

Police Group OKs Shooting Suicide Bombers in Head

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WASHINGTON, 5 August 2005 — An international organization representing police chiefs has broadened its policy for the use of deadly force by telling officers to shoot suspected suicide bombers in the head, The Washington Post reported yesterday.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police issued new guidelines to its 20,000 members about two weeks before British police shot dead a Brazilian electrician because they mistook him for a suicide bomber, the newspaper said.

US law enforcement officers typically had been authorized previously to use deadly force if lives were in imminent danger, the newspaper said.

Israel, with its long history of dealing with suicide bombers, also operates a similar policy.

Plainclothes officers shot Jean Charles de Menezes, 27, repeatedly in the head on July 22 at a London underground station as police hunted suspects in a failed bombing attack on the city transit system a day earlier.

The Washington Post said the international police chiefs group produced a new training guide for confronting suicide bomber suspects after the July 7 attacks on three London underground trains and a bus that killed at least 56 people, including four bombers.

According to the newspaper, the guide recommends that if lethal force is needed to stop someone who fits a certain behavioral profile, the officer should "aim for the head." The intent is to kill the suspect instantly so the person could not set off a bomb if one is strapped to the person's chest, the newspaper said.

Among signs to look for listed in the police organization's behavioral profile are wearing a heavy coat in warm weather, carrying a briefcase, duffle bag or backpack with protrusions or visible wires, showing nervousness, excessive sweating or pacing back and forth or an unwillingness to make eye contact and even mumbling prayers.

According to the newspaper, the new guidelines also say the threat does not have to be "imminent" — as in traditional police training — an officer just needs to have a "reasonable basis" for believing a suspect can detonate a bomb.

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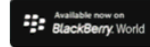
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