NICK ROBINSON:
Now back to the story which continues to dominate the news: the murder of course of Drummer Lee Rigby on a London street. I’m joined by the Home Secretary Theresa May. Home Secretary, welcome. The news that people will have woken up to this morning was the news of further arrests. Now obviously you can’t talk about an ongoing police investigation, but it will make some nervous that, far from being a lone wolf or lone wolves, this may be something wider than that. Can you tell us anything about that?

THERESA MAY:
Well first of all, Nick, I think our thoughts must be with Lee Rigby’s family and friends. I mean this was a horrific murder on the streets of London, but our thoughts must be with those who’ve lost a loved one. Yes there were some further arrests last night, some further searches have taken place. The police and the security service are working very hard in relation to this case. We now have around five hundred officers and others who are working on the case, including some officers who’ve been brought through from counter-terrorism units elsewhere in the country.
NICK ROBINSON:
So we simply can’t assume and shouldn’t assume that this is a lone wolf, as it’s called?

THERESA MAY:
Well I think the indications, all the indications would be for that. But of course this is an ongoing investigation and what we have to do is you know the police and the security service have to do their job. That’s exactly what people will be expecting them to do. So I can’t go into details of the case, as you yourself have said, for obvious reasons: it’s an ongoing investigation.

NICK ROBINSON:
Now the questions are already being asked inevitably of how the security services did their job. I know we’re going to get a report into that quite soon. But it does look, doesn’t it, as if these guys were not just on the radar of the security services, but had actually in some cases been in contact with them?

THERESA MAY:
Well again I can’t comment on the details of this specific case. But of course in a general sense the security service is an intelligence agency and their job is about gathering intelligence about those who might seek to do us harm, so they do that from a variety of sources and they will do that in a variety of ways and yes they will approach individuals from time to time. I see the work of the security service on a day to day basis and I see the excellent work which the men and women of the security service do to keep us safe. And if you just look at this year, for example, since the beginning of the year we’ve seen three counter-terrorism trials in which eighteen people have been found guilty and sentenced to around a hundred and fifty years.

NICK ROBINSON:
Excellent work, but it is clear that these two suspects were not just on their radar, had some contact. Does this make you worry, make them worry that mistakes were made?

THERESA MAY:
As I say, the security service and the police working together do do excellent work in
terms of dealing with disrupting plots as we’v seen from the evidence.

**NICK ROBINSON:**

*(over)* Sure, but is there anxiety about things that went wrong?

**THERESA MAY:**

*(over)* But of course, of course what we have in this country is the right procedures which say that actually when things like this happen, we do need to look at whether there were any lessons to be learnt. As with in this case where the police actually shot the two individuals, obviously the independent Police Complaints Commission moves in and looks at that aspect of this case, and so the Intelligence and Security Committee, the parliamentary committee covering members from both the House of Lords and the House of Commons will review what has happened from the point of view of the security service.

**NICK ROBINSON:**

And how soon will we get that report and will we, the wider public, get to learn if - and of course it is only an if - if mistakes were indeed made?

**THERESA MAY:**

Well the ISC Report will happen in … won’t happen immediately because what they do is they look back at the operation and they will look back at the case. We strengthen their powers to do that in the Justice and Security Act that was passed just a few months ago. And so they will not interfere in operational decisions because of course this is still an ongoing operation and it’s right that we let both the security service and the police get on with that job.

**NICK ROBINSON:**

You don’t want to pre-empt it. In your gut though, do you think you know the answer to the question about where the mistakes were made?

**THERESA MAY:**

As I say, I see the excellent work that the security service do on a day to day basis,
but we will look to see if there are any lessons that need to be learnt.

**NICK ROBINSON:**
The question that people ask themselves of course is how many people like this might there be. Sometimes the talk has been of two or three thousand people with very extreme views who could potentially be a danger. Overnight I see that Downing Street were briefing about this new or revision of the existing anti-extremist strategy, have talked about a few hundred. What’s the scale that you think you’re dealing with?

**THERESA MAY:**
Well you have people who are if you like at different points on what could be a path to violent extremism. The Prevent programme - and it’s right that the Government has a programme which is countering radicalisation, which is both countering the ideology that leads to radicalisation but is also working with individuals and working in institutions like prisons where radicalisation might take place - and that Prevent programme, we’ve already improved it. So since we came into government, we’ve changed it. I’m excluding more extremist preachers than have been excluded before; we’ve got more high quality programmes working with more people; and we’ve introduced a new programme which actually isn’t for those who are immediately at danger of radicalisation, but for those who are perhaps further out, and over … and around two thousand people have been worked with in just the last year in that particular part of the programme and we’re doing more work with more prisoners in more prisons.

**NICK ROBINSON:**
So the answer to whether it’s hundreds or thousands is you regard it as thousands who are potentially at risk?

**THERESA MAY:**
Potentially.

**NICK ROBINSON:**
Okay. Now you were talking about the review of the Prevent programme that’s been announced tonight. We’re told that there’s a new task force that we learnt about last
night. People will wonder is it really necessary to have new laws in order to stop people standing on the streets of Britain calling for the beheading of soldiers, or is it just that those laws are not being implemented?

**THERESA MAY:**
Well I think the task force, which is going to be able to look across the whole of government … I’ve talked to you about the Prevent programme in the Home Office. We need to look across institutions like universities, whether there’s more work we can be doing in prisons. But yes, we do need to look at the powers, we need to look at the laws. We need to look, for example, at the question of whether perhaps we need to have banning orders to ban organisations that don’t meet the threshold for prescription. We need to look at organisations outside government as well as what government is doing across the various departments like the work of Ofcom, for example. These are issues that are being raised. So …

**NICK ROBINSON:**
Ofcom. Let me just be clear - you’re talking about, in other words, internet, hate preaching or what’s shown on television? What would you like the communications regulator to do?

**THERESA MAY:**
One of the issues we need to look at is whether we’ve got the right processes, the right rules in place in relation to what is being beamed into people’s homes, which can …

**NICK ROBINSON:**
*(over)* What’s your instinct there? Mrs Thatcher used to talk about the “oxygen of publicity”. Is your fear as home secretary that we, the broadcasters, that the internet service providers have provided, hate if you like the oxygen of publicity?

**THERESA MAY:**
There is no doubt that people are able to watch things through the internet which can lead to radicalisation. What we do is we have a referral unit which members of the public and organisations are able to refer into that unit when they’ve got concern
about what’s being broadcast across the internet, and a significant number since that unit was set up in 2010 - something like 5,500, 5,700 - separate pieces have been taken down off the internet. But we need to look at this. As I say, we need to see if we should be doing more. We need to see if there are additional steps we should be taking to prevent radicalisation.

NICK ROBINSON:
And do you include the television companies in that? Did you shout at your television as you saw somebody like Anjem Choudary on the screens and do you believe the broadcasters are not exercising their responsibilities?

THERESA MAY:
Well I think Anjem Choudhury has disgusting views and I think it is right that we look at how those views are being presented. And I think there were many people who did indeed say what is the BBC doing interviewing Anjem Choudhury.

NICK ROBINSON:
But people may say back to you, Home Secretary, you’re in charge of the law. Why doesn’t the law get to grips with the likes of Anjem Choudhury. You’ve said just now that you’re reviewing the law. Are you suggesting that in future there may be laws that allow you to get a grip, if you like, on hate preachers in general? Let’s not talk about an individual because you won’t want to, I’m sure.

THERESA MAY:
I won’t want to talk about an individual, but what I do want to say is that this is part of the work that the task force the Prime Minister has set up is doing. It’s saying what are the powers we have at the moment, what new powers might we need in the future? Let’s look at this whole situation. Yes the Government has improved Prevent, yes we are dealing with more people, we’re supporting more people in trying to ensure they don’t get radicalised, but …

NICK ROBINSON:
(over) You make the point, but you know what your critics say, Hazel Blears, former Labour minister in the Home Office say - you cut its budget, and you’re not now
dealing with those people who might one day become extremists but aren’t yet.

THERESA MAY:
Well we are dealing … One of the things that we did as a government when we looked at Prevent when it came in was to say that we don’t actually just want to look at violent extremism, which is where the last government had focused this. We do want to look at extremism as well as violent extremism. And yes there’s an aspect of this which is about integration, but we have taken that away from the Prevent programme. That’s now the responsibility of communities and local government department - rightly because otherwise it was tarnished with just being about spying on communities.

NICK ROBINSON:
A couple of tests are being set for you. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, who now chairs the Intelligence and Security Committee, former foreign secretary, said no cuts to the budget of the intelligence service. We’re a bit short of time, so just to be clear you’ll fight cuts to the intelligence service?

THERESA MAY:
I’m absolutely clear that we need to ensure that the intelligence services and indeed in policing, CT - counter-terrorism policing, in the last spending review we ensured that CT policing was not treated the same as overall policing and I see every reason to take that same view in the next spending review.

NICK ROBINSON:
And Alan Johnson, your predecessor, has just said in that chair that if he were home secretary and if he couldn’t get the Data Communications Bill through the coalition, that would be a resignation issue. Now Nick Clegg has blocked it. Is it a resignation issue for you?

THERESA MAY:
I’ve always been clear that access to communications data is essential for the law enforcement agencies and the intelligence agencies. There is a reducing capability in relation to access to communications data and, as far as I’m concerned, I think this is
a very important thing that we need to ensure; that we’re giving our law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies access to the tools that they need to fight crime, paedophiles and terrorists. There was a ref…

NICK ROBINSON:
(over) You’ve had that argument …

THERESA MAY:
(over) Well there was a reference in the Queen’s speech.

NICK ROBINSON:
(over) Forgive me, Theresa May, you’ve had the argument. Okay there was a reference in the Queen’s speech.

THERESA MAY:
There was a reference in the Queen’s speech to work that needs to be done in this area and we are now working through what action needs to be taken and what action will be taken.

NICK ROBINSON:
But people may read that as you’ve come back with a sort of watered down form of it. Nick Clegg blocked it. And there may be people who sit watching this saying what is the point of a Tory home secretary if she can’t implement the laws she believes are necessary to protect national security?

THERESA MAY:
Well the Government has to implement the laws that we believe are necessary. We’re in a coalition government. I’ve made my view very clear. We’re now working through across the Government what action we can take, but I’m clear the law enforcement agencies, the intelligence agencies need access to communications data and that is essential to them doing their job.

NICK ROBINSON:
So before the next election, there is another go at this?
THERESA MAY:
As I’ve said, the Queen’s speech made clear …

NICK ROBINSON:
(over) I’m not sure that you said it that clear. Ok…

THERESA MAY:
(over) The Queen’s speech made clear that we are taking action …

NICK ROBINSON:
(over) It’s not about the sovereign.

THERESA MAY:
…. in this area.

NICK ROBINSON:
Now of course just before this happened politics subsumed Westminster, the politics of your party, the sense that things were going badly wrong. Do you think we’ll see another woman prime minister in your lifetime?

THERESA MAY:
What I think is that we have got a first class prime minister at the moment who is leading the country through difficult times. If you look at the reason why the coalition came together, it was about fundamentally dealing with the state of the economy that we’d been left by the last Labour Government. We’ve been able to cut the deficit by a third. If you look at how government is delivering under David Cameron, I think he’s an excellent prime minister and I want to see David Cameron carrying on as prime minister.

NICK ROBINSON:
The last woman prime minister …

THERESA MAY:
(over) The last time I looked, he was a man, Nick.

NICK ROBINSON:
The last woman prime minister we saw was a bit of a toughie. Do you think it’s time for another woman to get a bit of a grip?

THERESA MAY:
I think David Cameron is getting a grip. And just look. I’ve mentioned the deficit. I could talk to you about immigration being cut by more than a third, I could talk to you about what we’re doing in welfare reform across the board.

NICK ROBINSON:
(over) Or you could say a woman should be prime minister. But Theresa May, thank you for allowing me to tempt you even though you resisted. Thank you very much indeed.

INTERVIEW ENDS