

Jeremy Corbyn speech

***CHECK
AGAINST DELIVERY***

**Jeremy
Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party,**
speaking at a speech in central London today, said:

Our whole
nation has been united in shock and grief this week as a night out at a
concert
ended in horrific terror and the brutal slaughter of innocent people enjoying
themselves.

When I
stood on Albert Square at the vigil in Manchester, there was a mood of
unwavering defiance.

The very act
of thousands of people coming together sent a powerful message of solidarity
and love. It was a profound human impulse to stand together, caring and
strong.
It was inspiring.

In the past few days, we have all perhaps thought a bit more about
our country, our communities and our people.

The people we have lost to atrocious violence or who have suffered
grievous injury, so many of them heart-breakingly young .

The people who we ask to protect us and care for us in the
emergency services, who yet again did our country proud: the police;
firefighters and
paramedics; the nurses and doctors; people who never
let us down and deserve all the support we can give them.

And the people who did their best to help on that
dreadful Monday night – the homeless men who rushed towards the
carnage to comfort the dying, the taxi drivers who took the stranded home for
free, the local
people who offered comfort, and even their homes, to the teenagers who
couldn't
find their parents.

They are the people of Manchester. But we know that attacks, such
as the one at the Manchester Arena, could have happened anywhere and that the
people in any city, town or village in Britain would have responded in the
same
way.

It is these people who are the strength and the heart of our society. They are the country we love and the country we seek to serve.

That is the solidarity that defines our United Kingdom. That is the country I meet on the streets every day; the human warmth, the basic decency and kindness.

It is our compassion that defines the Britain I love. And it is compassion that the bereaved families need most of all at this time. To them I say: the whole country reaches out its arms to you and will be here for you not just this week, but in the weeks and years to come.

Terrorists and their atrocious acts of cruelty and depravity will never divide us and will never prevail.

They didn't in Westminster two months ago. They didn't when Jo Cox was murdered a year ago. They didn't in London on 7/7. The awe-inspiring response of the people of Manchester, and their inspirational acts of heroism and kindness, are a living demonstration that they will fail again.

But these vicious and contemptible acts do cause profound pain and suffering, and, among a tiny minority, they are used as an opportunity to try to turn communities against each other.

So let us all be clear, the man who unleashed carnage on Manchester, targeting the young and many young girls in particular, is no more representative of Muslims, than the murderer of Jo Cox spoke for anyone else.

Young people and especially young women must and will be free to enjoy themselves in our society.

I have spent my political life working for peace and human rights and to bring an end to conflict and devastating wars. That will almost always mean talking to people you profoundly disagree with. That's what conflict resolution is all about.

But do not doubt my determination to take whatever action is necessary to keep our country safe and to protect our people on our streets, in our towns and cities, at our borders.

There is no question about the seriousness of what we face. Over recent years, the threat of terrorism has continued to grow.

You deserve to know what a Labour Government will do to keep you and your family safe.

Our approach will involve change at home and change abroad.

At home, we will reverse the cuts to our emergency services and police. Once again in Manchester, they have proved to be the best of us.

Austerity has to stop at the A&E ward and at the police station door. We cannot be protected and cared for on the cheap.

There will be more police on the streets under a Labour Government. And if the security services need more resources to keep track of those who wish to murder and maim, then they should get them.

We will also change what we do abroad. Many experts, including professionals in our intelligence and security services have pointed to the connections between wars our government has supported or fought in other countries, such as Libya, and terrorism here at home.

That assessment in no way reduces the guilt of those who attack our children. Those terrorists will forever be reviled and implacably held to account for their actions.

But an informed understanding of the causes of terrorism is an essential part of an effective response that will protect the security of our people, that fights rather than fuels terrorism.

Protecting this country requires us to be both strong against terrorism and strong against the causes of terrorism. The blame is with the terrorists, but if we are to protect our people we must be honest about what threatens our security.

Those causes certainly cannot be

reduced to foreign policy decisions alone. Over the past fifteen years or so, a sub-culture of often suicidal violence has developed amongst a tiny minority of, mainly young, men, falsely drawing authority from Islamic beliefs and often nurtured in a prison system in urgent need of resources and reform.

And no rationale based on the actions of any government can remotely excuse, or even adequately explain, outrages like this week's massacre.

But we must be brave enough to admit the war on terror is simply not working. We need a smarter way to reduce the threat from countries that nurture terrorists and generate terrorism.

That's why I set out Labour's approach to foreign policy earlier this month. It is focused on strengthening our national security in an increasingly dangerous world.

We must support our Armed Services, Foreign Office and International Development professionals, engaging with the world in a way that reduces conflict and builds peace and security.

Seeing the army on our own streets today is a stark reminder that the current approach has failed.

So, I would like to take a moment to speak to our soldiers on the streets of Britain. You are doing your duty as you have done so many times before.

I want to assure you that, under my leadership, you will only be deployed abroad when there is a clear need and only when there is a plan and you have the resources to do your job to secure an outcome that delivers lasting peace.

That is my commitment to our armed services.

This is my commitment to our country. I want the solidarity, humanity and compassion that we have seen on the streets of Manchester this week to be the values that guide our government. There can be no love of country if there is neglect or disregard for its people.

No

government can prevent every terrorist attack.

If an individual is determined enough and callous enough, sometimes they will get through.

But the

responsibility of government is to minimise that chance, to ensure the police have the resources they need, that our foreign policy reduces rather than increases the threat to this country, and that at home we never surrender the freedoms we have won, and that terrorists are so determined to take away.

Too often

government has got it wrong on all three counts and insecurity is growing as a result. Whoever you decide should lead the next government must do better.

Today, we

must stand united. United in our communities, united in our values and united in our determination to not let triumph those who would seek to divide us.

So for

the rest of this election campaign, we must be out there demonstrating what they would take away: our freedom; our democracy; our support for one another.

Democracy

will prevail. We must defend our democratic process, win our arguments by discussion and debate, and stand united against those who would seek to take our rights away, or who would divide us.

Last week, I said that the Labour Party was about bringing our country together.

Today I do not want to make a narrow party political point. Because all of us now need to stand together.

Stand together in memory of those who have lost their lives

Stand together in solidarity with the city of Manchester

And – stand together for democracy.

Because when we talk about British values, including tolerance and mutual support, democracy is at the very heart of them.

And our General Election campaigns are the centrepieces of our democracy – the moment all our people get to exercise their sovereign authority over their representatives

Rallies, debates, campaigning in the marketplaces, knocking on doors, listening to people on the streets, at their workplaces and in their homes – all the arts of

peaceful persuasion and discussion – are the stuff of our campaigns.

They all remind us that our government is not chosen at an autocrats' whim or by religious decree and never cowed by a terrorist's bomb.

Indeed, carrying on as normal is an act of defiance – democratic defiance – of those who do reject our commitment to democratic freedoms.

But we cannot carry on as though nothing happened in Manchester this week.

So, let the quality of our debate, over the next fortnight, be worthy of the country we are proud to defend. Let's have our arguments without impugning anyone's patriotism and without diluting the unity with which we stand against terror.

Together, we will be stronger. Together we can build a Britain worthy of those who died and those who have inspired us all in Manchester this week.

Thank you.