SOPHIE RAWORTH:
Now we talked earlier about the terrors and threat and radicalisation. Immigration was also in the headlines again during the week with the publication of the latest figures – all issues which will have to be dealt with by Yvette Cooper if Labour wins the election. Well the Shadow Home Secretary is with me now. Good morning.

YVETTE COOPER:
Good morning Sophie.

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
In terms of Jihadi John, the terrorism threat, have the security services messed up?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well I think the security services and the police have been working immensely hard. I think they do excellent work all the time, including we had a case I think ten days ago where someone was convicted having been intercepted on their way to attack a soldier. So I think they do some excellent work. I think that their hands have been tied
I think by the government. I think we should have had the control orders in place across this parliament, which we haven’t had because they removed some of the powers, and I think that has caused them more problems but I do think they do immensely important work to keep us safe all the time.

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
So if you win the election, you will be bringing back control orders?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
We think it’s right to bring back this relocation power. That’s the most important part of the control orders and that’s what allows the agencies and the police to say to the Home Secretary ‘someone needs to be moved away from their networks, away from the radicalisation extremist networks’ that they might have been working with in order to disrupt any plots that might be being planned but also to try and prevent further radicalisation. That’s what’s been removed and that’s what we advised against. And my worry is when you look at all of these cases that are being reported now in the papers, there’s so many of these cases where people were allowed to return to London, for example, to continue to operate with their networks; questions about why some of these extremists were not being put on the new powers because the new powers are too weak.

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
So it’s the relocation aspect. But does that mean you would bring it back as part of a control order or would you keep the TPIMs? And there are already moves to attach the relocation aspect of it to a TPIM. So do you have control orders or do you stick with the TPIMs?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
I think effectively they’re the same thing if you bring the relocation powers back – because that’s the most important thing and that’s what we always argued for from the beginning. Because you know if you look now, we are being told that there’s considerable risk, that the threat has increased because of all these people who’ve been going to Syria, planning further attacks in Britain, and yet only one person is on a TPIM. Only one person. And that I think demonstrates really clearly that those
control powers are simply not strong enough …

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
*(over)* And that is happening though?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
… and you need stronger powers in place.

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
But it is happening already, isn’t it, and they are moving already to bring back the relocation part of the control order and attach it to the TPIM? So you are happy with what the government is doing on that front?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
But it’s taken them five years – five years of us arguing, five years of security experts arguing that this was the wrong approach. And so I think, you know, the fact that Theresa May could take the decision to remove those relocation powers against all that expert advice, against the arguments that were made in parliament, I think was the wrong thing to do, and we do need to know more about whether that has increased the risk as a result, about what difference it’s made to some of these very serious cases. I think the Intelligence and Security Committee needs to be briefed immediately on the details of these cases and whether or not it could have been handled better if they’d been able to be moved outside London.

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
Because when you say – and you have done over the last few days – you know they were wrong to get rid of control orders, it does make it sound like under your government you had hundreds of people under surveillance. I mean the reality is actually there were only around fifty control orders in the whole period which was 2005 to 2011 and the problem was they cost a fortune, didn’t they? I mean it cost something like quarter of a million pounds per person (and that was not even including the legal fees) and they were constantly challenged because of human rights law.
YVETTE COOPER:
Well in fact they were upheld in the courts many times. There has …

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
(over) Not all of them though obviously.

YVETTE COOPER:
No. And there has to be proper court scrutiny, there has to be checks and balances. And these should also only be used for the most extreme cases. These should not be routinely used. Of course what you want is people to be prosecuted through the courts, of course what you want is prevention in the first place. But there are some extreme cases, which we’ve heard of, where I think these are appropriate to use, but it is only ever going to be for a minority of cases. We can’t pretend it’s going to solve all of the problems.

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
Fine, so if you’re in power after May you won’t be bringing back control orders but you will be bringing back the relocation aspect of it. What about extra surveillance powers, which is what the Head of MI5 has been calling for? He wants sweeping powers to allow his security services to be able to listen in on conversations, to be able to monitor email, to be able to get more information from the internet service providers. Will you give him that? That’s what he wants.

YVETTE COOPER:
Well in fact the intelligence agencies already have the powers, legal powers in order to be able to introduce surveillance under proper safeguards, under proper checks and balances. And I think that’s the right thing to do. It’s been a long part of the intelligence and security work that they’ve always done. The challenge for them …

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
(over) They want more though, don’t they?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well the challenge for them is that technology’s changing and technology is moving on. So we’ve always said that of course the police and the intelligence agencies need to be able to keep up with modern technology, but the safeguards also need to be able to keep up as well. So with all of these things, where you have strong powers you need strong checks and balances, you need the checks and balances and the oversight in place. So that’s why we asked for David Anderson, who’s the independent reviewer of terrorism, to do a review of this whole area. Because I think the law is out of date. It does need to be updated, but we need to do it in a sensible way and I think he’s the right person to make recommendations about how that should happen.

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
So you can’t now guarantee that if you’re in power in a couple of months’ time that they are immediately going to get these sweeping powers?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well we’ve said that the law does need to be updated. So of course that means they’ve got to be able to keep up with new technology, but they also need stronger safeguards alongside keeping up with the new technology. But you know look you have to get the detail of something like this right and that’s why I think David Anderson needs to set out detailed proposals for everyone to look at.

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
Let’s talk about immigration. Net migration figures are out this week. We now stand at almost 300,000 in net migration. Is that figure too high?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well that target, as you said, is now in tatters. It was the ‘no ifs, no buts’ pledge that the government said. Yeah we …

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
(over) But I’m not talking about the target. Is the figure too high? Three hundred thou…, or 280,000 to be specific, is that too high?

YVETTE COOPER:
Yes and we’ve said that before and we would like to see it come down. But I think the …

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
*(over)* To what? How far? I mean are you talking about halving it? We know what David Cameron wanted to do. He wanted it under 100,000. Where would you, Labour, like it?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
Yeah and he’s failed in that approach because …

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
But where would you like it?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
Well because I think that’s the wrong approach to take because what he’s done is he set a target for net migration, he said ‘no ifs, no buts’, he was going to meet it, and in fact the actual level is three times the target that he set. And also the net migration target puts all immigration in together, so it treats students alongside people coming to work, alongside people who are looking for work, alongside people who might have come for family reasons, alongside refugees. It puts all of those different kinds of immigration together. I think that is the wrong approach …

**SOPHIE RAWORTH:**
Okay, so but what …

**YVETTE COOPER:**
… and they should target different kinds of immigration. We know, for example, that university students who come to Britain bring billions into Britain. The government’s ended up targeting them and trying to reduce that. On the other hand, there is a serious problem about illegal immigration where not enough enforcement’s done and where we, for example, think you should have a thousand more border staff, proper checks at the borders (which we’ve said how we can pay for) in order to improve that enforcement.
SOPHIE RAWORTH:
Migration Watch say that you know within eight years if we continue on these current levels, we’re going to have a population in the UK of 70 million people. You must have a notion of how far you want to cut the number of migrants or the net migration figure now. I mean is it half? Is it 150,000? Is it … I understand that there are different kinds of migrants, but how much more do you want to reduce it?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well I think that’s important – is to look at the different kinds of migration – and that …

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
(over) But people want to know really, don’t they, how … whether you think it is a serious problem at 280,000 or whether you think it would be perfectly sustainable and a good figure if it were 150,000?

YVETTE COOPER:
But I think the mistake that the government has made is by trying to lump all of migration into the same target. I think you’ve got to have different kinds of controls for different kinds of migration. So I’ll give you an example of an area where we would have stronger controls. There’s something called Student Visitor visas – people who come for short-term courses where there aren’t proper checks, so people can come for courses that maybe don’t exist, where … So this is not about university courses, where there aren’t proper checks, where people could then be working illegally and being exploited. There aren’t checks on those and those visas have doubled. We would have much stronger checks, for example, in that area.

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
Let’s talk about tuition fees obviously because this is the biggest commitment you have come out with so far. It’s Ed Milband’s big idea. We understand that negotiations were torturous. The universities have been left with this feeling that they’re now vulnerable. Can you guarantee that the money that is taken from the pension pots will go straight to them, that they don’t have a black hole?
YVETTE COOPER:
We’ve said exactly that – that …

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
(over) That they will have their money?

YVETTE COOPER:
That universities will continue to have the support; that we’re raising the money in order to make sure that universities get that support. So of course that’s the right thing to do. But I think this is also …

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
(over) Pound for pound they get the money? I mean there’s no … It goes into the treasury? It’s not going to be a case of the government saying, ‘well we’ll see how much you need or whether we need the money for other priorities’? Pound for pound, they would get that money?

YVETTE COOPER:
No the reason for raising the money through the changes to pension tax relief for the very highest earners in the country is in order to make sure that you continue to make sure that the universities get all of the money that they need, that you can fill that gap that will be created by changing the fees. But you know the real beneficiaries from this change in policy is actually the taxpayer because the current system is pushing up national debt. It’s the taxpayer that’s actually losing out most as well as it not having part of the long-term opportunities for our young people. We want the best chances for the next generation.

SOPHIE RAWORTH:
Yvette Cooper, we’ll have to leave it there. Thank you very much.

YVETTE COOPER:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS