TFR-024: UNITED KINGDOM - IED ATTACK ON TRAIN - PARSONS GREEN UNDERGROUND STATION, LONDON - 15 SEPTEMBER 2017

The Triton Report is compiled monthly by highly specialised data collators and former British Military Ammunition Technical Officers using state of the art data-mining technology. We work with global partners to gather, analyse and evaluate, comprehensively, all recorded IED events worldwide.
At 08:20hrs on 15 September 2017, a suspected IED functioned on board a London Underground District Line train at Parsons Green Underground Station in the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, London.

The device - concealed in a Lidl freezer bag and white tub – was described as having produced a loud noise, and subsequent fireball, injuring several people within the carriage.

Further injuries were reported as commuters stampeded attempting to evacuate the station. Eyewitnesses described a ‘fireball’ or ‘wall of fire’, with images of burns and further eyewitness descriptions suggesting the flame was directed upwards.

The device (as shown in the image from Twitter) was a probable IED, electrically initiated with a HME main charge, may possibly have included HPOM or TATP which has deflagrated as opposed to detonated. This could be down to a variety of reasons, but more than likely due to the manufacturing of the HME. Similar designs from a HME perspective have been observed in the 07/07 and 21/07 bombings in London.

It is possible that some form of fragmentation enhancements may have been included within the device. Fragmentation enhancements were incorporated within a device which was located on a train at North Greenwich on 20 October 2016. This particular device consisted of a backpack with a flask containing ball
bearings as fragmentation, utilising a timer. The device was intended to function as commuters were exiting the train. The perpetrator claimed the device was hoax but his internet history prior to the attack, showed he had searched for an IED construction manual and saved images of Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the mastermind of the Bataclan incident.

**TRITON COMMENT**

It may be possible that the perpetrator chose this particular train as it is comprised of the newer S7 rolling stock, which features carriages without internal divisions. Therefore the ‘fireball’ effect would have had been able to disperse over a greater area unheeded, causing maximum damage. This in conjunction with rush hour increased potential casualties.

The timing coincided with a number of high-profile events occurring within the city. Most notably the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) conference, playing host to global security and defence companies and figures, along with protesters who have congregated in response. Moreover, later in the evening a charity event for the Grenfell Tower victims was due to be held at Olympia, that uses the same train line.

Although no group has yet claimed responsibility, IS has called for supporters to launch attacks where they are rather than migrating to Iraq and Syria. This focus has featured a push for militants to use readily available weapons such as vehicles and knives, that has been replicated in more recent attacks against London. This is typified in the 03 June attack whereby three IS militants drove a van into civilians on London Bridge before launching a knife attack against civilians in the Borough Market area.
Despite this, the threat of an IED attack remains due to the dissemination of construction manuals and availability of mentors online. Al Qaeda’s Inspire Magazine Issue 17 featured IED attacks on railway infrastructure as can be shown on the image to the left. This was released in August 2017, and may have inspired the perpetrator.

Radicalised individuals have previously attempted IED attacks using gas canisters or bottles. On 20 June, a device comprised of a TATP main charge and gas bottles partially functioned during an attack at Brussels Central Station.

Gas canisters were also used in an attempt to construct a VBIED prior to the attacks in Barcelona on 17 and 18 August. In the latter instance it is possible that gas canisters were used in order to affect a fuel air explosion as instructions on how to accomplish this have previously been published in Al Qaeda’s Inspire magazine.