



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

21 July 2005

**BY HAND**

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Your ref:

Our ref:

*Dear John,*

**Operation KRATOS: suicide bombers**

In the meeting we had with the Prime Minister yesterday, I raised the issue of maximising the legal protection for officers who had to take decisions in relation to people believed to be suicide bombers.

This is clearly a fast-time decision-making process, in which officers cannot risk the kind of containment and negotiation tactics which would normally be the case. Put simply, the only choice an officer may have may be to shoot to kill in order to prevent the detonation of a device. In due course, I believe we need a document similar to the military rules of engagement but time does not permit its creation at the present time.

The officers have the protection of Section 3 of the Criminal Law Act. I do not seek to exempt them from investigation (and, ultimately therefore prosecution, if evidence of deliberate malfeasance was available). However, I am confident that prosecuting authorities will take cognisance of the pressures under which the Service operates in terrorist scenarios.

The current urgency, however, is over the role of the IPCC. There is much concern about revealing either the tactics that we have and/or the sources of information on which we are operating.

I therefore believe that, in a fast-moving, multi-site terrorist situation, in which suicide bombers are clearly a very strong possibility, a chief officer of police should be able to suspend S.17 of the Police Reform Act 2002, which requires us to supply all information that the Independent Police Complaints

Commission may require. The IPCC has a dual role in the sense that it, itself, is under a duty to provide as much information as it can to the complainant or to members of the deceased's family. This could put further lives at risk in these circumstances.

I have therefore given instructions that the shooting that has just occurred at Stockwell is not to be referred to the IPCC and that they will be given no access to the scene at the present time. The investigation will be carried out by the Met's own Directorate of Professional Standards. This investigation will be rigorous but subordinate to the needs of the counter-terrorism operation.

I have spoken to Nick Hardwick, Chairman of the IPCC, and informed him of this decision. I am grateful to know that your office had already contacted him.

Clearly, this is a developing situation but for the time being I seek your support for this measure, which may form the basis for amending legislation in the future.

A copy of this letter goes to Nick Hardwick and a copy to Len Duvall, Chair of the Police Authority.

*Yours sincerely*



Ian Blair  
Commissioner

cc Nick Hardwick, Chair IPCC  
Len Duvall, Chair MPA