ANDREW MARR

EMILY THORNBERRY

AM: Emily Thornberry you were listening to Cressida Dick there, and of course you’re also a London MP yourself.
ET: Yeah, I didn’t get a lot of sleep. I think like a lot of Londoners, we didn’t get a lot of sleep. It reminded us of 7/7 when we lost so many people, we lost 13 people from Islington.

AM: You were newly-elected at that time?
ET: Yes, I’d only been elected for a couple of months, so it was immensely challenging to know what the best thing to do was. But my view was that you have to ask people to stick together, that. What they’re trying to do is they’re trying to separate the very essence of London. We are an example to the world of a multiracial, multinational city. We can show the world how it can be. And they just want to undermine it and we will not let them. And we have to make sure that we continue to stick together defiantly and make sure that we work together again as a community, and people have to be brave and have to be strong today.

AM: We were seeing there an aerial shot of the bridge where this attack happened. This is the second attack on a London bridge and it just strikes me that perhaps London’s bridges are particularly soft targets. There aren’t bollards, there aren’t bits of street furniture to stop cars from getting onto the pavement, and of course people have nowhere to jump except into the river. Do you think we need to look again at the security of London bridges?
ET: I think that’s probably right. I mean, the other reason of course that they’re attacked is because they’re so iconic. And that’s one of the reasons why you’re careful about the street furniture. So there has to be a compromise found there. But yes, I mean, for example, when Arsenal stadium was built there were
measures that were made in my constituency to make sure that there were bollards there, to make sure that vehicles couldn’t get up. Obviously you can never make anywhere completely safe, but measures like that and like we’re now beginning to get around the House, around parliament, I think need to be looked at.

AM: Need to be looked at again. Okay, this is an extraordinary situation, to have two attacks during a general election campaign. The Labour Party is suspending national campaigning, not local campaigning but national campaigning until this evening, I think. Why are you doing that?

ET: Because I think that we just can’t go on today. I think particularly, as I say, in London, it’s particularly hard for us. People are still – people are waking us this morning not knowing if one of their relatives or one of their friends may have been involved in this. People are desperately trying to get in touch with friends to make sure that everything is okay. I don’t think it’s right for us to campaign today, but again it’s a matter of balance, because we must not be cowed by these people.

AM: Well, I was going to say we have to keep calm and carry on, we have to carry on with what we were going to do, which includes at the moment above all, politics. And this campaign has been derailed twice by terrorist attacks. You must feel some sense of frustration that you can’t get back onto the arguments about tax or Brexit or whatever it might be at this point. Do you think there is any case at all for extending the campaign and trying to delay the election for a week?

ET: No. I think that we will – the Labour Party will begin its campaigning again this evening, our national campaigning. We think that’s the right balance. And we also are acutely aware of the fact that what these murderous people want is to undermine our democracy and undermine our values, and the very thing that
we should be doing is continuing with our election and indeed, we should be urging people, as I said, in defiance to go out and vote and be involved in this.

AM: The one-time leader of Isis, Mr Baghdadi, said, ‘the terrorists should destroy the idol of democracy and uncover its deviant nature.’ Do you think that this is part of a wider attack on British democracy during an election campaign?

ET: Well, I don’t know if it’s a conscious – I don’t know if it’s done consciously or not, but clearly a side effect of it could be, and that absolutely we must not allow to happen. And one of the responses, the response from London, should be to be brave, be calm, carry on. But also do not let this derail our democracy. We go ahead with this election and we make sure people vote. (ends)