that immediate vicinity and that's the one hospital that has a helicopter landing pad as it happens, so that hospital might well be under threat.

PORTILLO: I think we have a very serious position now with public morale and public information because people will I think be reacting with terror, and I think the politicians and the people in Lance's position would now be wanting to get onto the media very, very quickly with any word of reassurance they could give about this, and I really don't know what they would be able to say.

BBC Action Line

08

000 56 54 50

Tues May 25 10:44

BREAKING NEWS

Police : stay indoors

Police are still urging people to stay indoors until the extent of the chlorine release is known. They are repeating again it is extremely toxic.

ESLER: Okay, well we want to bring in at this point Lyn Fernie who is a safety consultant specialising in chemicals. Lynne, what would happen to the chlorine in an incident like this?

LYN FERNIE

Principal safety consultant

Aker Kvaerner

In this sort of incident where we have a tanker that's been ruptured, the gas is transported as a liquid under pressure. So what we'll have is a two-phased release. We'll have a gas cloud that's formed, it's moving very quickly away from the source, but because it's very dense it's hugging the ground. So what I've got here is a map of the area. What we can see is in the inner circle here, the inner contour, the concentrations will be fatal, and that's from 600 metres from the tanker. Up to a kilometre away we're still going to see people suffering major injuries and above two kilometres away from the tanker people outdoors are going to suffer a dangerous dose, and at that sort of dose they're going to have burning eyes, nose, mouth. They may be suffering dizziness, they're probably going to feel quite ill, potentially

vomiting.

Tues May 25 10:48

BREAKING NEWS

Police – stay indoors.

First reports from the Commercial Street area suggests many casualties. One eye witness has described a fog of greenish gas on the surrounding streets. Police are still urging people to stay indoors until the extent of the chlorine release is known.

KIRSTY: Well let's go over now to Peter Cockroft who's at the London Weather Centre. People how is the weather likely to affect that chlorine cloud?

PETER: Kirsty, the most important thing is the wind. Now we've got high pressure out over the Atlantic and that won't change over the next few hours. Now that means light, north westerly winds across London, no, more than five miles an hour, so the gas is likely to drift south eastwards across the East End. At the moment the gas isn't dispersing very quickly, now that's down to the cloudy sky, but if the sun breaks through, that could cause more mixing and make the gas spread out more. Now the advise from the emergency services is to stay indoors and we'll be updating the situation continuously on our radio station 95.9FM.

KIRSTY: Thank you Peter.

PRICE: If there are now bombs going off above ground, in this case a lorry being attacked, it could happen anywhere, so the potential for mass panic across not just the capital but the whole country is very much with us. I think therefore we need to look at more serious measures. We do have reserve powers in effect to take over the BBC if we were to wish to, and to get them to broadcast whatever we wanted them to broadcast. Those powers are there in the Broadcasting Act. By advice to the Prime Minister would be not to use those but I think we should be talking to the broadcasters about having the Prime Minister on the air very quickly.

GILBERTSON: You wouldn't disagree with that Michael at all?

PORTILLO: No, I entirely agree that the Prime Minister should be out there and we shouldn't be using the powers to bring in the BBC but we should certainly be talking to the broadcasters about the way in which the coverage is going to be organised.

Tues May 25 11:21

BREAKING NEWS

Toxic Cloud over East London

London reporter Mina Sharma has managed to get onto a balcony overlooking Whitechapel where the main impact of the chlorine gas will be felt. Mina...?

MINA: As you can see, I'm wearing my protective suit as a precaution. A cordon has set up around the area and police are desperate for people to remain indoors. The gas itself is not visible from here as the cloud is drifting at ground level. But we understand it's heading towards Whitechapel and possibly the Isle of Dogs.

KIRSTY: And without that mask Nina, would you be able to smell the chlorine?

MINA: No, I'm simply too far away and the cloud is moving away from me now. Of course, as it disperses it becomes less toxic, less dangerous. But the police are still urging caution. We're all familiar with the smell of chlorine swimming pools but in this form it is a poisonous gas.

KI

KIRSTY: Do you have any idea about the number of casualties?

MINA: No, I haven't. Various estimates suggest hundreds. Maybe more killed within the vicinity of the explosion itself, but we have no hard figures.

KIRSTY: Thank you Mina for that. Well clearly a very serious situation is emerging in Commercial Street. I am now able to bring you an update from the Hyde Park where 19 people have been confirmed dead.

BENNETT: Well I think we have no experience of this and the vast numbers of casualties with serious lung injury I suspect and a lot are burnt, I just don't think you have experience of having to deal with those sorts of numbers.

GILBERTSON: Unprecedented.

BENNETT: It's unprecedented, yes.

IAN HOULT

Emergency Planning Officer, Hampshire

I think the local authorities and voluntary agencies would be called upon here to help the help agencies and to administer help and support and welfare wherever it could. And there are quite a lot of resources that can be deployed in that respect.

Local authorities and the police are in the frontline of alerting the public in the event of a terrorist attack.

The national siren network was dismantled in 1992 / 93 and has not been replaced.

KIRSTY: But chlorine is concentrated in the Bishopsgate area at the moment and we've just been sent these pictures from the scene. Now you're looking here at Bishopsgate. That is the gas, it tends to swirl and then sink to ground level as you can see. I mean it actually looks like a liquid but that is in fact gas, and it is highly toxic. The police are saying please stay indoors until this has dispersed, it's extremely poisonous. This cloud of chlorine gas came from a tanker that exploded near Liverpool Street Station and it is now concentrated in the Bishopsgate area.

ESLER: The police, like all frontline services, do have CBRN which is chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training. Charles Shoebridge has been looking at the figures for the Metropolitan Police to try to figure out how many police with the training would be available to deal with an incident like this.

CHARLES SHOEBRIDGE

Security consultant

The harsh fact is that during the vital golden hour following a chemical incident, it's extremely unlikely that

any CBRN trained or equipped officers at all will be available on the ground. The government has set a target of 5% of operation officers being CBRN trained and equipped by April 2004. But of course this means that 19 out of every 20 operation officers don't have any equipment or training in this area at all. In London, those figures translate to approximately 1500 officers of whom, because of shift patterns, leave course requirements and so on, only about 400 or so can be expected to be on duty at any one time.

GILBERTSON: Well it's far from reassuring but not particularly surprising. Bearing in mind the fact that officers are not always available, they aren't going to be available and that actually getting them to the scene is going to be a problem. Frankly I think we've got to play with what we've got.

The Metropolitan Police dedicated – CBRN Unit has 30 officers.

In the London Ambulance Service 186 people have received CNRN training. This equates to one in nine staff.

Local authority staff in England & Wales have no CBRN training.

ANNE GALLOP

Deputy Chair

London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority

We have about 300 officers who have also been trained in CBRN techniques, and in any one time you could probably take 30 of those in to deal with this incident, or to direct this incident, and we have three incident response units, that's the units that are going to decontaminate people. We could get over to the IRUs there within 15 minutes, that means that they could be people who've been immediately affected by the gas could be going through a decontamination unit very, very quickly.

PORTILLO: If they get through the traffic.

GILBERTSON: If they get through the traffic, exactly.

The CBRN police reserve carries protective suits at all times. Most other CBRN-trained officers have to return to base for their suits before being deployed.

ESLER: I've got one of the suits here that they would wear. Maybe those of you who have gone through training with this would like to tell us a bit about how difficult it is to operate, to do any kind of job when you've got this on and the boots on and so on.

BLACK: One thing I think we've got working for us with this, and I have done the training Winterbourne Gunner with the military is that we know it's chlorine gas. Now chlorine, provided you keep it off your skin and out of your lungs, you will be okay in some kind of suits, so there won't be that fear for the rescue workers that have to go in, that it's some kind of complicated nerve agent or something very, very weird that we haven't seen before. At least they know if they can't smell it, then the gas mask is working and if they don't have a burning sensation on their skin, then it hasn't penetrated the suit.

GILBERTSON: Yes, I've undergone the training. Beyond about 30 minutes really you're not good for very

much at all. You can't involve yourself in work that requires a great deal of exertion. It's very difficult to communicate to people outside. It's very difficult to talk to people, it's very difficult to use radio equipment. Officers from any of the emergency services and the military who were put into those things will do the best they can for as long as they can.

[News Room] Can I have a word? I've found out there are seven schools close to where the chlorine tanker exploded. It might be worth sending someone out to one of those to see how they're coping. Apparently there's no special guidance for teachers in an emergency.

No emergency plan, nothing? Alright, I'll see whose available. Mail me the details.

No specific national guidance has been issued for schools or care homes.

Many local authorities have issued guidance to schools in their areas to assist in emergency planning.
(SOURCE: London Resilience)

Ask your headteacher or care home manager about their plans.

KIRSTY: It's 1 o'clock, the headlines. London has come under attack this morning. Three explosions on the underground were followed by a chemical tanker which exploded releasing lethal chlorine gas. Police are continuing to encourage the public to stay indoors. 40 people are now confirmed dead and there are many hundreds injured. The Home Secretary has said the attacks bear the hallmark of Al-Qaeda but we've no confirmation of their environment. Emergency services are attending all the scenes but it's clear they are severely stretched. Traffic continues to be backed up across the city and on all main exit routes. Senior government ministers are meeting in Cobra, the specially designated emergency meeting room in Whitehall.

GILBERTSON: Cobra would want to hear what the senior police officer involved – and that would be the Commissioner in term – has to say about the management of all the incidents if the Commissioner went to them and said I need more personnel, I need more equipment, I need more this, I need more that. It could be facilitated through Cobra.

BLACK: One of the things can be done and I was in Cobra on the 12th September, when something is decided in Cobra, normally by, in this sort of strategy by a minister in fact, possibly the Prime Minister himself, what you get is instant action, the person responsible for that sphere, and the senior person at the table, someone will go away and put that plan or decision straight into action.

PRICE: But I think Cobra has a very important psychological role because in a sense we are now at war, that is the war cabinet. That is the symbol that the government and the authorities are in control of the situation to the extent that they can be.

KIRSTY: Well London reporter Nina Sharma has made her way to one of the main hospitals receiving casualties from that chlorine exposure. She joins us now. Nina.

NINA: I'm joined by John Green who's been a paramedic for 18 years. John, can you

describe what today's
been like?

JOHN GREEN: Awful. I've dreaded a day like this. I've considered the possibilities of course that something like this might happen but you never expect it's going to happen for real. The traffic has been very hard to get through for a start. Serious injuries at the tube. And now with the choline as well, we're spread too thin. We struggle to get to people quick enough. We've had delays getting more oxygen. There just aren't enough ambulances.

NINA: But you are trained for something like this?

JOHN: Yes, yes we are, but we've never had to apply it for something of this scale. I've been a paramedic for 18 years and I've never been involved in a mock incident or anything like that, a practice run, nothing.

NINA: But you are saving lives?

JOHN: Yes, yes we are.

NINA: I won't keep you any longer, thank you John. Absolutely a difficult day for all the emergency services here in London.

Thank you Mina.

There must be a capacity issue for hospitals.

The hospital would stop doing all their routine work, and everything would be cleared out, all the non off duty staff would come in. But my concern is, the majority of these patients I think are going to require very intensive care. We just don't have those sort of facilities. I don't think many countries would have.

NARRATOR: Jonathan Fox is a serving paramedic and a member of the professional ambulance personnel association which represents about a fifth of all ambulance staff.

JONATHAN FOX

Association of Professional Personnel

I've been a paramedic and I've been in the ambulance service for 25 years, and in that time I've actually never been involved in a simulated exercise. There's a mindset that needs to be actually hardwired and this is where the issue of exercises and simulations are so important, and I think it's not just for myself, I think it's for all ambulance staff. There needs to be an involvement of those vital professionals who are going to be at the sharp end of the response. All the professionalism in the world is only as good as the practice that makes it happen.

GILBERTSON: His comments go to the heart of the training policy really. But training isn't just about initial training, it's about training and retraining and ensuring that people are up to speed.

HOULT: Yes, you're right, police and also fire are very committed to exercises and doing that, as indeed the ambulance service are in principle but what we find they can't do is on exercises is take away frontline staff to spend time at the exercises. They're so short of resources, because it's

very, very difficult to take
those resources away from frontline.

GILBERTSON: But they're just the people who ought to be trained, they're just the people that want to be there.

HOULT: I wont argue with that.

POWER: I think it depends, in my experience, on the sort of training and culture that exists in any organisation. I'm still very concerned about the 300,000 office workers who were hoping to goodness that they on the receiving end of their own staff who are trained to deal with crisis, and my concern is perhaps that wont be the case.

PORTILLO: One of the extraordinary things about September 11th was how very well evacuated the World Trade Centre was, how quickly, how professionally, this was something which had been repeatedly rehearsed. What would don't know of course is how many buildings in London will be able to operate at that level of efficiency.

More than half of business in the UK have no emergency plans in place.

SOURCE

Business Continuity Institute & Chartered Management Institute

ESLER: As we all know, mock training and disaster exercises are heard.. held from time to tome around the country, but one of the criticisms that we've heard on Panorama is that they're not a true test f anything which is really likely to happen.

September 2003

Bank Underground Station

For instance, the Osiris exercise at Bank underground last September was held on a Sunday, the whole area was closed off. We understand that the commuters on the train were not real commuters, they weren't members of the public and ordinary underground staff were not part of it at all.

ANNE GALLOP

Deputy Chair

London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority

The Bank exercises were incredibly important because it helped the emergency services to coordinate one each with the other. And it also helped the fire brigade to test out some of the new equipment they'd had in conditions which were more like the real conditions they were going to have to face in reality.

GILBERTSON: I've heard Osiris described as a very expensive photo opportunity, now I'm not so cynical as to say that's the case, but you're absolutely right. If you want to test the systems, you need to test them in the round, or you need to test them under pressure.

[Newsroom] I just put a call in to one of my police contacts to check out where the tanker was hijacked from. He says they know the company man, they're talking to him about where it might have been heading. They think the driver was asleep in the cab at the time but that's not all. He says there could be another one.

Another what?

Tanker.

Jesus! What else have you got?

Well not much at the moment but I couldn't get them, they're trying to keep the lid on. If they confirm another tanker missing there'll be a full scale alert. The RAF will be up and all the police choppers they can find.

Was your contact sure?

Mmm.

What about Sky or ITN?

Not yet but they will.

This will cause chaos. Alright, see what else you can get. I'll go see what the advice is. Ah.. tubes, still closed?

Still closed.

GILBERTSON: This is another one for a judgment call. We can't spook the entire country and tell them that there is a tanker on the loose that may explode somewhere. What we need I think is some hard intelligence.

BLACK: Well I think we do, but the best intelligence system, the best warning system you can have is everybody who's on your side. So I'm not sure.. I do agree with you, we don't want to panic everybody but it's going to be very difficult how to manage the new side on that but in a sense you want everyone out there like an eye spy boy scout looking for this.

PRICE: I don't think we have any choice in the matter. The BBC have clearly had a tip off, they've heard about it, they are concerned that their competitors and they're working in a competitive environment will have heard about it too. Sooner or later, and it's going to be sooner, somebody is going to broadcast the fact that there is or may be another tanker out there. We have to manage that rather than to pretend that we have the power to stop the public finding out.

PORTILLO: But the chances are we have a good description of it, we can issue that description to the public, the public may help us find it. On the other hand, imagine that we keep this information to ourselves, and we then find that the tanker explodes and we hadn't alerted the public, we hadn't given them the chance to participate in the search, I think the consequences will be absolutely....

HOULT: Well the public inquiry will tell you when ?? ?? and rightly so.

[Newsroom] Right, get whatever else you can. The deal is we go on this story now. Remember we have to be careful about the tone so just for now these are reports.

What about No.10 and the Cabinet Office telling us to play things down?

We have to let people know what's going on but sensibly, okay? Get back to your

contact, and since the police will do another turn, urging caution, asking people to stay indoors.

KIRSTY: Well lets go now to Mina Sharman who's with a member of the hospital's medical staff.

MINA: Anita Joseph is a medical director here. Anita, can you give us some idea how you're coping now.

ANITA: Well it has been an extremely hectic day. We have put our emergency plan into action and it's working very well and given that we've had a lot more people than we'd planned for. We've had a lot of walking wounded which of course you'd expect, a lot of people with breathing difficulties and some with some very serious heart disease, and of course a lot of very frightened people.

MINA: Have you considered locking down the hospital? It seems to me to be very full.

ANITA: I don't think it's appropriate to discuss that now? We have been working very, very hard and we've called in as many off duty staff as is possible and we're doing our best.

MINA: Your A&E department, like most hospitals, is hard pressed at the best of times. How can you manage this many people?

ANITA: As I say, we're doing our best.

MINA: Thank you.

KIRSTY: Thank you Mina, and we're going to be hearing from some other hospitals later.

BENNETT: Every hospital has its own main incident plan which it will follow and most of the hospitals will be sending out teams, registrars, emergency registrars and nurses to the site.

ESLER: For a sense of whether major incident plans are adequate, let's hear from John Hayworth who's a senior A&E consultant with 25 years experience and he's a recent past President of the British Association of Emergency Medicine.

JOHN HAYWORTH
President

British Assoc. of A&E Medicine 2001-04

Major incident plans in the past have been developed on the basis of how to respond to the sort of major incident that we understand, like a train crash or a plane crash or a coach overturning, some sort of incident that is a one off. Most major incident plans at the moment are not designed to deal with a series of events or incidents but are happening over a period of time at different locations but within the same geographical area, and although many plans are flexible and staff certainly Accident and Emergency flexible in their response to these sort of challenges, they will no doubt add an order of magnitude, of complexity and difficulty to the staff involved, both in the hospital and in the field as well.

KIRSTY: Well we can go back now to Mina Sharma. Mina.

MINA: Many of the casualties from today's chlorine explosion are being treated here in this hospital. I have with me Joan Baker who is amongst the survivors. Joan, can you tell me what

happened?

JOAN BAKER: Well I was on the way to my doctor's at Farringdon because I've not been feeling too well recently, and I heard this loud bang go off and I didn't know what it was, but it made me feel a bit unsettled and then the next thing I knew I was struggling to breathe. And I was coughing much worse than usual and my eyes felt like they were burning.

MINA: How did you get to hospital?

JOAN: I'm not really sure because I can't remember much of what happened after that. I think I must have just passed out. The doctors told me that it was the chlorine gas and they said they had to wash it off and so they couldn't give me my clothes back. These aren't mine.

MINA: And how do you feel now?

JOAN: Oh I feel a bit queasy still and my chest feels a bit tight and my eyes are sore but the doctors say I was very lucky, so I think I just want to get home now.

MINA: Thank you Joan. Just one of the many people affected by today's chlorine explosion. Now back to you in the studio.

BENNETT: There is no doubt for example patients who come into intensive care for other reasons who survive can often have long-term psychological effects.

Indeed.

It takes them a long time, if ever, of getting over it.

POWER: Some of the lessons from 9/11, there are more people suffering now than were actually perished that day, through inhaling the dust and effects are now showing.

HOULT: There's a strong direct ?? that can be taken here is run by the local authorities, and the issues that Peter is talking about, they're looking after people, the survivors, particularly the decontaminated or uninjured survivors, is very much the responsibility of the local authorities. The local authorities struggle now with the results of central government ?? ?? ?? the money isn't there in large amounts, and it's about to get worse. When I go to my elective members and they're looking at the Director of Social Services, Director of Education, the Head of Highways and looking at where to allocate resources, they're not going to allocate great resources in my direction.

Since 2001, the government has refused requests to increase local authority annual funding for emergency planning.

The annual budget for all England & Wales is £19 million.

ESLER: After a terrorist attack questions would be asked about how much information is available to the public, and the Home Office in fact hasn't published any leaflets of guidance to members of the public but we did find some information on the Home Office website which says: "Terrorism is a crime like any

other, so follow the same precautions that you normally take to avoid being the victim of a crime."

CRISPIN BLACK

Former Intelligence Officer

I think treating Al-Qaeda groups as criminals has a very important propaganda effect because that is

actually what they are. They're just mass murderers. However, that Home Office website, I mean that

Home Office website, I mean that's probably going too much the other way. Clearly a major terrorist strike

on the centre of London isn't just like any other crime, so the advice to people at home and everything like

that I think has to be a little less glib than that.

MICHAEL PORTILLO MP

Former Defence Secretary

Well we haven't given any general guidance about how people should prepare for incidents. We don't have

any sort of generalised civil defence training which involves the public, do's and don'ts about how they

should behave when there are incidents and that is beginning to me to seem like quite an important gap.

HOULT: It's a huge gap that we've identified and one that we're very, very keen to get on with, but one

which government, to be honest, is still dragging its feet over. I think though that the government is erring

on the wrong side of the ?? at the moment, I think we need to go more on the education and information

side rather than the cautious side to go to war.

GILBERTSON: It seems a bit cynical but what are you going to say?

PORTILLO: You would cover things like making sure that in every building that you routinely occupy,

you've considered the way in which you would leave the building. Considering how you would seal the

building against a gas attack, not using your mobile phone unnecessarily, ensuring that you switch on Radio

or television immediately in order to get instructions, and if possible, generalised instructions. You know..

it is likely that you will be asked to remain at home, or it is likely that you'll be asked not to move.

LANCE PRICE

Former Deputy Director of Communications

10 Downing Street

I think that across the board in this country we tend to guard information too closely to those who have it

and disseminate it to... not often enough and not widely enough, and I think the public have got a greater

capacity to deal with uncomfortable truths and uncomfortable possibilities and scenarios than perhaps we

give them credit for.

KIRSTY: -Downing Street says messages of support and condolence have been coming in from across the

world, including from the President of the United States, the President of France and the United Nations

Secretary General. The Prime Minister is due to address the nation at 9 o'clock tonight. And we can return

again to Ian Manning who is at the Hyde Park Police Cordon.

IAN MANNING: 87 people have now been confirmed dead and hundreds have been injured. The search

and rescue mission will continue through the night and into tomorrow to locate

remaining survivors. Back to you in the studio.

KIRSTY: Thank you Ian. And we understand that a further 94 people are confirmed dead from the Oxford Circus and Vauxhall explosions.

GILBERTSON: Absolutely unprecedented. This is on a scale of Madrid and beyond, clearly. What's the Prime Minister going to say tonight at 9 o'clock?

PORTILLO: I think the Prime Minister is going to rally the nation and I think he'll stand a very good chance of achieving ?? ?? I mean the entire nation is under attack and I think the Prime Minister needs to show the determination, the quiet determination to deal with this, to find the perpetrators, to try to make Britain as safe as possible, but in any case to be the leader of his people at this very important time.

KIRSTY: News is just reaching us that following a full scale alert the police have intercepted a second chemical tanker on the A13 near Basildon. It's been reported that this tanker was carrying cyanide. There have been no injuries and no further details have yet been released.

GILBERTSON: It's tremendously reassuring to the public at large because they know that we are efficient, they know that we are equipped, they know that we can actually intervene and do something constructive.

ESLER: And at this point it becomes profoundly important for public morale for the police to be...

GILBERTSON: It's good news and it needs to be sold as quickly as possible.

PRICE: I disagree.

GILBERTSON: You disagree?

PRICE: I think you must allow the facts to speak for themselves. If people are going to be reassured by the fact that this has been intercepted then fine. There must be absolutely no crowing about it. For a start we don't know what else is out there, and I think the last thing we should be doing is patting ourselves on our backs at this time.

GILBERTSON: I think, as I was saying, it's good news...

Yes.

GILBERTSON: Whether we claim it as good news but it's good news.

BLACK: Well in summary, this is a good day to ?? ?? On this day, one of the things that would have happened there would have been a number of operations going on anyway, now a decision would have to be made by the heads of the intelligence services, whether to suspend those operations because the resources are needed elsewhere, whether to move in and arrest people because you want to restrict the operational space of the terrorist, all kinds of questions like that would have to be answered.

KIRSTY: Well we're going back to Mark Cook who is with Chief Superintendent Bellow. Mark.

MARK COOK: Thanks Kirsty. The police have issued up to date figures of the dead and injured. Chief Superintendent Bellew would you share those figures with us.

BELLUE: As of now we have 370 declared dead from the three underground explosions, and 2,100 as a result of the chlorine tanker explosion. This is of course an extremely grave situation and the police extend their heart felt condolences to the families of the bereaved.

COOK: These figures seem very high. Do you expect them to rise?

BELLEW: We do, yes, but it will be some time before we have an update.

COOK: What about the rescue operation in the underground?

BELLEW: It is still very difficult but all efforts are continuing. Several hundred people have been taken to hospitals but none of the trains, as yet, have been completely evacuated. This of course remains our prime concern.

COOK: And what about the survivors of the chlorine blast?

BELLEW: There are upwards of 3000 injured with various degrees of severity. The emergency services are in the process of decontaminating people and making sure the most seriously affected get to hospital.

COOK: But surely the hospitals are overrun?

BELLUE: Everyone is doing their best, thank you.

KIRSTY: Thank you Mark. Well as we heard there, the casualty figures at the moment are 370 dead from the explosions in the tube stations and over 2000 from the chlorine effect, so clearly figures which dwarf all recent terror attacks.

GILBERTSON: Well to use a hackneyed expression, the world changed. We could talk about fairly benign issues such as.. you know.. the investigative process and how we're managing the administrative arrangements but they pale into insignificance.

POWER: When we've got something like this, there's no normality other than the new normality that follows after this. For all of those people this is a new life. The messages from people in the Manchester bombing all those years ago and so on, they're going to repeat this every time. It's on the news again, every time they smell it in the swimming pool. It's going to have a resonance that will go on for decades.

BBC Action Line
08000 56 54 50

PRICE: I think that's inevitable that there will be recriminations sooner than people might expect. The message from everybody today should be that London survived, that Britain survived, that the terrorists didn't win, and that wasn't down to any decisions that the Prime Minister made or that Cobra made or anybody else, but it was down to the hard work of all the individuals in the emergency services, in the hospitals throughout London. It's a day really to pay tribute I think to the work

of every single person.

ESLER: We invited the Home Secretary to answer the questions raised in this programme about how prepared we are for a terrorist attack. He declined. Well the attacks on September 11th were a complete shock because nothing of that type had ever happened before. The attacks in Madrid were not a total surprise because of course we all expected it could happen again, and we do know that Britain is a target, we do know about Al-Qaeda, there's no room for shock or surprise anymore. Tonight's exercise was plausible but it was of course fictional. But it's hard to see how the government can do anything other than educate us and prepare. There's no room for excuses, we have of course been warned.

I think possibly what we saw on film today might be at the lower end of what terrorists on a good day might achieve.

I am wondering about the purpose and effect of this very programme it will alarm people but may lead decision makers to think again.

Recent events 9/11 and more recently elsewhere in Europe have made the programme very, very realistic and from that we start to realise perhaps we should know more.

KIRSTY: London is waking this morning after the worst terrorist attack in its history. According to official figures more than 3,000 people may have died with at least a further 3000 injured. The queen has expressed her deep sorrow and the Prime Minister has pledged to bring the perpetrators to justice. Already protest marches are being organised across the country with the largest numbers likely to be in London massing at Hyde Park, the scene of the first explosion yesterday.

If you have any concerns about the issues raised in this programme call the BBC Action Line on 08000 565450
Richard Bacon continues the discussions on BBC Radio 5 Live now.

www.bbc.co.uk/panorama

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