AMBER RUDD

ANDREW MARR SHOW
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ANDREW MARR: Home Secretary, can we start by talking about the Parson’s Green attack? There’s been another arrest again today, announced overnight. This suggests that it was not a lone walk attack.

AMBER RUDD: Yes, it does. But it’s too early to reach any final conclusions on that. I mean, this has been a year like no other. We’ve seen, as you said earlier, five serious attacks and six that were foiled by the police, and the police are getting on with doing their operation today, they’re working closely with the security services. I had an update this morning. They’ve made two arrests, as you said, and they’ll be working hard today to see what else they can find out about this attacker.

ANDREW MARR: Now, so-called Islamic State has suggested there are several other unexploded devices still at large. Have you any information or reassurance on that at all?

AMBER RUDD: We don’t. It is inevitable that so-called Islamic State or Daesh will reach in and try and claim responsibility. We have no evidence to suggest that yet. But as this unfolds and as we do our investigations, as the police do their investigations, we will make sure that we find out exactly how he was radicalised if we can.

ANDREW MARR: Can I ask whether it’s true that the Daesh information that’s coming out at the moment is always as dangerous as you’ve suggested?

AMBER RUDD: Well, yes we think it is. I mean, the way these – particularly young people –

ANDREW MARR: In a sense do you take it seriously when they say there are other unexploded devices, do you take this seriously or is this propaganda?
AMBER RUDD: Well, my focus has always been on making sure there is less material out there from Daesh to radicalise people. Perhaps claiming responsibility might do that as well. But the police will be responsible for looking into whether these connections are actually correct or not.

ANDREW MARR: Are there more resources coming for the counter-terrorism operations?
AMBER RUDD: Absolutely there are. I mean, today we’ve announced £24 million of new money which will go to counter-terrorism operations across the country where it’s needed. Particularly to support operations where they’re protecting people in public places. We’ve made sure the counter-terrorism budget has been able to expand overall from 2015 to 20. It’s gone up from eleven and a half to fifteen billion. We’re absolutely committed to making sure the security services and the police have the right resources.

ANDREW MARR: Back at the time of the election you were talking about a new commission on de-radicalising groups. What’s happened about that?
AMBER RUDD: Well, actually just this week we are launching the advertisement to advertise for a new lead commissioner for the Commission for Extremism. We want to find out what else we can do to support communities and counter extremism.

ANDREW MARR: You’ve been very careful in your language both today and yesterday. What did you think when you saw this tweet from Donald Trump? ‘Another attack by a loser terrorist. These were people who were in the sights of Scotland Yard. Must be proactive.’
AMBER RUDD: Well, it’s never helpful to have speculation about an ongoing operation. And you know, I would include the President of the United States in that comment.
ANDREW MARR: And it was speculation, he’s not received a leak from Britain?
AMBER RUDD: It is pure speculation, absolutely.

ANDREW MARR: And this is not the first time the Americans have leaked information of have suggested they know more than the British public. After the last attacks there was more in the American press, and I can remember you being very angry and the Prime Minister being very angry, which suggests the Americans have not learned that lesson.
AMBER RUDD: No, I think that’s a different lesson, if I may. Because our particular complaint was at the inappropriate and actually outrageous leak of material following the Manchester inquiry. But that was shut down. It didn’t happen again. And that relationship with the American secret services and security services is very important to us for trying to track down the perpetrators, because we have to remember that so much of these attacks have international bases. We have to be able to work privately with secure lines with the Americans, with the Five Eyes community, and with our European friends.

ANDREW MARR: So is your message to President Trump, Donald stop tweeting, put your phone down and just stop it?
AMBER RUDD: I don’t I’d be the first person to say that, would I?

ANDREW MARR: But that would be your message?
AMBER RUDD: Well, we don’t want any speculation on an ongoing operation.

ANDREW MARR: Okay, can I turn to another big, big issue this week, which is police cuts. Do you accept that there 23,000 fewer police today than when the Conservatives took power in 2010?
AMBER RUDD: I do accept that. I accept that between 2010 and 15 there were cuts in the police budget, but I would also ask other people to accept that crime came down in that period. The
fact is crime overall is down by a third since 2010. The police have done a fantastic job in managing with those cuts.

ANDREW MARR: We just talked about terrorism, which sadly has not come down. And of course the police are the front line, they’re the eyes and ears of the security services on the streets of Britain. Do you think that 20,000-plus cut in police numbers must have had a deleterious effect on our anti-terrorist operations?
AMBER RUDD: I simply think that is too simple to approach it like that. What we have is an onslaught of attack from Daesh trying to radicalise people. We have to work against making sure that foreign fighters don’t come back here from Syria. We do have to have eyes and ears on the ground and we are making sure that communities are resourced to be able to deliver that.

ANDREW MARR: Would you like to get police numbers back to where they were in 2010?
AMBER RUDD: I want to make sure that the police are always able to do what they need to protect us. Every time I have a COBRA, and I chaired one yesterday, I ask the police if they have the resources they need to do their job. And they tell me they have.

ANDREW MARR: Because there may well be more police cuts coming because you’ve increased police pay by two per cent, but you’ve said the police operations themselves must find that money.
AMBER RUDD: We’ve actually protected the police budget between 2015 and 20. We have asked the police to find the extra one per cent, because you’re right, they’re getting one per cent on their salaries and one per cent additional. The fact is that’s £24 million a year. They have about one and a half billion in reserves. And Tom Windsor has been quite clear from his report that there are additional savings the police can make. But we will –
ANDREW MARR: Can they make – sorry – can they make those savings without further cuts in police numbers?
AMBER RUDD: Yes, they can. We would ask them to do exactly that.

ANDREW MARR: So when it comes to cuts overall they’ll be cutting police stations, cars, IT equipment etc, and they are going to have to find money to pay this?
AMBER RUDD: No, I don’t accept that.
ANDREW MARR: They’re going to have to find it from somewhere.
AMBER RUDD: Well, as I say, they have one and a half billion in reserves. And the inspector, Tom Windsor, has said there are additional areas where they could make efficiencies. For instance, I visited a police station recently which had made a major move from one police station to another. They were saving themselves, they told me, £700,000 a year because of the move, and they were able therefore to recruit another 20 police officers. Some police offices are being really sensible and innovative in the way they manage their budget and actually increasing their numbers in that way.

ANDREW MARR: You’re suggesting that others are not?
AMBER RUDD: I think there are still opportunities there for people to take advantage of new efficiencies.

ANDREW MARR: And of course these increases are below inflation. Inflation’s running just below three per cent at the moment. This is two per cent. So do you accept, as Jeremy Corbyn says, that this is in effect a pay cut for the police?
AMBER RUDD: Well, I accept that these are difficult times. We have asked the public service for pay restraint. You know, we still have a deficit. We don’t do this because we like keeping pay down, we do it because we think that it’s the right thing to do to make sure that our deficit continues to reduce.
ANDREW MARR: So for the police and for prison officers, this is a pay cut?

AMBER RUDD: Well, it may be for some people in terms of where inflation is at the moment, but I would say to them that it’s good thing, the right thing to do, to recognise they need to have more than one per cent, which is what we’ve done for the police and for the prison officers. But I would also remind people that we cannot run a large deficit indefinitely. That would just pass the responsibility on to their children and our children to pay for it.

ANDREW MARR: Let’s turn to the case of Samim Bigzad, the Afghan builder. He’s a young man, he worked for the construction companies, for the Americans and the Afghan government. He came to this country in fear for his life. You deported him, first to Istanbul and then to Kabul, and he’s now being brought back again, and you were found to be in contempt of court.

AMBER RUDD: Yes. Deportation is an important part of managing our immigration process. We will always abide with what the courts have asked us to do. I accept –

ANDREW MARR: But on this occasion you didn’t abide by what the courts asked you to do because he was in Istanbul, the court said bring him back now, and you frogmarched him and put him on a plane to Afghanistan.

AMBER RUDD: Well, that’s not actually the whole story, Andrew, but I can’t be drawn on details of this individual case because it is ongoing with the courts. But I take it very seriously and I will make sure we do the right thing according to the law.

ANDREW MARR: Okay. A High Court judge said you were in contempt of court. If I was in contempt of court, or friends I knew at the pub were in contempt of court, that would be a really, really serious matter for us. Is it a serious matter for you?

AMBER RUDD: We take it – I do – of course I take it very seriously.
ANDREW MARR: So how do you respond to that? Do you have to go back and apologise or what happens?
AMBER RUDD: Well, as I say, I will look carefully at the information and make sure that we abide by the law as we always do.

ANDREW MARR: And is this guy back in the UK now?
AMBER RUDD: I’m not going to comment on his individual case.

ANDREW MARR: Alright, thanks. Can we move on then to another subject which we have spent a lot of time talking about: Boris Johnson. Have you read his 4,000-word piece?
AMBER RUDD: Unfortunately not. I had rather a lot to do on Friday. There was, you know, a bomb that nearly went off, as we know, in Parson’s Green. Yesterday I chaired COBR, I went to see the police, I went to see the operation. No, I didn’t have time to read that piece.

ANDREW MARR: Ruth Davidson has suggested the timing was wrong in that case, do you agree with her?
AMBER RUDD: I think she has a point, yes. You know, I had a very busy weekend dealing with what could have been a terrible attack on our public transport.

ANDREW MARR: Do you think this article generally was a helpful intervention or an error of judgement?
AMBER RUDD: Listen, I have the great good fortune to work with Boris. I know what an irrepressible enthusiast he is about Brexit. And what he’s done is set it out there. I think it’s absolutely fine. I would expect nothing less from Boris.

ANDREW MARR: You said very famously at the time of the referendum, I think, that he was the life and soul of the party but
not a man you’d want to drive you home at the end of the evening. What did you mean by that?

AMBER RUDD: Yes, what I meant by that is I don’t want him managing the Brexit process. What we’ve got is Theresa May managing that process. She’s driving the car off, to continue the allegory, and I’m going to make sure that as far as I’m concerned and the rest of the Cabinet is concerned, we help her do that. This is a difficult moment.

ANDREW MARR: So this is back seat driving in effect?

AMBER RUDD: Yeah, you could call it back seat driving, absolutely. But I’m very clear that the Cabinet and the government supports Theresa May, at this difficult moment to make sure that we get the best result for the United Kingdom. But I’m sure we can.

ANDREW MARR: He has clearly a vision of Britain after Brexit which is not to be right beside the rest of the EU, not to be a normal European country, as it were, but to look out to the rest of the world, look out to America, to look out to the Commonwealth, to cut taxes, to cut regulations. It is a separate view of where we are going. Is that your view as well?

AMBER RUDD: Well, I don’t think it’s wholly separate to what we’re doing. I mean, he has also said, perhaps causing some confusion with people who want to see it as something that it isn’t, that he supports the Prime Minister and she’ll be doing her speech on Friday and he’s behind that, as the rest of us are as well. I certainly think, as we leave the EU we need to have close international relationships not just with the EU and with Europe but with other countries, like America, which I visited recently in order to work with them, and other international countries.

ANDREW MARR: Is it helpful to have the £350 million a week promise for the NHS back on the front pages, and do you think that will actually happen?
AMBER RUDD: Well, you know what? I’m not going to refight the referendum and be drawn in once more to that device of theirs to talk about that number. The only number that matters to me is the difference between the 48 and the 52. 52 per cent voted for us to leave, I want to make sure the government delivers on that and brings as many of the 48 with us as well, trying to unite the 52 and as many as possible of the 48.

ANDREW MARR: He says something that’s almost the opposite. He says you cannot have a 58-42 Brexit result. It’s a winner takes all, in effect. They won the referendum and therefore there has to be a complete Brexit.

AMBER RUDD: I don’t think that’s what he’s saying. I think he’s saying he supports the Prime Minister, that we are delivering on the 52, but we don’t want to cut off the 48. I want to make sure, and the government does, that we bring as many people as possible with us. The fact is that most people, like myself, who campaigned for Remain, believe that now we need to get on with it. We need to do it in a way that protects the economy, that doesn’t have a cliff edge, that makes sure that immigration attracts the brightest and the best – and we can do all those things as long as we do it at a pace where the government is united and engaged with the European Union.

ANDREW MARR: So it’s clearly not a helpful intervention as far as you’re concerned?

AMBER RUDD: Time will tell, I think, Andrew.

ANDREW MARR: Alright, let me read you part of what he said as well. He said, ‘I look at so many young people with a 12 stars lipsticked on their faces and I am troubled with the thought that people are beginning to have genuinely split allegiances.’ He’s talking about young people in particular. Is he right about that?

AMBER RUDD: Well, it shouldn’t come as any surprise. We had the referendum last year. People did have very different views. I
think the challenge of the government, and which we are up for, is making sure that we do attract the people who voted to stay so that we can deliver a much more unified outcome.

ANDREW MARR: But he’s going beyond that. He’s saying that he is troubled by split allegiances in this country.

AMBER RUDD: Well, I would say to him come with us and make sure you support the government on trying to unite everybody around the exit we’re going to deliver.

ANDREW MARR: Can I ask one final Boris-related thing? There’s been a lot of private comment today that this is in effect a leadership challenge. Publicly, do you think this is a leadership challenge?

AMBER RUDD: No, I don’t think it is. I think that he, like I, supports the Prime Minister in this difficult time as we fight – conclude the negotiations with the EU. I think what we’ve seen from Boris is what we are used to, which is his incredible enthusiasm for making sure that he delivers that optimism he’s so famous for.

ANDREW MARR: But this is a very, very dangerous fissure line inside the government. Do you understand that this is something that could actually bring the government down if it goes badly wrong? If people don’t show discipline and don’t show the right kind of leadership this could blow you all apart?

AMBER RUDD: No, I don’t agree with that. I think the government is united behind the Prime Minister, I think that Boris has had his say, he shows that incredible enthusiasm and energy that he is famous for, but he’s also said he’s supporting the Prime Minister on Friday, as we all do.

ANDREW MARR: Another directly EU-related issue today. There’s going to be a paper published tomorrow about a new security
treaty with the EU after we have left the EU. Can you explain about that?

AMBER RUDD: Yes, this is our proposal to make sure that we continue to have the widest possible agreement with the EU about how to keep people safe. This comes back to the point of making sure that we address the fact that the attackers tend to move around, often within Europe.

ANDREW MARR: Do we come out of Interpol, do we come out of all of those previous agreements when we leave the EU?

AMBER RUDD: Our proposal is to have a treaty where we lock in to all those different arrangements.

ANDREW MARR: So we’d stay part of Interpol?

AMBER RUDD: We would say part of Europol, for instance, or we would lock in to them from the outside. And my conversations with my EU counterparts give me a lot of encouragement that we can do that. It’ll be good for them, it’ll be good for us. Because I want the Frenchmen in London to be safe, for the Englishmen in Berlin. They want the same outcomes.

ANDREW MARR: Okay, can we go on, one other issue there is whether this new treaty happens whether or not we have a good successful and easy Brexit. In other words, if things go badly wrong at these Brussels talks do we still go ahead with a treaty on security and intelligence sharing and police sharing whatever happens?

AMBER RUDD: Absolutely we do. This is in the interests of the EU, European countries, as it is in the interests of the UK. I’m completely confident that that will go ahead. It’s not conditional on something else. It is something that will save lives, they’re committed to it, and we’re committed to it.

ANDREW MARR: So that is, in a sense, a change of policy?

Because that’s not what Theresa May said back in her letter to Donald Tusk in March. She said that if things went badly wrong
our cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism would be weakened.

AMBER RUDD: It would be weakened if we didn’t arrive at an agreement. I’m saying to you I’m completely confident that we can. She’s expressed what is the bald truth, which is that we need to have this agreement, they do, we do. We will get it.

ANDREW MARR: Okay, it’s the first time we’ve talked since the election. You started that election campaign with a pretty good majority, you left it with a few hundred. It must have been a fairly devastating night for you.

AMBER RUDD: It was a very anxious-making night. It ended just on my side, and Labour had fought a good fight and came a good second. But I’m hoping over the next few years to build on it by showing the voters of Hastings and Rye how I can support them locally.

ANDREW MARR: What went wrong in that campaign for your party?

AMBER RUDD: Wow, a lot of things didn’t go as planned. A lot of things came by surprise and we’re doing a review at the moment. I mean, I’m not going to unpick it now again, Andrew.

ANDREW MARR: Well, you see all the runners and riders, as ever, for future Tory leaders in the papers today. Do you accept that your very, very wafer-thin majority makes it much less likely that you could be leader of your party?

AMBER RUDD: I’m focused on making sure that I deliver what I need to for the government of the country, which is additional security. So I am down in Hastings and Rye most weekends working locally but my priority has to be, as Home Secretary, keeping people safe. That’s where I’m focused. I haven’t got time for the rest of it.

ANDREW MARR: One final issue we haven’t really had time to talk
about properly, but the big immigration leak last week caused a huge amount of comment, including from business, who suggested that you are heading, as a government, towards an immigration policy that would absolutely hammer a lot of businesses currently reliant on EU labour.

AMBER RUDD: Actually I saw some comments that said that. Some comments were much more supportive, and actually it was quite –

ANDREW MARR: The catering industry was particular upset.

AMBER RUDD: They were. But I would say to them in that document there were lots of different options laid out. We listened to them, we listened to most departments and areas who have concerns about immigration, a full report will be coming out later in this autumn. I’m committed to making sure, as the government is, that we protect businesses, including them.

ANDREW MARR: Would your life be easier if Boris Johnson wasn’t very keen on writing?

AMBER RUDD: I think Boris is an important part of the Cabinet, adding enthusiasm, energy and sometimes entertainment.

ANDREW MARR: And you wouldn’t like to see the Cabinet without him?

AMBER RUDD: I enjoy working with Boris. I enjoy working with the rest of them too.

ANDREW MARR: Home Secretary, thanks very much indeed for talking to us.

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