

AMBER RUDD

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AMBER RUDD

AM: Can I start by asking, in your view is this a lone attacker or is there a wider plot?

AR: Well, what we're hearing from the police is that they believe it's a lone attacker. But it's an ongoing investigation, they're still collecting evidence about his journey, the people he's spoken to, the contacts he made, so we can't be completely conclusive about that yet. But as we find out more from the investigation I think that's what it'll confirm.

AM: What we do know is there was a Whatsapp contact just before he launched the attack, and if we knew what that contact was, what he said and to whom, we'd know a lot more. But as I understand it, I use Whatsapp, it's encrypted at both ends, and if you tap on the Whatsapp system it tells you that. So you know that the security services, you know, the Home Office is never going to see what you do. I think I can show you what it says here. 'Messages you send to this chat and calls are now secured with end-to-end encryption. Tap for more info.' And if you tap it tells you you will be completely safe. Nobody will ever see it. And that's what a lot of people think terrorists and others are using. Can I put it to you that that situation is now completely unacceptable?

AR: That is my view. It is completely unacceptable. There should be no place for terrorists to hide. We need to make sure that organisations like Whatsapp – and there are plenty of others like that – don't provide a secret place for terrorists to communicate with each other. It used to be that people would steam open envelopes or just listen in on phones when they wanted to find out what people were doing, legally, through warrantry, but on this situation we need to make sure that our intelligence services have the ability to get into situations like encrypted Whatsapp.

AM: So this is exactly the same argument that's going on between Apple and the FBI in Washington, where Apple, Tim Cook of Apple, has so far said that they're not going to allow the American authorities to open a back door into their products. And yet if they don't do that, then this end-to-end encryption continues. So do you think that the British government and the American government have to take on the big internet companies and force them to open up their devices.

AR: If I was talking to Tim Cook I would say to him this is something completely different. We're not saying open up, we don't want to go into the cloud, we don't want to do all sorts of things like that, but we do want them to recognise they have a responsibility to engage with government, to engage with law enforcement agencies when there is a terrorist situation. We would do it all through the carefully though-through, legally covered arrangements. But they cannot get away with saying, 'we are in a different situation,' they are not.

AM: But they say no. I mean, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple: 'it would be wrong for the government to force us to build a back door into our products.' And yet without that you can't find out what you need to find out

AR: Well, I would ask Tim Cook to think again about other ways of finding out, of helping us work out, how we can get into situations like Whatsapp on the Apple phone. It's not necessarily Apple itself, sometimes it's what's happening with other situations on it, which is why I'm calling in a lot of the organisations who are relevant to that this week to ask them to work with us to deliver the answer. It's not about them standing back from us. This is a national problem.

AM: Can I just ask you who you're calling in?

AR: Well, I'm not going into that, but – it's a fairly long list, but it's also some of the smaller companies as well, to make sure that

AMBER RUDD

there's no hiding place for terrorists. I want to make sure that everybody takes responsibility for this.

AM: Okay but at the moment there's plenty of hiding places. If, for instance, Whatsapp say no, we're not going to end end-to-end encryption, we're going to allow those messages to carry on being encrypted, will you legislate to force them to change their mind?

AR: I don't see that – well, I do agree what we have to have a situation where we can have our security services get into the terrorist communications, that's absolutely the case. So of course I will have those conversations and we will see where they go.

AM: Because this is a big selling point for them, they advertise this as a positive virtue of their systems. If they're going to change, they're going to want to change, you're going to have to make them change.

AR: I think I need to set it out clearly for them. I'm not saying that I want to get into your Whatsapp, Andrew> What I'm saying –

AM: You're very welcome.

AR: What I'm saying is where there are situations where there are ongoing investigations with terrorists, I mean, these people have families, have children as well, they should be on our side, and I'm going to try and win that argument.

AM: Okay, a parallel situation, much discussed in the press this week, has been the use of big, big online sites to advocate all sorts of horrible and hate-filled terrorist-related stuff, and it took us, again, 30 seconds – I'm not going to show it on the air, but there's a site here, guidelines for doing just terror operations. And this shows you how to stab somebody to death if they're wearing a stab-proof vest, exactly where to stab them and with what kind of knife. It takes 30 seconds to get this. Again I put it to you, this is absolutely unacceptable in the world in which we now live.

AR: It is completely unacceptable and we have been active making sure we get that message out. In my department we take

AMBER RUDD

down that sort of imagery, that sort of contact. We've taken down 250,000 since 2010.

AM: But so far this has been voluntary and often after the event, and this stuff is still out there despite everything.

AR: No, again –

AM: I'm going to have to put it to you, you may have to legislate, you may have to actually use the law against these companies to stop this happening.

AR: What these companies have to realise is that they are now publishing companies. They are not technology companies, they are platforms. And we need to make sure that that stops. You are right, we will not resign from taking action if we need to do so. But there has been quite a lot of good action taken. I mean, for instance, on child sex exploitation they've worked together –

AM: You'd tell Google to take that down.

AR: Absolutely we would.

AM: And what would you say to those people who say, look, if you actually look at the reality of life in the modern world, Amazon, Google, this really big – Apple – these are such big, powerful global companies that Amber Rudd and the British government aren't really up to taking them on, they're too big for you?

AR: Well, I would say think again, because we want to do this and we also want other countries to do this. I'm already in conversations with the US and the European Union have said they will talk to us about these items.

AM: Do you quite like the idea of the German plan for fines on companies who put this kind of stuff up?

AR: I'm not sure the German plan has been entirely successful. I would much rather have a situation where we get all these companies round the table agreeing to do it. Now, I know it sounds a bit like we're stepping away from legislation but we're not. What I'm saying is the best people, who understand the technology, who understand the necessary hashtags to stop this

stuff even being put up, not just taking it down, but stop putting it up in the first place, are going to be them. That's why I'd like to have an industry-wide board set up where they do it themselves. They could do this, I want to make sure they do.

AM: And now another way of looking at this attack, as I said at the beginning of the programme, that it was incredibly low-tech as an attack. It was hiring a car and buying a knife. And isn't the real truth – and we should say this to people out there – that in this kind of world those kind of attacks can't always be stopped? If you tripled the budget for MI5 and MI6, if you poured money into policing, they still wouldn't be able to catch everybody?

AR: Well, I'm afraid that is the sad truth. We've been at the threat level of severe for two and a half years, which means an attack is highly likely. We haven't had an Islamist attack like this for four years, but the fact is they are always going to try and attack us in our homes, as we saw this week in the centre of democracy.

AM: And his guy was peripheral, he wasn't on the radar in any serious way?

AR: Well, I can't comment any more. I accept it's been in the newspapers. MI5 have said he was on the edge at one stage but hadn't been active recently.

AM: Can I ask about another issue, which is that this could have been an awful lot worse had it not been for the pure coincidence that there was a vote going and that Michael Fallon, the Defence Secretary's police were there and they were armed, because there weren't any other armed police there? And for a lot of people, as we discussed in the paper review, that is really strange, that the main gate into parliament at a time of a severe terror alert had no armed police on it.

AR: Well, there are constant reviews and updates, so we have the right form in defence in parliament, it's not something we take lightly at all. As a result of this, in the normal course of business

there will be another review. There are armed police on the Palace of Westminster, so the decisions that have already been made have been carefully considered. We will see whether there's any change going forward.

AM: Can you confirm that it was Michael Fallon's people who did this?

AR: I can't. No.

AM: You can't. Okay, can I move on to another parliamentary-related issue, again discussed in the papers, which is that this throws into the air the whole business of emptying parliament out and putting it elsewhere while the refurbishment goes on. Do you think as a result of this attack that needs to be looked at again?

AR: Well, I think that the refurbishment comes back and back, when we're actually going to do it and what the cost will be the best way to do it. I think what this reinforces is the need to make sure that security is absolutely watertight, because MPs do sometimes feel under pressure in their constituencies and in parliament. But I would just add one thing: this wasn't just about MPs. This was about individual tourists just walking down the bridge. This man - it was an assault on London and on the country.

AM: Absolutely. You may have heard Baroness Warsi talking about Prevent and saying because of the greatest hostilities to this programme in schools, universities, many Muslim communities, it is time to have a pause, a judicial review and think about Prevent. But I think you intend to double down on it instead.

AR: Well, I think that now is exactly the wrong time to have a pause. What we've seen this week reinforces the need to make sure that we have active communities trying to stop people becoming radicalised. So no, I wouldn't pause it. But I do recognise what Baroness Warsi said about needing to make an effort to sell it to communities. We need to do better there, to

show that this is a safeguarding initiative, it's about protecting young people.

AM: Let me ask you about other terror-related story, which has been this ban of laptops from certain countries by certain airlines. Again to a lot of people this seems strange, because if terrorists, bad guys, have found ways to turn laptops into bombs on planes presumably that information can be used anywhere around the world and there should therefore be eventually be a full-time ban on laptops on aircraft anywhere.

AR: Well, it's difficult to say how far this will go. Whether we may at some stage arrive at that place. But at the moment the government has made the decision on where to have that ban in place, based on intelligence we've received.

AM: Can I turn to Brexit now, finally, the other big story of the week. In very simple terms how damaging would it be to this country not to have a deal?

AR: Well, I think, as the Prime Minister said, it would be worse to have a bad deal than not to have a deal. So we're going to enter into negotiations over the next few weeks and two years to make sure that we do get a good deal. And can I say that in my exchanges with Interior Ministers in my particular area, particularly on security, it's been a very big welcome in terms of wanting us to work with them, wanting to have an engagement with the European Union, with individual countries that will continue the work that we do with them.

AM: I mean, one description of no deal is more than four million citizens confronted with extreme uncertainty about their future, burdensome customs checks, lengthening lorry queues at Dover, serious disruption of air traffic and possibly even nuclear fuel shortages if there is no deal.

AR: I think it's fair to say I don't recognise that description. You know, I mean, the fact –

AMBER RUDD

AM: That is the main negotiator, Michel Barnier, who's our main negotiator on the other side. That's what he thinks no deal would look like.

AR: Of course he would. Well, he would say that wouldn't he? I don't recognise that apocalyptic description at all. I mean, let's face it, the UK government, the UK economy is doing rather well now, much better than some of us thought previously, and the world economy is doing well. And the British have got that entering into it. I think there is a lot of positioning right now and I think that over the next two years I hope people will calm down and we'll see a really good deal that'll work for us and the European Union.

AM: Now, you as a Remain campaigner in the old days and subsequently want to have us full access to the single market and customs union as is possible They're saying that that comes at a price, a £50 billion deal was discussed again this week by Mr Junker. Do you recognise that, it that something we might end up having to pay?

AR: I certainly do think that we should try to have the widest possible access to the single market. That is what businesses want us to have and that's what would be good for the economy.

AM: And that might be worth paying for?

AR: We don't know what that cost would be. We don't know that at all. That is going to be part of the negotiations. We have a lot to offer in this negotiation as well. So we mustn't ever forget that it's going to be two-way.

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