# London Hijack Attempt

Last edited October 21, 2006

## News and Developments

**Sky News: Air Chaos After Terror Plot Disrupted**
http://news.sky.com/skynews/article/0,,30000-1230417,00.html

Speaking at Scotland Yard, Deputy Commissioner Paul Stephenson said he was confident the police had disrupted a plot "to cause mass murder on an unimaginable scale".

He said 21 people arrested in London, Birmingham and the Thames Valley were still being held - the culmination of a covert counter-terrorist operation lasting several months.

Security raised to 'critical'

The Home Secretary John Reid said the "main players" were in custody but cautioned against complacency.

**Hot Air » Blog Archive » Breaking: Scotland Yard busts “major plot” to blow up airplane (Update: A d**
http://hotair.com/archives/2006/08/10/breaking-scotland-yard-busts-major-plot-to-blow-up-airplane/

Ace is trumpeting this as a possible victory for the Patriot Act and U.S. intelligence, specifically vis-a-vis the flight to Boston two days ago that was forced to return to the UK. Could be, but the British claim the operation has been in the works for months; they were within 48 hours of making a collar when that flight got turned around, so presumably they already had their ducks pretty much in a row. Which means the guy on that flight who showed up on the U.S. no-fly list either (a) wasn’t involved in this or (b) was involved in this, but nonetheless somehow managed to board a plane on its way to America in the midst of a massive counterterror sting. (a) seems likelier than (b), but we’ll see.

**Hot Air » Blog Archive » Breaking: Scotland Yard busts “major plot” to blow up airplane (Update: A d**
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ad morning for me to get a late start, but here we go. TSA has banned all liquid carry-ons in the U.S. except, it appears, baby formula and insulin. A friend of mine once told me that a particular concern of TSA’s is terrorists trying to smuggle C-4 onboard in shampoo containers, because the chemical signature is somehow similar enough to shampoo that the detection equipment doesn’t pick it up. Keep an eye out for details about which explosive these guys were planning to use.

**Can you drink a liquid explosive? By Daniel Engber**
http://www.slate.com/id/2147500/fr/rss/

Investigators believe that the suspects in the terrorist plot foiled Thursday planned to bring various bomb ingredients onto commercial airliners in liquid form. As a result, all but a few liquids have been banned from airplane cabins. Passengers can carry on important medicine, or milk and juice for small children, as long as they're willing to taste those liquids in front of security staff. What would happen if a terrorist were forced to take a sip of his liquid explosives?

Very little. Bomb experts say that the "liquid bombs" might involve chemicals like nitroglycerine, nitromethane, hydrazine, ammonium nitrate, gasoline, or—most likely—the ingredients for triacetone triperoxide (also known as TATP). (The terrorists could mix these up onboard to make an ignitable explosive.) These are all nasty chemicals that you wouldn't want to drink under normal circumstances. But if you could somehow disguise your liquid bomb ingredients as milk or juice, you could probably get away with a little gulp in front of the airport screeners.

**Counterterrorism Blog: Al-Qaida's Use of "Liquid Bombs" Targeting Airliners**
http://counterterrorismblog.org/2006/08/alqaidas_use_of_liquid_bombs_t.php

Though for some, news of a reported Al-Qaida plot to down multiple commercial airliners with liquid explosives may sound exotic and unusual, in fact, U.S. authorities have been aware of such a threat from Al-Qaida affiliates for over a decade.

In 1995, when U.S. and Philippine security services uncovered a plot by 1993 World Trade Center bomber Ramzi Yousef and his uncle 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to bomb over a dozen U.S. airliners simultaneously over the Pacific Ocean [Operation Bojinka], they quickly moved in and arrested their co-conspirators. One of the detained men, trained commercial pilot Abdel Hakim Murad, described Ramzi Yousef's plans in detail -- including his intention to travel to "France, Egypt, and Algeria after the activities here in the Philippines. The purpose was to train those Muslim brothers thereat, on using a Casio watch as a timing device, chemical mixtures to compound bombs, and to share his expertise in eluding detection on an airport's x-ray machine, and eventually smuggling [onboard] this liquid chemical bombs. Furthermore, France has a lot of Algerians staying and that these Egyptians and Algerians ha[ve] no experience on making these bombs and [do] not know the basics of smuggling liquid bombs through the airport."

**Musing Minds » » Your World, yesterday**
http://musing-minds.com/2006/08/11/your-world-yesterday/

I think that the British have to get used to the economic negative impact of having a large, hostile, and murderous minority living in their midst.

Ben Stein: Bravo.

Varney: A recent poll of British Muslims found 7 percent found sucide bombing acceptable, 20 percent found it acceptable if it was directed against the British military, and **37 percent found it acceptable if it was directed against British Jews**.[emphasis Stewart's] That means…

Ben Stein: Oh my God!

Varney: a half million people in Britain have a near Nazi mentality, and there's an economic price for that situation.

**More time granted to quiz bomb suspects | NEWS.com.au**
http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,20242286-1702,00.html

**NINE people have become the first terror suspects to be held without charge in British jails for more than two weeks, after a court gave police more time to quiz them over the foiled plot to bomb US-bound passenger planes.**

Police were granted warrants to detain eight terror suspects until August 30, and one until Thursday, a police spokeswoman said.

Two others were released without charge yesterday.

"Officers from the Metropolitan Police Service Anti-terrorist Branch were this evening (Wednesday) granted warrants of further detention for nine people arrested during the anti-terrorist operation that took place overnight on August 9-10, 2006," a police statement read.

Under British anti-terror laws, police can detain terrorism suspects for up to 28 days without charging them with an offence, subject to regular court approval. Previous legislation only allowed police to hold terror suspects for 14 days without charge.

A total of 25 people have been arrested since police carried out pre-dawn raids in London and around Britain on August 10 in connection with an alleged terror plot to blow up US-bound passenger jets flying from London's Heathrow airport.

Eleven have since been charged, and yesterday's news brought the total number of suspects released without charge to five.

## Explosives

**UNCENSORED! BBS**
http://uncensored.citadel.org/amoeba-readfile.php?filename=astrolit.txt

A completely new family of explosives has been developed with entirely new properties, giving rise to revolutionary application concepts that never before have been possible with conventional explosives. The most significant of the new explosives are Astrolite A-1-5, said to be the world's MOST POWERFUL NON-NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE, and Astrolite-G, claimed to be the world's highest detonation-velocity liquid explosive. Both explosives are remarkably safe to handle and are unusually versatile. Both also can be mixed from nondetonable components. Astrolite explosives are a product of advanced rocket propellant technology. They were discovered quite by accident in the 1960's by research personnel investigating a so-called rocket propellant that proved so powerful that it consistently destroyed rockets on the test stand. Astrolite explosives are formed when ammonium nitrate is mixed with anhydrous hydrazine. Extensive solvolysis occurs with the liberation of large amounts of ammonia gas and a new compound (hydrazonium nitrate) is formed and remains in solution. This produces a clear liquid explosive called Astrolite G. When aluminum powder (100 mesh or finer) is added, it forms Astrolite A-1-5. Formula:

**Hydrazine - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrazine

**Hydrazine** is a chemical compound with formula $N_2H_4$ used as a rocket fuel.

Hydrazine is a liquid with weak basic properties similar to ammonia. Due to the alpha effect the nucleophilicity is much stronger than that of ammonia, which makes it more reactive. It can be made by oxidizing ammonia with sodium hypochlorite (the Raschig process). It is a monopropellant rocket fuel. It is also pyrophoric, i.e. it can ignite spontaneously.

**Hydrazine - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrazine

Hydrazine is used primarily as a chemical intermediate to produce agricultural chemicals, spandex fibers, and antioxidants. Hydrazine is also used as rocket fuel (starting in World War II for the Messerschmitt Me 163, under name **B-Stoff** (hydrazine hydrate) and in a mixture with methanol (M-Stoff) as C-Stoff), an oxygen scavenger

(corrosion inhibitor) in water boilers and heating systems, a polymerization catalyst, a blowing agent, and as a scavenger for gases. Additionally, it is used for plating metals on glass and plastics and in fuel cells, solder fluxes, and photographic developers. Hydrazine is used as a reactant in fuel cells in the military, as a reducing agent in electrodeless nickel plating, as a chain extender in urethane polymerizations, as a reducing agent in plutonium extraction from nuclear reactor waste, and as a water treatment chemical. Hydrazine is also used as a chemical intermediate for blowing agents, photography chemicals, pharmaceuticals, antituberculants, textile dyes, heat stabilizers, explosives, and to make hydrazine sulfate. In addition, a semiconductor deposition technique involving the use of hydrazine has recently been demonstrated, with possible application to the manufacture of thin-film transistors used in liquid crystal displays. Hydrazine in a 70% solution is used to power the EPU (emergency power unit) on the F-16 fighter plane. Hydrazine is also used as low-power propellant for Space Shuttle maneuvers in orbit in its Reaction Control System and Orbital Maneuvering System, using hypergolic 1,1-dimethylhydrazine with nitrogen tetroxide oxidizer.[2] The explosive Astrolite is made by combining hydrazine with ammonium nitrate.

## Historical Background

**Pyrotechnics, Explosives, & Fireworks**
http://www.faqs.org/docs/air/ttpyro.html

In 1846, an an Italian chemist named Ascanio Sobrero added glycerol to a mixture of nitric and sulfuric acids, setting off an explosion that nearly killed him. He had discovered the first high explosive. Sobrero to no surprise decided that the liquid he called "nitroglycerine" was dangerous. He tried to keep it a secret.

He failed. A Swedish chemical manufacturer named Alfred Nobel began to produce nitroglycerine for rock blasting in 1863. Nitroglycerine can't be detonated by a simple cord fuze, and so in 1865 Nobel devised the first detonator, a blasting cap consisting of a small black power charge with a cord fuze, to set it off. Nobel's detonator was a significant step forward in the development of modern explosives technology.

It is a liquid explosive and dangerously sensitive. In fact, it was so unsafe that it is astounding that anybody wanted to be anywhere near it, and Nobel's brother Emile was killed while working with it. It was often carelessly shipped as normal freight, without markings to indicate special handling, and terrible accidents occurred. Nitroglycerine was banned in several nations.

Late in the 1860s, workers found that nitroglycerine that had been frozen was almost impossible to detonate, and so manufacturers began to freeze it for shipment. However, this was clearly a stopgap solution.

Alfred Nobel was already working on ways to make a safer explosive. He determined that nitroglycerine was much less sensitive if it was absorbed in "diatomaceous earth", a porous clay that consisted of the deposits of the skeletons of tiny sea creatures laid down aeons before. This material could be packed into cardboard tubes and reliably transported, handled, and detonated. It could not be set off by a spark or a flame. It was not only safer than nitroglycerine, it was even safer than black powder.

Nobel named it "dynamite", and it quickly became the industrial explosive of choice. Dynamite offered much of the power of nitroglycerine with greatly improved safety. However, it was not perfect. The nitroglycerine in dynamite tends to "sweat out" in storage, and even form puddles in crates. Cold weather also tends to crystallize the nitroglycerine inside a stick of dynamite, making it more sensitive.

**Texas City Disaster - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_City_disaster

The **Texas City Disaster** of April 16, 1947, started with the mid-morning fire and detonation of approximately 17,000,000 pounds (7,700 tonnes) of ammonium nitrate on board the French-registered vessel SS *Grandcamp* in the port at Texas City, Texas. It also triggered the first ever class action lawsuit against the United States government, under the then-recently enacted Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA), on behalf of 8,485 victims.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_City_disaster

The Texas City Disaster is generally considered the worst industrial accident in United States history. Witnesses compared the scene to the fairly recent images of the 1943 German bombing of ammunition ships in the harbor at Bari and the much larger devastation at Nagasaki. The official death toll was 581. Of the dead, 405 were identified and 63 were never identified. The remaining 113 people were classified as missing, and no identifiable parts were ever found. This figure includes all 28 firefighters who were at the ship when it exploded. There is some speculation that there may have been hundreds more killed but uncounted, including visiting seamen, non-census laborers and their families, and an untold numbers of travelers. However, there were some survivors as close as 70 feet (21 m) from the dock.

Over 5,000 people were injured, of which 1,784 were admitted to twenty-one area hospitals. Wings of sightseeing airplanes flying nearby were sheared off. Over 500 homes were destroyed and hundreds of others damaged, leaving 2,000 homeless. The seaport was destroyed and many businesses were flattened by the blast or consumed in the fires. Over 1,100 vehicles were damaged or destroyed, 362 freight cars obliterated — the initial property damages were estimated in hundreds of millions of dollars.

A seismologist in Denver, Colorado, initially interpreted the shock waves as an atomic bomb explosion in Texas. The explosion was so large that Strategic Air Command briefly raised the United States defense level (Defcon) in fear of a nuclear attack. The 3,000 pound (1,400 kg) anchor of *Grandcamp* was hurled 2 miles (3 km) and was found in a 10-foot (3 m) crater. It now rests in a memorial park. Massive amounts of burning wreckage ignited everything within miles, including dozens of huge oil storage tanks and other chemical tanks. The nearby, larger metropolis of Galveston, Texas, was covered with an oily miasma which left black deposits over every outdoor surface.

According to the United States Department of Defense publication *Effects of Nuclear Weapons*, the explosion was comparable to that produced by a 2 to 4 kiloton nuclear weapon.