

Rudd: Building a Safer Britain

Amber

Rudd, Home Secretary, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference in Manchester said:

**(Check
against delivery)**

“Conference,

Standing here in Manchester it is impossible to forget the sight of this proud city, shrouded in grief, after a pop concert in May.

It is impossible to forget the images of the terrified concert-goers ... the images of the injured and the dead – some so very young.

The toll of those who have been the victims of such violence this year is grim. It includes those targeted outside Finsbury Park Mosque, and in London Bridge. It includes the innocent people mown down on Westminster Bridge. It includes Police Constable Keith Palmer who paid with his life in the line of duty, trying to stop that attack.

His death is a reminder of the daily danger in which our police force and intelligence agencies put themselves, to keep the rest of us safe. They have our utmost gratitude and so too the brave men and women of the Fire Service, for their extraordinary heroism, in battling the Grenfell Tower fire. Their job, like mine, is to do everything in their power to keep this country safe. And this year, more than ever, it's right that we thank them.

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There are other images from this year that I choose to remember. And they are these.

I remember the doctors and nurses from Guys Hospital, with so little regard for their own safety, running towards the carnage on Westminster Bridge. Their only thought was to get to those who needed help.

I remember the courage of Mohammed Mahmoud, Imam at the Finsbury Park Mosque, and the small group who, in his own words, “managed to calm people down to extinguish any flames of anger or mob rule”.

There are those who
after the failed device at Parsons Green opened their homes, and offered to
'put the kettle on' – a uniquely British response.

And in the aftermath of
the attack here in Manchester, communities came together in a great
expression
of solidarity. United in sadness with a desire to show the city was not
beaten.

It is such displays of
courage in the face of terror, of resilience, and of compassion, that I think
should make us proud. Proud of the spirit which pulls us all together, in
defiance of those who would harm us.

This is what I believe
Britain is about. And this is the spirit we must harness to build a safer,
more
united Britain.

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I was struck by what
Bear said about the multi-faith nature of the scouts. It's a powerful
reminder
of the civic groups that bind our society together. The united Britain we all
want to see.

As Home Secretary, you
see the sorts of initiatives around the country that are doing excellent
work,
to build stronger, more resilient communities.

After the year we have
faced, we will need more of them.

I've spoken to mothers
learning about what their kids do online, so they know where they could be
vulnerable to pernicious influences. I've seen groups set up to challenge
racism in sports, and places where those same sports are being used to
encourage
greater integration in communities.

Establishing the new
Commission on Countering Extremism will further support this agenda, by
exposing extremism and division. It will be key in challenging those who
preach hatred.

The task of tackling the
warped Islamist ideologies that have inspired terrorist attacks this year is
without a doubt amongst the greatest we have faced. But it is not the
only one.

Violent and non-violent extremism in all its forms – Anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, Islamophobia, intolerance of women’s rights – these, and others, cannot be permitted to fester. Our values are far, far better than this. And we owe it to ourselves to root this hatred out wherever it emerges.

The safer Britain I want to help build as Home Secretary is a united one.

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As we have seen all too painfully this year, the UK faces an unpredictable threat from terrorism. From “lone wolf actors”, to those radicalised online in their bedrooms, to Da’esh groups hiding in the ruins of Raqqa. We face random attacks at home, and well-planned threats to British Nationals and our interests overseas.

We also face a real and growing threat from the extreme right. We all remember the tragic murder of the excellent MP, Jo Cox, as she took part in our democratic process. Last year, I made the first terrorist proscription for an extreme right-wing organisation – National Action. And just last week I banned two more repugnant mutations of that organisation.

What I can tell you today is that while 5 plots got through this year, 7 were also stopped by our world class security services. Be in no doubt, the huge investment we are making in our counter terrorist efforts is saving lives, even when we tragically have seen so many lost.

If we’re to do better then we have to be a step ahead. And that means being nimble and responsive as the threat evolves.

Over the last months, I have been reviewing our counter-terrorism powers and legislation.

We have seen what could be interpreted as a shift towards crude attacks, with lone or few attackers, using everyday items. There also appears to be a trend towards shorter timescales, from aspiration to attacks.

If we’re going to keep people safe we need to disrupt plots in their early stages. Many such plots will include some element of online radicalisation.

Extremists and terrorist material can still be published online, and is then too easily accessible on some devices within seconds...Messages of hatred and violence accessible from any laptop or smart phone.

Progress has been made,
but this has got to stop.

Today I am announcing
that we are tightening our laws for individuals looking at this type of
material online.

We will change the law,
so that people who repeatedly view terrorist content online could face up to
15
years in prison. This will close an important gap in legislation.
At present, the existing offence applies only if you have downloaded or
stored
such material – not if you are repeatedly viewing or streaming it online. A
critical difference.

We will also change the
law in another important way. If someone publishes information about our
police or armed forces for the purpose of preparing an act of terrorism, then
they could face up to fifteen years in prison.

My job isn't just to
protect the public.

It's also to protect
those who put their lives on the line for us. These changes will do both.

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But it is not just
Government who has a role here. In the aftermath of the Westminster Bridge
attack, I called the internet companies together. Companies like Facebook,
Google, Twitter and Microsoft. I asked them what they could do, to go further
and faster.

They answered by forming
an international forum to counter terrorism. This is good progress, and I
attended their inaugural meeting in the West Coast.

These companies have
transformed our lives in recent years with advances in technology.

Now I address them
directly. I call on you with urgency, to bring forward technology solutions
to
rid your platforms of this vile terrorist material that plays such a key role
in radicalisation.

Act now. Honour your
moral obligations.

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We all need to move more quickly to keep Britain safe.

Removing harmful material from the internet is a core activity of Prevent, our prime counter-radicalisation programme. But there is also a clear, human safeguarding element.

In London earlier this year, I met a mother whose son had travelled to Syria to fight for Da'esh. She had no idea of his plan. She was devastated.

But it was not just her son who had been groomed by Da'esh's toxic influence. Her daughter's school had concerns that she too might travel to Syria. The local Prevent team provided counselling to both mother and daughter. Without the support that Prevent provided, it is likely she simply would not have known where else to turn.

Conference, Prevent works.

This is not to say that we cannot improve it. But I would issue this challenge today to its detractors: work with us, not against us.

We all have a role to play. Prevent isn't some 'Big Brother' monolithic beast. It's all of us working together, through local initiatives set up by local people, schools, universities and community groups.

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Now, I know I have done something very unusual for a politician in current times ... I've spoken for this long without mentioning Brexit.

Back in June 2016 everyone had their say.

The country made a clear decision. I have said it before, and I say it again – I fully respect the result.

We chose to leave and we must make a success of Brexit. Our children's futures depend on it.

These negotiations are going to be challenging. But great challenges also bring great opportunities.

With David Davis, I have proposed an ambitious new security treaty. So that even as we leave the EU, we can continue to work with our European allies to keep us safe.

And later in the year we will publish a paper on our future immigration system – showing how we will have greater control over our immigration rules in the future. But also how there will be no cliff edge for businesses. Because I appreciate it will take time for them to adjust after over 40 years of free movement.

As we build that new immigration system and deliver on the result of last year's referendum, I'm committed to working with businesses, both large and small, to make sure we don't impose unnecessary burdens, or create damaging labour shortages.

We'll be taking these decisions on the basis of comprehensive new evidence. I have commissioned the Government's independent advisers on migration to prepare reports – for the first time ever – on both the impact of free movement on the British economy and the value that international students bring to our world class university sector.

A new security treaty. A new immigration system. Decisions based on evidence and consultation. That's how we can bring the country together, restore the public's confidence in immigration, and keep British citizens safe, as we leave the European Union.

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Put simply: my job as Home Secretary is to make Britain safer. I have talked today about terrorism. But it also includes protecting the most vulnerable in our society...Those who have been exploited, abused, made victims of crime.

Among them there will be those suffering abuse that see no escape or refuge. There will be those who have been failed before, whose trust and belief in the system is gone.

The injustices they have suffered must not simply be allowed to fade away uncorrected. The scale of abuse suffered by children over decades in this country is shocking.

Before 2010, child sexual abuse was simply not a sufficient enough priority.

Measures we have implemented in recent years have changed that. But as with all crime, it is evolving, rapidly.

Technology has made

content and online abuse easier to find and participate in, through peer to peer file sharing, through chatrooms and online forums. And it has created conduits that enable abusers to search out and make contact with their victims in new ways.

The National Crime

Agency tell me there has been an exponential surge in the volume of child sexual abuse referrals. They tell me it is one of the most challenging threats we face.

This is a vile crime,
with thousands of victims around the world.

Today I can announce the UK Government is investing in a ground-breaking technology, which partners in Canada have developed.

It is called Project Arachnid. An apt name. It is software that crawls, spider-like across the web, identifying images of child sexual abuse, and getting them taken down, at an unprecedented rate.

Our investment will also enable internet companies to proactively search for, and destroy, illegal images in their systems. We want them to start using it as soon as they can.

Our question to them will be 'if not, why not'. And I will demand very clear answers.

This is a global technology solution to a global technology problem. It would not be possible without the efforts of partners and internet companies around the world. And their efforts are to be commended.

But we also know that end to end encryption services like Whatsapp, are being used by paedophiles. I do not accept it is right that companies should allow them and other criminals to operate beyond the reach of law enforcement. There are other platforms and emerging trends that are equally worrying.

We must require the industry to move faster and more aggressively. They have the resources and there must be greater urgency. If not, the next generation of our

children will have been needlessly failed. That is not acceptable to me. And I can tell you Conference, on my watch that simply will not be happening.

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A year ago, I stood before you and set out my priorities as Home Secretary. Keeping your neighbourhoods and our country safe. Protecting the vulnerable. Moving at a pace with evolving crime to better disrupt it.

Where crime is moving increasingly online, we are expanding our efforts. With billions invested in cyber security and hundreds of millions invested in police transformation. There's a renewed focus on combatting fraud. And we're introducing new offences to protect women and girls.

We will also shortly publish our consultation outlining how we intend to crack down on violent crime and offensive weapons. It will be complemented next year by a new strategy to combat serious violence. We are going to prevent children purchasing knives online, and we are going to stop people carrying acid in public if they don't have a good reason.

Acid attacks are absolutely revolting. You have all seen the pictures of victims that never fully recover. Endless surgeries. Lives ruined. So today, I am also announcing a new offence to prevent the sale of acids to under 18s. Furthermore, given its use in the production of so-called 'mother of Satan' homemade explosives, I also announce my intention to drastically limit the public sale of sulphuric acid.

This is how we will help make our communities safer as crime changes.

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None of this would have been achieved without the dedication of my ministerial team: Brandon Lewis, Ben Wallace, Nick Hurd, Sarah Newton, Susan Williams

And wider support group in Parliament: Andrew Griffiths, Robert Jenrick, Nus Ghani, James Cleverly, Simon Hoare and Charlotte Vere.

I am so grateful for all your hard work.

But, as an MP in a

marginal seat, I know the most important thank you should go to you.

I know more than most
how nerve-wracking it can be to see a handful of ballot papers representing the
future – not just remaining an MP... but continuing this job as your Home
Secretary, with the essential work that needs doing.

I cannot overstate my
appreciation for all the people that chose to go out with me in the rain on a
Saturday morning. Who scuffle on hands and knees to shove a leaflet through
those irritating letter boxes located at the bottom of the door – my personal
hate. Who negotiate ferocious dogs, or in the case of Hastings and Rye
swooping
seagulls, to get those pledge letters through every door.

There is no question
that you made the difference. Without it, I wouldn't be standing here today.
Please know that I am so grateful to you for your time, and belief, and when
it's that close... as in my case 346 votes close... it gives the phrase 'every
vote counts' a whole new meaning.

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Conference, thank
goodness Diane Abbott wasn't doing the sums that night.

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A year on from standing
here for the first time as your Home Secretary my priorities remain
unchanged.

We live in dangerous
times, as we have so tragically seen in the past few days with the events in
Canada, France and now Las Vegas.

In Britain, there is
still much more work to do to build a safer country.

Not just to tackle the
increased threat from terrorists. Crucial as that is. But also to help those
shackled in domestic servitude. To better support through a new bill the
victims of domestic violence, and more effectively hunt the perpetrators.

To make sure we never
forget the commitment of our police, our Police and Crime Commissioners and
our
intelligence forces, by whose diligence and vigilance we are kept safe.

That's why my department
is working with the Police Federation on its campaign to Protect the
Protectors. We've already funded a new national police welfare service. We're

reviewing the law so the police can pursue the appalling thugs on mopeds who attack people on our streets. And we're also examining whether we need clearer rules so anyone who assaults an emergency service worker faces a tougher sentence.

The police protect us
and it's my job to make sure we protect them.

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Conference, I would like
to share two final thoughts with you.

When the country is
facing so many complex threats, I do not believe that our country would be safe in the hands of Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott. The Conservative Party has always been, and always must be, the party of law and order. And I will give credit to previous Labour Home Secretaries that took important steps to improve our security.

But this lot are
different.

They have spent three
decades opposing anti-terrorist laws. They've talked of their 'friends' in Hamas and Hezbollah. They are silent on the anti-semitism that festers in their Party. They won't clearly condemn the actions of the IRA. They don't support police officers shooting to kill. They've called for the dismantling of the police, the disbandment of MI5 and the disarming of police officers.

Saying you condemn all
violence when specifically asked if you'll condemn one groups' actions isn't good enough. Staying silent when your supporters abuse and insult people because of their religion, sex or political views isn't good enough. Simply paying lip service to demonstrate your commitment to our security isn't good enough.

Their record proves they
are not serious. And your safety would not be their priority as a result.

Britain deserves better
leadership than this in these difficult times. And it has it with my distinguished predecessor, Theresa May, and the Conservative Party.

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My second conviction is
one that I hope you will also share.

Throughout history our

nation has faced many threats. In the twentieth and twenty first century, these threats have at times been acute.

But we have faced
them. And we have faced them down.

Westminster, Manchester
Arena, London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green ... some of the worst
terrorist attacks in decades.

They have tested our
resolve. It will likely be tested again.

What terrorists want is
for us to fear, to turn away from each other, and to become divided.

We will not.

We will stay united,
together.

Because this is our
Britain not theirs.

It is our way of life
that defines us as a country. It is our values, our freedoms and the
communities we've built that make us a proud, strong and united nation.

They will always do so.

Thank you."

ENDS