

Responses from the Public on the Proposed Measures in the Counter Terrorism Bill

28 June 2007

Some measures not mentioned in the proposal seem obvious. First of all: "know your enemy". The home office must ask why terrorists wish to perform acts of terror. Having just returned from time in the Middle East the universal answer to that question is that neither Britain nor the United States of America show any interest in enforcing measures agreed by the United Nations to tackle the Arab Israeli problem. Until this is done there is no hope of restoring any credibility in British or American 'democracy', since the rules of democracy are completely ignored in Israel/Palestine.

Secondly diligent enquiry must be made about the sources arms supplied on such a vast scale to that part of the world. Money could be wisely spent on pursuing and punishing arms dealers.

Until basic question like these are addresses all anti-terrorist measures will be in vain. Our experience of terrorism in the thirty years in Northern Ireland should teach us this.

29 June 2007

I would like to see Intercept Information used to fight terrorism within the United Kingdom to do this we need to change the law, we need to have the following safe guards in place in so far as that the police and other agency's should seek authorisation from a district judge or above. If a judge can not be found, then the Commissioner of Police can grant such order for 24 hours until the matter is brought before a Judge

I feel that the police and other agency's should prove beyond reasonable doubt that intercepts are of national security, I also feel that once authorisation as been given, then a time limit should be imposed as to how long the intercept should take place.

Intercept of privileged information between solicitor and client should only be used were it can be proved that such information is related to any form of terrorism, any information deduced from such intercept criminal or not should be ignored as this will be going against the principle- pals of the Intercept. If Intercept becomes law I would like to see the police and other agency's be accountable to the House Of Commons.

26 July 2007-12-07

Some initial thoughts on the new terror proposals.

1 – Why stop at a border force uniting HMC&R with Immigration – neither of these forces has SC and DV cleared staff on the front line and therefore cannot be exposed to SECRET information – they will not be able to easily share watch list information.

2. Why not propose to restructure and properly fund Special Branches. The current structures are disjoint and overlapping – the accountability of procurement and funding dubious and egotistical.

3. Stop powers at ports – the TACT 2000 grants officers the power to examine and / or detain for the purpose of examination –from there Arrest can follow should the officer have reason. Why should they need any other powers – if they have no cause to arrest then the traveller should be free to go – if they work in tandem with the C&R and Immigration service (and they do) then they have far greater powers by proxy to see suspect's documentation and travel baggage without directly resorting to open examination and detention. I do agree that powers at egress are not as great as on ingress – but if somebody is not wanted for a crime or had not been subject to a court order then why should they be prevented from leaving the country on a policeman's say so.

4. A single national IT system for data sharing and intelligence handling would facilitate much better value and use than the current disparate, arcane and parlous systems scattered throughout the various forces and units. See the HMIC thematic report – A Need to Know.

Fundamentally all the legislation and policy / strategies will fail without proper intelligence handling. CONTEST – is based on intelligence led policing and CT – snag is the reality does not match up to the vision.

Officer at ports today have to call many units and systems to discover if a detained / stopped person is on a watch list – and even if he is on a sensitive 'do not stop' watch list - doh! All within tight timescales.

5. The restructure of CT and AT elements in the Met to one unit has proven disastrous for community relations – a knee jerk AT response at CT gathered suspicions was inevitable.

Restructure so that a national CT police force reports to a national 'controller' and into Thames House – and an AT function does the same but to force police officers as current. The AT performing the collection evidence and prosecution – pursuing the terrorists and protecting the public – the CT collecting intelligence and steering CT efforts preventing terror acts.

6. Detention for 28 days is bad enough – longer would be a corruption of power. The police can expedite information extraction from devices – PCs, SIMS and through telephone companies without needing more time – an alternate is to increase the bandwidth(staff/ resources) of technical CT/AT forensics.

7. The use of snooped intel as evidence is a dangerous path to walk – you open the door for the defence to ask for ALL the evidence to be played in court – risking boring the jury to the point where they lose the plot and the case runs on and on into a mistrial.

8. Seizing assets of the un-convicted – un-accused terror suspect as a legal power!????
Are you actively trying to become a recruiting sergeant – have the lessons of the past been completely forgotten. That one item must be removed – if not on moral grounds then do it for political expediency – the bill will not pass if it remains.

8. Why is ACPO allowed to act as the interface between the HO and the police forces – it is a club /union for senior police officers. It has no constitutional role – it is a charity. The government should stop funding CT work and the like via ACPO and put in more accountable structures. ACPO redirect HO grants as they see fit.

Currently national CT Police systems can't be owned by anybody
not SOCA - expressly no CT role)

Not NPIA - son of PITO - can help procure national CT stuff but a lead force takes the national contract and others pay annual fee. – leading to dubious funding structures and contracts.

Not ACPO as they don't have sufficient funds or accountability

Not the Home Office, as it doesn't want the depreciation costs on its books.

The result is multiple disjointed silo procurements and data sets - ageing technology with poor support contracts and a loss of information flow and accountability. And an inability to properly data mine a track larger watch lists.

In summary don't re-legislate to subvert the courts and due process in favour of police powers. Legislation will not stop terror – instead restructure (appropriately) and refund (adequately)

17 September 2007

I have read the consultation paper, "Options for pre-charge detention in Terrorist cases".

It seems to me that the existing 28 days is already a very long period to hold a suspect without formally telling him why. The suspect may be a man or woman with a family, and a job to hold down. A very high proportion of those detained are eventually released without charge.

After a terrorist incident such as a flaming car being crashed into Glasgow airport, it will normally be possible to bring a charge quickly, much sooner than 28 days. In other cases there may be lesser charges that can be brought quickly, such as storing explosives, having an unlicensed weapon or having a false passport. The police must have had some rational reason for making an arrest. If absolutely nothing is found within fourteen days, I think the suspect could well be released. Twenty eight days is already too long for the *pre-charge* detention.

23 September 2007

Sirs,

I write to record my unalterable opposition to any extension of the time limits on pre-charge detention, as proposed in the above mentioned bill. 28 days already constitute an abuse of power and were obtained from Parliament only as a result of some prodigious arm twisting by the Blair government. It is most disappointing that Mr Brown, far from distancing himself from the heinous record of his predecessor wishes to carry this abuse even further. This sort of legislation is a first (or is it, yet another) step towards the creation of a police state.

01 October 2007

I have read the government's proposed changes in the CT Bill 2007 and I am completely opposed to ANY increase in the pre-charge detention period. Please do not increase what is already a violation of civil liberties. I will also be writing to my MP to urge him to vote against this bill.

07 October 2007

I feel that Liberty's proposed alternative is far better than the others. Extending the limit for detention even further is a serious infringement of people's human rights. As well as being a dangerous precedent in its own right it risks alienating communities who it is used against- as internment did in Northern Ireland.

I would urge to Government to reconsider this proposed change as a matter of urgency

07 October 2007

Responding to the Home Office consultation on the options for pre-charge detention, I am not at all convinced by the arguments for the need to further extend the period during which a person can be detained without charge, and am very concerned about the social and civil liberty repercussions of doing so.

I endorse the view of Liberty (Option iii) - which I am glad to see you include amongst the options put forward.

10 October 2007

I wish to express my opposition to any extension of the existing 28 day limit. I do not believe that a convincing case has been made for an extension, and I believe that the civil liberties issues should take precedence.

I believe also that more resources should be given to the Police & Security services, and that these services should be better managed and led so as to improve their effectiveness and efficiency (ie not like the Stockwell shooting fiasco). The aim should be to pursue investigations quickly and successfully.

10 October 2007

Dear Sir

I am responding to the invitation to submit comments regarding extending the Pre-Charge Detention period for suspected terrorists.

I am opposed to any such extension as I do not believe it is necessary or justified and in fact I think it would be counter-productive, in the same way that Internment was in Northern Ireland, acting only to radicalize people who are upset by seeing their friends and neighbours detained in this manner.

I have to say, it seems premature to be considering this question before receiving the results of the review into the use of intercept evidence, which may conclude that this is more a valuable tool than extended detention.

I have seen no explanation as to why the police need to detain people for such long periods. Whether suspects are in custody or not, the police can still continue their investigations, therefore I can only conclude that the premise is that by detaining suspects for long periods, they will 'break' and confess or provide valuable information that allows the police to either stop a terrorist attack or at least to successfully convict the suspect and/or others of terrorist related crimes. Therefore, in order to assess whether extended detention is at all useful, we would have to be shown that this has in fact happened in previous cases. I would imagine in many cases, it could be just as useful, if not more so, to keep the suspects under surveillance, perhaps leading to the capture of even more terrorists and materials, whereas arresting and detaining a suspect will inevitably tip off any others involved, with the risk that they will go underground and be free to plot other attacks.

I consider Liberty's proposals for post-charge questioning, with suitable judicial oversight, as sensible, as well as their suggestion of providing more resources, including more interpreters, perhaps by scrapping the ID card scheme and using the estimated £6bn it will cost. I also support their view that the emergency measures in

the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which provide for extended detention, are adequate for a situation where the country is facing numerous serious threats.

11 October 2007

I am not persuaded that a case has been out for extending the present limit of 28 days. The police are always eager for more powers but parliament should be extremely wary of granting an extension of the basis of a supposed future need. It gives greater scope for oppressive police questioning, or worse.

The supposed safeguard of judicial oversight is of no value since there is little to supervise until a charge has been laid.

This issue was emphatically decided by MPs less than two years ago. I object to the executive coming back to the same parliament to try and get the matter reopened.

I strongly support Liberty's opposition to this authoritarian measure and commend that organisations's constructive alternatives to it.

12 October 2007

The current 28 day limit for pre-charge detention is excessive and certainly should not be increased. Liberty's solutions for the perceived problems - <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/pdfs/policy07/home-affairs-ctte-counter-terrorism.pdf> - are a much better set of alternatives.

In any case, the Civil Contingencies Act already provides for longer detention if/when the envisioned scenarios ever arise.

12 October 2007

Sir

Re your consultation paper: Option (iii), please.

I have served in the Army in Northern Ireland and understand the pressures that the police may be under to conduct investigations and the risk that this incurs. However, I am also keenly aware of the 'boiled frog' argument that liberties are often eroded gradually, perhaps with the best intentions, but the result is that it's too late before people realise that they have had their rights curtailed significantly.

I believe (albeit as an amateur observer) that the best way to fight terrorism is to hold true to our way of life, not play into the terrorists' hands with populist legislation. I oppose the extension of the period that a person can be held without trial. If the Government is determined to ignore pleas such as mine, how about at

least having a 'sunset clause' on any legislation so that we don't find ourselves permanently threatened with long detention without charge?

13 October 2007

I feel impelled to comment on the paper "Options for Pre-Charge Detention in Terrorist Cases" for the following reasons:

1. 50% of the people arrested and held without charge are released back into the community. How are they supposed to rebuild their lives afterwards and what messages does that send to the communities who are so crucial in assisting the security services? Increasing the length of detention feeds negative feelings including feelings of betrayal from the UK security services and plays into the hands of terrorist propaganda.
2. Lessons from Northern Ireland: I do not need to go into the horrific consequences of internment from Northern Ireland. The 90 day detention allows history to repeat itself.
3. There are alternatives as suggested by Liberty that are not 'knee jerk' reactions of a state hoping to clamp down on civil liberties. These are real, thoughtful suggestions, and whilst may not be the obvious first choice would work for the greater good.

Thank you for considering my opinions.

13 October 2007

Dear Home Secretary,

I do not believe that there is any justification for extending the period for which people can be held without charge, and believe that the current limit of 28 days should be reduced.

I am in agreement with the views of Liberty which can be seen at this web address:

<http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/pdfs/policy07/home-affairs-ctte-counter-terrorism.pdf>

14 October 2007

Hi there, I'd like to voice my opinion as a British Citizen about your consultation regarding PRE-CHARGE DETENTION IN TERRORIST CASES.

I think a further extension to the already too long detention without charge of 28 days would be equivalent to internment. It is also not necessary, as argued by many MPs

including Mr Cameron. The proposal by Liberty seems the most reasonable. My confidence in this Country's police forces is at rock bottom, and after blunders like de Menezes and Forest Gate I think they should immediately and publicly suspend their shoot-to-kill policy, instead of meddling with politics and scaring us into approving even more draconian legislation. I'm also looking forward to see what kind of hard evidence ground international air travel to a halt in August last year, and forced the introduction of theatrical security in airports the world over.

"The government will make use of these powers only insofar as they are essential for carrying out vitally necessary measures" - Adolf Hitler

Enough is enough.

14 October 2007

I have read the consultation document on the website and am writing to say that I do not agree with the government's preferred options (i) of legislating to extend the period of pre-charge detention to 56 days, even with the safeguards stated.

I do not think that the consultation paper presents a very balanced picture of the risks and benefits of the proposal. It concentrates much more heavily on managing the risks of terrorism than on the risks that the continual incremental extension of security legislation poses to broader civil rights on which a strong and cohesive democratic society is ultimately based. It also only offers the opinions of senior office holders who support the proposal, and does not offer opinions of other public figures who may have a different view for people to consider.

I do not think the arguments for extension are sufficiently compelling to outweigh the additional risks to the individuals potentially affected by them and to all of us in extending the impact on individual and collective civil rights. I understand the arguments about safety in an environment affected by the threat of terrorism, but I think the proposal distorts the balance I have referred to earlier too far. I would want to see other actions taken to achieve the intended goals:

- Divert resources from the proposed ID card scheme to strengthen police and intelligence services in the areas needed to increase the speed with which investigations can be carried out, including more access to interpreters.
- Remove the bar on the use of intercept evidence. I welcome the consideration by the Privy Council of this issue, and suggest that certainly no further action should be taken on extension of pre-charge detention until that report is provided.
- Allow post-charge questioning in terror cases, provided that the initial charge is legitimate and there is judicial oversight.
- Rely on the existing powers of the Civil Contingencies Act, as parliamentary oversight is appropriate in these circumstances.

I have noted the arguments in the consultation document about the alternative proposals not completely eliminating the risk, but it is my view that the risks need to be balanced in this situation rather than assuming that all risk has to be eliminated on

one side of the argument, and no attention paid to the increased risks on the other, civil liberties, side.

16 October 2007

My submission to the public consultation process.

Detention without Charge.

I am against the extension without charge of the 28-day detention period. Instead more funds should be made available to the Police and Intelligence service, so that more information is available prior to arrest. This would be a better way of securing public safety than ID Cards, which would not have stopped the 7/7 suicide bombers in London.

Post Charge Questioning. I support this provided that the initial charge is legitimate. This would allow for a supplemented charge. More use should be made of lesser charges initially, which could lead to an earlier arrest, such as attending a terror camp or inciting terrorism, which could be later raised to a more serious charge.

International. The UK should sign up to EU police co-operation In the new Treaty as a further means of intelligence gathering.

18 October 2007

Dear Sir

In response to the Home Office proposals, my view is that option (1) would be a bad mistake. It would do little to deter terrorism. Conversely, the resultant eating away of important rights would represent a victory for terrorism.

A balance has to be struck between protecting the public from terrorism and protecting civil liberties. The extension of pre-charge detention to 28 days in my view already goes too far.

Of people held under these provisions, some would be successfully charged, but others would be innocent. Enmeshing innocent people in this way is a terrible price to pay, and would inevitably create hatred and foster terrorism among those unfairly detained and their communities, thus inevitably having a negative effect.

I am broadly in agreement with the counter-proposals that have been made by Liberty in its submission to you

19 October 2007

Dear sir/madam,

Having read the 'options for pre-charge detention in terrorist cases' I felt I should write to you.

I feel that there should be no extension of 28 days without charge.

My reasons are:

If insufficient evidence can be brought to charge within 28 days, then the person is either a) innocent, b) guilty but covered track well enough to buy some time (over 28 days), or c) guilty but covered tracks so well that no proof will ever come to light. Innocent people should not be detained like this. Habeas Corpus and innocent until proven guilty should always rule - it is fundamental to humanity!! (Although I believe you have destroyed this long held belief with ASBO's and SOCPA)

The definition of "terrorism" is open to interpretation which *could* be redefined to include anyone disagreeing with the government, not just those who attack innocent civilians. A dangerous situation for what is supposed to be a democracy. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter and all that...

This government is well into a spiral of pre-emptive strikes on civil liberties in the UK and abroad and this is yet another attempt to increase its power over the people. Even though there is much hidden about the what terrorists want to achieve, and what message they are trying to get across, I am sure you are aware it has much to do with these policies and illegal wars that this government insists on continuing with.

Yes, there is a balance to be made between individual liberty and national security, however there are fundamental civil liberties which should never be taken away under any circumstances. You have already crossed the line with taking habeas corpus away from us, this is further encroachment that must not be allowed to happen.

Please return to basic, fundamental values for people of this country and stop increasing the unaccountable power of the government. There are too many laws oppressing the people who the government is supposed to serve already. This coupled with the fact that this government is not trusted, and future governments' views cannot be guaranteed means these laws could easily be used against perfectly law-abiding citizens in an immoral way. There are too many risks to civil liberties when weighed up against national security so I urge you to see this balance too.

02 November 2007

I support further consideration of changing from the adversarial to a judge-led investigational approach as set out briefly in Option (iv).

I believe the present position of holding “suspects” without charge based on the untested beliefs of a police officer will become unsustainable and even more damaging to our fragile societal bonds.

04 November 2007

I have read the paper with interest. In response I consider option 3 to be just and transparent. I think this option allows for accountability and removes some of the risk of miscarriages of justice and the reduction of rights that generations of individuals have dedicated themselves to achieve. I think it is essential that rights and responsibilities are taken extremely seriously. Every right we have as individuals have been fought for in the face of injustices. History has proved that for acts of injustice to take place all that is required is for good people allowed it to happen in the face of perceived necessity. The rise of Fascism in Europe is one on numerous examples; some things can't be compromised on whatever the short term justification.

However option 4 could be considered a more pragmatic approach. My concern about this option is how the Judge would be selected and how truly independent they would be. I have some experience of working in the CJS and the vast majority of Judges I have had contact with have been exemplary in their ethics and approaches; however, it is not universal. I think that concerns at a change to the adversarial system being undermined is ludicrous in comparison to the risk for individuals who may be held without charge and have no involvement in terrorist activity. History clearly indicates that innocent individuals will make false admissions simply to stop feeling coerced, believing that later these admissions will be seen to be what they are; natural human responses. I think it likely that most of us, if held for protracted periods, would say anything. That too could also put the public at risk given the shortage of resources available.

07 November 2007

Dear Sir,

'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance'.

Our society has a great deal of tolerance and individual freedom, and if our government functions well it is because we grant it by consensus the right to impose reasonable laws and the ability to defend our liberties. I recognise that there are others who do not share our ideals and way of life and would like to impose their restrictive and oppressive practices on us. These impositions must be resisted.

However, our way of life includes, crucially, the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest. The ever increasing demands by our government for an extension of the period for which possibly innocent citizens may be held without trial, are a direct assault on our cherished ideas of freedom. The 'possible requirements' and 'maybes' put forward

in these proposals are simply unjustified steps down a slippery slope and could be invoked with just as little justification for an increase from any existing level.

My point is that by these progressive erosions of liberty, you are handing success to those who despise us and wish to curtail our freedoms, as surely vigilant not to lose our liberty in defending it!

Please think again.