The Political Discourse of the ‘New Age of Terror’: An historical examination of the United Kingdom’s approach to counter-terrorism post-9/11 with a Critical Discourse Analysis observing how counter-terrorism strategies are framed to present a specific narrative for the ‘new age of terror’.
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Abstract

At the start of his premiership UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, spoke of ensuring that Britain continues with its proud history of multiculturalism by developing programmes to further integrate communities and reduce tensions resulting from immigration. Initially this programme was successful and many hailed the drive of New Labour in its desire to ensure that Britain sold itself as a welcoming place to call home. However, this celebration of success has been called into question over the first two decades of the new millennium following the seemingly steady increase in terrorist attacks and foiled attacks – many of which have been linked to British-born actors or immigrants to Britain. Thus, this study will call into question the extent to which the UKs multiculturalist approach has hit a stumbling block, positing that it is the change in approach to counter-terrorism through its Prevent programme that has led it to unlearn’ lessons from Northern Ireland and actively ensured a backward step through alienating the very communities it is trying to engage. It will examine the extent to which this seemingly more suspicious and divisive government-led approach alienates rather than celebrates cultural diversity, creating an environment ripe for radicalisation, in direct contrast to its aim, using Critical Discourse Analysis to show that the government’s approach from 2005 to the present day become entrenched as a result of the ‘new narrative’ of the ‘new age of terrorism’ and that this has led to a development of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ approach which is not taking into account the necessary holistic approach to counter-terrorism, instead alienating Muslim communities and creating a hostile environment made worse by the permeation of suspicion from the general public who have bought into the narrative following more than a decade of its telling.

Introduction

Political discourse regarding the issue of terrorists and state approaches to counter-terrorism in the West has changed direction since the 9/11 attacks in 2001. The reason why there was a change in Europe is linked directly to the policy taken in the USA, but it is important to note that the impact in Europe has been much more far-reaching due to the differences in demography and the existing approach counter-terrorism due to existing threats that on the European Continent prior to 9/11. Europe has experienced terrorism and terrorist attacks for centuries, in a way that the United States
had not, and has developed counter-terrorist strategies that were largely designed by each country to deal with individual threats. Although there was communication between states as a result of cross-border concerns and the similarity of risk, ultimately individual countries dealt with the issue of terrorism on an individual basis. This will be examined through studying the changes within the United Kingdom, firstly with regards to its most devastating and long-ranging terrorist threat as a result of the ‘Troubles’ with Northern Ireland, and the lessons that were learned from a divisive and reactive counter-terrorist policy, through to a diplomatic approach that eventually led to the Good Friday Agreement and reduction in tensions. In direct contrast the narrative will be picked up in 2001 whereby the 9/11 attack marked the turning point in UK counter-terrorist approach, and it will argue, repeated the mistakes of the 1970s and 1980s with a focus on reactive policy up to and most specifically following the 7/7 bombings on London. At this point the government further developed its counter-terrorist policy with the backing of a wary public, to introduce the policies currently in place today. Thus, as a result of the changing focus of counter-terrorism post-9/11 which saw the UK in particular, but Europe in general through the European Union, developing strategies that were intended to target a global and amorphous threat, rather than a state-specific based on a small-scale or individual aim, the debate over terrorism has changed to one whereby Western European nations in particular have become much more one-note and focussed on Islamic-fundamentalism as a world-wide threat that has been transposed to also be an individualised threat. This focus became pronounced as a result of key terror attacks in Europe that led to the pushing through of new counter-terrorist legislation, notably the 2004 attack on Madrid and the 2005 attack on London, which resulted in a much more pronounced development of an anti-radicalisation approach as the fear of ‘home-grown’ terrorism was discussed as a new and more serious threat than any seen before. As the media picked up on the political discourse, a new narrative with regards to terrorism became front-page news so quickly and for so long, that this has now become entrenched in public consciousness to the point that the belief of the majority is that Europe is now facing its most dangerous period in recent history. This fear, compounded and capitalised by the media and the political narrative surrounding terrorism, has not only led to a growth in Islamophobia in the UK and Europe, but has arguably made Europe a more dangerous place as a result of reactive policy that disproportionately targets a minority and places them front-and-centre of the narrative.

Thus, this work will argue overall that the decision to change the policy toward terrorism in-line with that of the United States post-9/11 led to the creation of a new political discourse that created a ‘new’ enemy for Europe that matched that faced by the United States following the attack. This discourse then became entrenched in the UK as a result of the London Tube attack in 2005, but necessarily widened due to a need to focus on the issue of ‘home-grown’ terrorism and how to stop
radicalisation upon the discovery that some of those involved in the London bombings were British citizens, born and bred. It will be argued that much of this occurred because the media picked up on and began to shape the political discourse and thus shape the resulting counter-terrorism strategy. This will be shown through critical discourse analysis of media, chiefly in the UK, of pieces published in relation to terrorism and terrorist attacks in the post-9/11 landscape, honing in on those in 2005 and then in 2015 in a comparative study to show how the narrative of terrorism has changed to the point that people in the UK are now much more concerned about the nature of terrorism than they have been in modern history, despite the threat actually being far lower in comparison to previous periods such as at the height of the ‘Troubles’ in the UK.

Finally, the piece will come full-circle to argue that, as a result of the changing political discourse from targeting a specific and individual group that is a threat to individual states to a target of an amorphous group driven by ideology but existing anywhere in the world through distinct ‘sleepers’ the narrative has become much more paranoid, causing states such as the UK to actually become more likely to be targeted as the citizenry is being asked to look out for and report threats that could come from profiling of Muslims. This will be examined first through an examination of the history of UK counter-terrorism, from the foundations of its strategy over the ‘Troubles’ with Ireland through to 9/11 and then the 7/7 London bombings. Moving on to the formulation of the counter-terrorism narrative that holds extremist ideology to be the problem and a community-based approach to root out radicalisation to be the solution, a discussion of the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy CONSENT, most specifically the strand of Prevent, will take place and it will be shown how, in some areas, this is having counter-productive effect in that it is segregating Muslim communities and encouraging a suspicion of the authorities. This theme will be picked up in a Critical Discourse Analysis of speeches from the 2015-2017 Conservative governments showing that their focus is on cementing the ‘new narrative’ by presenting an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ agenda in the face of any criticism of government policy, picking up on drive behind CDA research which is to show how the linguistic character of social and cultural process and structures are produced, and that in this instance the British government are exercising their power over the people by framing their approach to counter-terrorism in such a way as to imply that any citizen who does not agree with the state is not in-line with ‘British values’ and or on the side of the nation. In conclusion it will be argued overall that, should the government wish to continue celebrating Britain’s multiculturalism as it was doing at the start of the new millennium, it needs to focus on producing a counter-terrorism strategy that criminalises the act, is consistent in targeting the actors no matter their agenda or ideology, and ensuring that it is not pressurised by the media discourse to producing short-term reactive policies that will, in the long-term potentially do more harm than good.
9/11 – a ‘New Age’ of Terror?

In the plethora of media chatter, analysts argue that, following the shock of 2001, the UK has allowed itself to be led away from its own experience with regards to anti-terrorism, instead latching onto and following the new narrative of there being a ‘new age of terrorism’ that requires a fresh approach. What developed was a reactive and short-term strategy that was distinctly lacking a balanced, measured and informed examination of the events that have taken place around the world in relation to terrorism and terrorist demands, that offers an historical and contemporary context to what is happening in the United Kingdom. Indeed, the media landscape for much of the new millennium has been dominated by journalistic accounts warning of the danger posed to Britain by terrorism, particularly of the type involving radicalised Muslim men. This has in part led to the continuation of a reactionary policy that has not only not dealt well with the risk from terrorism, but has, research suggests, created an increased risk through the profiling and alienation of Muslims communities in the UK. One of the problems with the issue of ‘terrorism’ is of course that there are more than 100 recognisable definitions of the term, with even the British government finding it difficult to agree on a single definition. Others argue that ‘terrorism’ doesn’t exist at all, rather it is a label applied by states against those whom they disagree with. Others go further still, such as Noam Chomsky, who writes that a discussion about terrorism deflects from far greater crimes committed by states that have attempted to hold a monopoly on the use of violence.¹ There is of course evidence to support this argument as states in the form of state terrorism, as opposed to state-sponsored terrorism, have killed, and continue to kill, far more innocents that all non-state terrorists have or ever likely will. This hypocrisy only aids the justifications put forward by those who claim their intention is to fight against Huntington’s theory of the ‘clash of civilisations’², whereby the conflict is one on-going between Muslims and Christians. However, this piece of work accepts that terrorism does exist and defines it along the line put forward by Hewitt in his book The British War on Terror as being the threat or use of violence for political reasons, such as to influence government policy, against civilians and non-combatants by non-state actors (not denying that state terrorism exists, but that it is something separate) and that terrorism poses a real threat in the world today.³

The political rhetoric in both the US and Europe in the aftermath of 9/11 was that those in the ‘west’, who lived under an umbrella of shared ideals of peace, democracy, diplomacy and a globalised vision of shared interests, were under threat from a very new type of tyranny that places

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¹ Chomsky, N – Terror and Just Response – Znet article
² Huntington, S – Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the New World Order
³ Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p3
everyone at risk of being a potential target simply because of where they lived. We were told that we were living in a new world, one whereby news reports of the threat level facing the UK were had become standard – a ‘new normal’ was upon us. For example, on 30 June 2007, after a failed terrorist attack at Glasgow International Airport, the threat level in the UK rose briefly to ‘Critical’, meaning a terrorist attack was not only likely but ‘imminent’, as explained on MI5’s website. This terrifying modern world, arriving on the back of the 11 September attacks that left 3000 dead in the United States, then came directly to the United Kingdom on 7 July 2005 with the suicide attacks in London that killed 56 people. Indeed, even as the website is checked today, the threat remains set at ‘Severe’ meaning that ‘an attack is highly likely’. In fact, since the UK Threat Level system was introduced on 1 August 2006, replacing the BIKINI colour-coding system, the risk has been at ‘Critical’ four times (in response to the 2006 Trans-Atlantic aircraft plot; the 2007 Glasgow airport attack; the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing; and the 2017 Parsons Green bombing), while it has only dropped to ‘Substantial’ – meaning ‘an attack is a distinct possibility’ twice, for a total of less than six months over the 12 years the alert has been in operation.

All of this points to the fact that the UK and Europe is indeed facing a distinctly different and more dangerous risk of terrorism than at any other time in history. And yet, in many ways this is nothing like a new world. Terrorism is certainly not unique in the British context as, terrorism related to Ireland dates from the nineteenth century, and even efforts by Al-Qaeda did not actually begin on September 2001.

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4 MI5 website – Threat Levels link
5 Ibid
6 UK threat level changes, 2006-2017 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UK_Threat_Levels#Changes_to_threat_levels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UK_Threat_Levels#Changes_to_threat_levels)
Development of UK terrorism: the ‘Troubles’ with Ireland

In 1867 an explosion in London killed 12 and injured more than 50 due to a massive bomb planted at Clerkenwell Prison by a group of Irish nationalists. The aim of the nationalists was to force the British government to free a Fenian comrade held at the prison but the initial reaction from the establishment at the time was withering scorn, including from a German writer, Karl Marx, who believed that the bomb was little more than a one-off attempt to rock the government, but that the threat could be easily contained. The reaction from the Metropolitan Police was slow, especially as they had failed to stop the Clerkenwell plot despite having received advance warning from Dublin. However, the threat did continue to grow and the Met was forced to respond, eventually establishing Special Branch as the lead agency to deal with the terrorist threat from Irish nationals. Early in the next century Britain continued to face down the Irish threat, as well as attacks from other fronts as Europe experienced a political implosion in the lead up to and aftermath of World War I and the Russian Revolution. This evidences that the historical context for a British – and European ‘war on terror’ appears more than a century prior to that currently being fought. Periodic bursts of violence continued well into the twentieth century as the question of Ireland remained unsettled. The 1916 Easter Rising brought the issue to the front of the political agenda again as the decision by the British government to execute 16 of those involved caused untold damage to the British cause, far outweighing the impact of the uprising itself. The result was a war for independence fought between 1919 and 1921 as Irish nationalists began to launch attacks on the British mainland in an effort to influence British government policy toward Ireland. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was the leading organisation and, collectively between 1920 and 1921, the IRA carried out 17 shootings, 25 robberies, 294 arson attacks and 91 incidents of sabotage against telegraph lines.7

The IRA attacks ebbed and flowed over the next forty years as the issue of Ireland continued developing, but by the latter half of the 1960s escalation of the conflict reached a whole new level. On the global stage the world was feeling fractious from the Vietnam War, the American civil rights movement and ongoing counterculture. In the midst, Northern Ireland, where the minority Catholic population had experienced decades of discrimination at the hands of a Protestant-dominated society, including the denial of employment opportunities, saw a series of campaigns to improve the lot of Catholics in the late 1960s. Tensions and accompanying violence grew in Northern Ireland, culminating in massive riots that saw clashes between the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and Catholics in August 1969. Eight died as a result of the hostilities and

7 As quoted from Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p13
hundreds were injured. Although they were not responsible for the riots, the Provisional IRA (so-called following a split within the organisation into the Provisional IRA, which came to dominate the agenda, and the Official IRA) took advantage of the growing conflict by selling itself as the defenders of the minority Catholic population against the might of the repressive force of the British and Protestant government. In response the British deployed the military to restore order in the province, which was initially welcomed by the Catholics who hated the Protestant-dominated police force and viewed the RUC with mistrust. The soldiers understood that there was a need to win over the ‘hearts and minds’ of a population that was divided and suspicious in order to successfully achieve the counter-terrorism aim, but this recognition came to nothing as the military presence further escalated tensions. Soldiers, who are trained to kill, lacked the knowledge and sophistication of the police force in dealing with this urban conflict which, along with the introduction of a curfew in 1970 and military searches of Catholic neighbourhoods, began the process of alienation. The Catholics felt targeted and under attack from all sides, playing directly into the hands of the Provisional IRA. The following period of internment and violent interrogation, inevitably led to violent clashes viewed not only as a colossal failure against the Ireland question, but also against the threat of terrorism which escalated as a result of this counter-terrorism strategy.

The focus of internment on Catholics was a counter-terrorist disaster. Of the 1,981 who were interned, 95 per cent came from the community, demonstrating an apparent bias in the way security was carried out, which alienated, and in some cases radicalised, the local population into participating in terrorism. As a result of the community’s collective treatment, intelligence gathering was next to useless. The second blow to the counter-terrorism strategy came with ‘Bloody Sunday’ on 30 January 1972, which saw British paratroopers open fire on a peaceful Catholic demonstration in Derry, killing 13 and wounding 26. This event not only aided IRA recruitment, but the harsh tactics of the British detracted attention from the violence committed by the IRA as a terrorist organisation. In a symbolic response to Bloody Sunday, as well as an attempt to intensify the pressure on the British government to withdraw from the province, the Provisional IRA launched a bombing campaign on the British mainland. The first attack, in February 1972, killed six, including a Catholic priest, with a car bomb at the Aldershot barracks of the Parachute regiment. Further bombs exploded over the next two and a half years outside the Old Bailey and Whitehall, two London rail-stations, and a coach on the M62 motorway, killing a woman, her two children and nine soldiers. A bombing at the Houses of Parliament injured a dozen people, while one at the Tower of London killed one and injured 41 children. Then, a succession of bombs placed at pubs saw seven killed at Woolwich and Guildford, and bombs exploded in two pubs in Birmingham, 30 minutes apart, killing 21 and wounding 168. Advance warnings were given, but
not with enough time to evacuate, resulting in high-levels of injuries. The death toll on the final attack in Birmingham remained the highest from one attack for England until the 7July attack in 2005.8

UK Counter-Terrorism Development in response to the ‘Troubles’

In response to these attacks the British government was shocked into a dramatic response that resulted in the Labour government pushing through drastic new legislation in the form of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974 in an all-night sitting of Parliament. These new powers defined terrorism as ‘any use of violence for political ends’ and ‘any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public, in fear’.9 Although this legislation was intended to be temporary, multiple amendments were made periodically and it grew into the Prevention of Terrorism Acts that would remain in place until February 2001. There were many controversial elements to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, no more so than that it allowed for the detention of those arrested in connection with terrorism for up to seven days without charge, and also permitted the government to proscribe terrorist organisations, including the IRA. Furthermore, the law recycled the previously used counter-terrorist power of deportation through the use of ‘exclusion orders’. Loud voices spoke up against the legislation that seemed to fly in the face of individual civil liberties, including a young lawyer and later Shadow Home Secretary, Tony Blair, who in 1994 attacked the seven-day detention period saying: “The liberty of a subject should be taken away not by the act of a politician but by a court of law.”10 Yet, in the face of so many attacks and the outcry from the media and fear of the public, the government of remained apologetic, with then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins arguing in favour of the severity of the law, freely admitting: “These powers are draconian. In combination they are unprecedented in peacetime. I believe they are fully justified to meet the clear and present danger”.11 At the same time Special Branch increased their ranks from around 200 at the end of the 1960s to 379 in 1985, Scotland Yard established a ‘bomb squad’ in the early 1970s, and MI5 and MI6 began developing a

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8 Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p19
9 Statewatch.org – UK Terrorism Act 2000: New Definition of ‘terrorism can criminalise dissent and extra-parliamentary action
10 Blair, T, as quoted from Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p20
11 Jenkins, R, as quoted from Taylor, P – Brits: The War Against the IRA – p175
stronger focus on terrorism. By 1994, Britain’s chief domestic intelligence agency devoted nearly half of all its resources to countering Ireland-related terrorism.\textsuperscript{12}

One of the key components of the counter-terrorist strategy in relation to Ireland was human intelligence. This came in a variety of ways, from a tip-off to long-term informers who worked from within a targeted organisation or were embedded into it. This strategy was part of the crucial ability to win ‘hearts and minds’ and the intelligence proved vital to reducing the number and scope of attacks over the coming decades. As one member of Special Branch put it in an interview with Peter Taylor: "Sources are the lifeblood of intelligence...Terrorists don’t advertise their working parts so it’s up to us to penetrate them."

Alongside the formal intelligence, the efforts to counter-terrorism related to Ireland slid into morally questionable areas, including the use of black propaganda and, as recent news reports have shown, the likely targeting of individuals for killing by Loyalist paramilitaries. The use of deadly force by the state against terrorists generated further controversy during the Troubles and continues to plague the government to this day as demands are made for the justice for those who were targeted or avoided criminal charges through working as informants.

All of this played into the hands of the IRA, which continued to be active throughout the 1980s.

The reaction of new Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who was rigid in her dealings with the hunger strikers led to her and her government being prime targets of republicans. Thatcher’s close advisor, Airey Neave, was assassinated and the IRA came close to killing the PM herself when a bomb exploded at the Grand Hotel in Brighton in October 1984 during the Conservative convention, killing five people. Thatcher though remained implacable, although there were secret talks going on in the background that led to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Accords in 1985.

Ultimately though, as John Major took over from Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1991, the government came to the realisation, that after decades of attrition, the only solution to the problem of Northern Ireland was through diplomacy.

Although there were many on both sides of the political divide who saw this route as ‘giving in to terrorism’, especially as the British security forces, often through the use of informers, disrupted the IRAs operations, such as attacks and weapons smuggling, but the threat remained very real. In March 1994 mortars landed on runways at Heathrow Airport, and a ceasefire ended with a massive truck bomb that killed two and caused huge amounts of damage to Canary Wharf in February 1996, followed four months later by another huge bomb that badly damaged central Manchester. All the lessons learned from the Troubles taught the government that heavy-handed and reactive policies

\textsuperscript{12} Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p22
\textsuperscript{13} Taylor, P – Brits: The War Against the IRA – p150
did nothing more than stir up the terrorist propaganda abilities and increased the threat. It also showed the importance of winning ‘hearts and minds’ and that community-based intelligence was essential to reducing the terrorist risk. Most importantly, however, was the realisation that, alongside the counter-terrorist efforts, diplomacy based on a shared understanding and delivery of compromise was essential to the restoration of peace. Due to the diplomatic efforts of world leaders including John Major, Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, who worked with the Northern Irish parties to diplomatically reach a peace, an international multi-party agreement was signed on 10 April 1998, that brought to an end 30 years of sectarian violence. Although there have been continual spikes in violence since that point, during 2000 the British authorities detained only seven people under the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in connection with Ireland-related terrorism, compared to 39 who were held linked to international charges, which was the lowest total since 1974.\textsuperscript{14}

The changing political discourse and the ‘centralisation of terror’ post-9/11

After World War II there was an establishment of a ‘New World Order’ and the development of diplomacy over warfare as the first point of action through the growth of the United Nations. Yet, in relation to both international strife and terrorism, Western security thinking has an interesting history of being ‘shocked’ into change by singular events such as the massacre of Srebrenica and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The most marked change in approach, certainly since the end of the Cold War, came with 9/11, which saw the world as we know it change. Yet, the resulting ‘war on terror’ was a deliberate political choice taken by Western political leaders following the attack. They could have taken other routes, but chose instead to launch an attack on terrorism that in its amorphous nature led European states down a path that fundamentally changed its political narrative toward terrorism. 9/11 was a huge shock for the United States because of its, albeit false, sense that the US homeland had been immune from attack, including those from terrorism. This was not actually the case in one considers the context of the Oklahoma City bombing, but also a litany of other attacks on US soil in the 1990s, including the Atlanta Olympic Games and in the bomb that derailed a train in Arizona. Yet, the differentiation between previous events and 9/11 came in the formation of a new narrative on terrorism. While, the narrative stated, that previous events had been carried out by ‘lone-wolves’ – to the point that their actions were not always said to be linked to terrorism at all,

\textsuperscript{14} Statistics on the Prevention of Terrorism Legislation for 2000, as quoted from, Hewitt, S – \textit{The British War on Terror} – p28
rather an act driven by a desire for an individual outcome – 9/11 instead spoke of a terrorist threat not seen before, but one which posed a clear and immediate threat to the entire Western world. This new threat, it was said, was different in that it was not formulated by individuals or small groups with minimal or state-centric aims; rather it was led by a new form of terrorist organisation. And so, Al-Qaeda was called front and centre into the narrative. Despite the fact that the United Kingdom over the last thirty years had certainly been threatened by active organisations intent on terrorism, the focus of UK policy in the wake of 9/11 seemed to change to meet the agenda of US policy-makers who envisioned a single threat narrative of terrorism that was an active threat not just to the United States (and therefore limited) but to the entire ideology of the democratic West (therefore a tangible threat to every state characterised by these values). Not only that, but the narrative dictated that, as every democratic state in the West was a target, it stood to reason that every democratic state must join the US in their attempt to expel the world of this new threat. This expansive view was clearly seen in President Bush’s speech to Congress on 20 September 2001, whereby he said: “And we will pursue nations that provide aid or a safe-haven to terrorists. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism with be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”

**UK Counter-Terrorism Development in relation to 9/11**

Up until this point in the UK and Europe as a whole, terrorism was understood quite differently from that put forward by the Bush administration which was delivering the view of a single-threat narrative of democratic West versus anyone who threatened that belief. As already shown, for over a century up until this point, European nations had been with the risk of terrorism, from the militant left in support of a Communist take-over or demands for animal rights, to far-right nationalism, to state-specific acts such as the problems with Ireland in the UK to the Basque separatist group Eta in Spain. Thus, the United States launching an attack in 2001 on what it termed the ‘age of terrorism’ should have seemed baffling to most European counter-terrorist policy makers. Prior to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 the UK had a history of atrocity in places as distinct as Birmingham, Guildford, Belfast, Enniskillen, Warrington, Omagh, Brighton and London (which experienced 14 separate attacks in over 20 years up to the Belfast Agreement, and four more afterwards) in the

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15 President Bush’s address to a joint session of Congress, 20/09/2001
thirty years prior to 9/11. Yet, the attack suffered by Americans was deemed so dreadful that it was sufficient to call the post-9/11 world a new ‘age of terror’, and Europe went along with this narrative despite it not necessarily fitting the reality on the ground outside the USA. Tanda and Chanda expressed the drive to pursue this new narrative in their book *The age of terror: America and the world after September 11th* saying that America had declared a new age, and that declaration would structure security and foreign policy for the world. For the UK this would mean a change to existing counter-terrorism policy, which would be framed far more in accordance with the American agenda than by Britain’s own experiences in struggles with terrorism, and would in turn lead to it not only forgetting some important lessons learned in the past in relation to terrorism-response, but to also seemingly be doomed to repeating mistakes of the past, with consequences that stemmed far beyond the Twin Towers attack. With the declaration of the ‘war on terror’, the focus of the counter-terrorism strategy stemmed from the threat to the West, but because it is a single-narrative, it naturally fails to engage with the fact that there are in fact multiple strands to the threat, especially in relation to Europe whereby the immigration levels of those deemed part and parcel of the threat-narrative – the Muslim communities – meant that the resulting counter-terrorism strategy would become far more reactionary and the focus would turn in itself in a way never seen before, creating a strategy that risks driving a wedge between communities as a result of its one-note approach in a country with a very different make-up to that of the United States.

**The British counter-terrorist response 2001-2005**

British counter-terrorism strategy has traditionally sought to understand the nature of the threat being faced and this has been an ongoing and flexible approach ever since the lessons learned by the British security services from the series of failures in the counter-terrorism strategy related to the ‘Troubles’. From the disaster that was Internment in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, to the police investigations carried out in relation to bombings and attacks that not only led to miscarriages of justice, as seen for example by the Maguire Seven, the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four, and the handling of hunger strikes in the early 1980s. As shown previously, these failures resulted in a process of reflection and learning in London and Belfast that was followed by real operational success. This was seen in regard to preventing attacks in Northern Ireland, but also as a developing policy that tackled terrorist activities from the animal rights and environmental

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16 Croft, S & Moore, C – *The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror: Understanding Terrorist Threats in Britain* – p822

17 Ibid
groups, far-right groups, and those involved in international terrorism. Yet, after 2001 there were changes in the British approach as the ‘war on terror’ was overlaid the practice and culture of existing policy that had been adapting over decades to work within the needs of the UK. Croft and Moore refer to this period as one of ‘unlearning’ as the process of reflection, learning and local context was placed in and alongside the ‘macro’ ideas from the US on terrorism that led to different types of threat coming into focus at different times.¹⁸

**UK counter-terrorist response to the ‘new and global’ threat**

The resulting policy for the UK was the development of CONTEST, the name given to the United Kingdom’s counter-terrorism strategy. It was first developed by the Home Office in early 2003 in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks as the existing counter-terrorism (CT) legislation was rewritten in line with the broader remit demanded for the ‘new age of terror’. CONTEST is split into four work streams that have become known as the ‘four P’s’: Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare. Prevent is set up to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This remit includes countering terrorist ideology and challenging those who promote it, supporting individuals who are especially vulnerable to becoming radicalised, and working with sectors and institutions where the risk of radicalisation is assessed to be high, such as in the NHS and schools. The purpose of Pursue is to stop terrorist attacks by detecting, prosecuting and otherwise disrupting those who plot to carry out attacks against the UK or its interests overseas. Protect aims to strengthen protection against a terrorist attack in the UK or against its overseas interests and so reduce their vulnerability through a focus on border security, the transport system, national infrastructure and public places. Its aim is to first recognise the threats, then identify the measures to reduce risks. Prepare is tasked with mitigating the impact of a terrorist attack where that attack cannot be stopped. This includes work to bring a terrorist attack to an end and to increase the UK’s resilience so the country can recover as quickly and as well as possible from the aftermath of an attack.¹⁹

There have been many criticisms of CONTEST, but none more so than of the Prevent strand, especially it was this strand that has proved to be the most intrusive and divisive as it has developed along with the new threat narrative toward terrorism in the UK, and one that would take on a life of its own in response to further attacks carried out on European soil in 2004 and 2005. Most notably, Prevent seemed unable to learn from the mistakes of the past in relation to the handling of the

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¹⁸ Croft, S & Moore, C – *The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror: Understanding Terrorist Threats in Britain* – p824

Troubles, and as such is repeating failures experienced in the community thirty years ago. This will be discussed in depth later on in this work.

The first strand to the new threat narrative: A centralised, global terrorist threat

The first threat narrative that was assessed in 2001 was that emerging from the attacks of 9/11 and focussed on the idea of a ‘centralised, global terrorist threat, a narrative that was the key to the Bush administration’s response to the 9/11 attacks. The attackers themselves were not viewed as criminals carrying out a criminal act; rather they were understood to be soldier-terrorists following the orders of their leader. By taking this approach it gave legitimacy to the US government’s policy of an invasion and changing the government of another state in response. The justification being that, it was not those who carried out the 9/11 attack who were responsible, rather it was the government that had harboured and encouraged those who carried out the attack, meaning a revenge strike could be carried out. This meant that 9/11 was no longer viewed as a transnational issue; rather it was instead a state-to-state challenge. This had an important impact on the UK counter-terrorism strategy because, then Prime Minister Tony Blair, was convinced by this policy, as shown by his speech to the 2004 Labour Party Conference when he stated that:

“There are two views of what is happening in the world today. One view is that there are isolated individuals, extremists, engaged in essentially isolated acts of terrorism. That what is happening is not qualitatively different from the terrorism we have always lived with... The other view is that this is a wholly new phenomenon, worldwide global terrorism based on a perversion of the true, peaceful and honourable faith of Islam; that its roots are not superficial but deep, in the madrassahs of Pakistan, in the extreme forms of Wahhabi doctrine in Saudi Arabia, in the former training camps of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan... in the extremist minority that now in every European city preach hatred of the West and out way of life.”

As can be clearly seen in the speech for Blair, like Bush, this was a ‘new age of terror’ and one which was a global campaign, not limited to individual actors and individual states. This was a clear change in direction of the policy narrative for the UK, and one which would come to influence others in Europe through the EU, especially following the 7/7 London bombings, as Blair believed that 9/11 had changed the world and this narrative relied on the fact that the ‘new age of terrorism’

[20 Blair’s Conference Speech, 28th September 2004]
was born out through a centralised threat of them (Islamic fundamentalists in Al-Qaeda) versus us (Western society). Due to this belief, it was implied in the rhetoric that only a great and coordinated response would be sufficient to stand up to the new threat. The Western response is marked in its sudden taking on of the narrative and departure from what it had been doing previously, perhaps this can be viewed through the lens of the post-Cold War era being readily dredged up in memory as two giant powers faced off against one-another; one is righteous and trying to save the world as we know it, the other evil, trying to destroy the world as we know it. The new terrorist narrative was an easy fit for a world that was still trying to get used to a notion of reduced global threat. As a result counter-terrorist strategy became focussed on the centralised notion that the greatest threat from terrorism came from Islamic fundamentalists and therefore this must become the key focus for on-going strategies moving forward.

The second strand to the new threat narrative: the development of a ‘network threat’

The second aspect to the change in British counter-terrorist strategy arose from the notion of a ‘network threat’. This theory developed following analysis in 2001 that suggested that Al-Qaeda was not necessarily a centralised structure but instead a ‘network’ of groups working separately but toward the same goal. Although there was disagreement as to whether the group thought of as ‘Al-Qaeda’ had always been this way, or if this network had been developed through necessity as a result of the war in Afghanistan, the new threat narrative took on board this development. This led to a debate arising between analysts as to how this newly identified network threat would play out, which was centrally important in further considering how it should be handled by counter-terrorist services in the West. One of the leading analysts in this field, Marc Sageman, wrote in his 2004 book *Understanding Terror Networks* that Al-Qaeda should be understood as a ‘social network’. He went on to argue that such networks cannot be ‘destroyed’ by counter-terrorism measures, but that they can be ‘disrupted’. In contrast Bruce Hoffman argued against Sageman saying that it was possible to defeat Al-Qaeda with a dual strategy of destroying enemy capabilities (capturing or killing senior Al-Qaeda leaders) and breaking the cycle of terrorist recruitment. The debate left British policy makers with a choice as to how they could approach the terror threat, especially now that Hoffman’s analysis pointed out that the resultant splintering of the network due to the ongoing

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21 Sageman, M – *Understanding Terror Networks* - pp137-142
22 Croft, S & Moore, C – *The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror: Understanding Terrorist Threats in Britain* – p826
war in Afghanistan meant that there was an even larger and more widespread terrorist operation than had been before. The choice for the policy-makers then was whether to maintain the importance of Al-Qaeda within the ‘new age of terrorism narrative’, or to focus on that of a grassroots, leaderless terrorist threat that is multifaceted but with a singular aim to disrupt and terrorise the West. The decision that the policy makers arrived at was to change it to one of the larger, leaderless threat, but this was not necessarily a decision made by choice so much as driven by events in Europe. 2004 saw the aftermath of the most devastating Islamic attack on European soil with the 2004 Madrid bombing, while the UK experienced the worst attack on British soil since height of the Troubles with the 2005 London bombing. All in, the demands from the public, driven in part by fear, in part by the media-storm that followed, drove the change in focus, which was to slot in amidst the development of the third strand of the new narrative; that of the home-grown threat.

The third strand to the new threat narrative: the ‘home-grown threat’

Ethnic diversity in the UK had been a fact of life post-WWII and by 2001 its effects were noticeable. Most cities have a wide-ranging demographic, and mosques and temples are a familiar feature of most towns and cities. The changes though were not a smooth transition; the UK faced problems with each new wave of immigration, starting with the ‘Empire Windrush’ whereby 260,000 immigrants settled in the UK in the 1950s, through to the expansion of the European Union bringing with it the free movement of people. Race riots were experienced in every decade, but integration occurred as the country adapted to the changing landscape and outlook. Throughout the 1990s the government encouraged integration and a focus on ‘multiculturalism’ as schools, local government and corporate organisations launched initiatives to celebrate the cultural background of ethnic minorities whose heritage stemmed from outside the UK. The country took immense pride in the progress made toward creating a genuinely multicultural society, and, although there were, and are still, criticisms that the pace of change is still too slow or restricted purely to large towns and cities, the UK adapted well as the waves of immigration filled a place in the economy and then settled into Britain. However, there have always been debates about the fact the government was not placing enough emphasis on the responsibilities of immigrants to adapt to the British way of life, and that the identity of traditional working class communities was being unfairly neglected,

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with some fearing that they were irreparably in decline. And it was onto this landscape that the events of 7 July 2005 burst with the devastating terrorist attack on the London transport network.

The incident that became known as the 7/7 attack occurred nearly five years after the attack on the US and saw so-called ‘jihadist’ terror come to London. In this context the term ‘jihadist’ is used as intended by those carrying out the attack to mean a Muslim who supports a violent struggle against the perceived enemies of Islam. In four separate suicide bombings, on a bus in Tavistock Square and on three separate underground trains, 52 civilians were killed. The attacks caused much soul-searching in local communities because the most alarming fact about the attacks was that the bombers were not foreign imports but British-born citizens who had been seemingly well-assimilated into society. The leader of the groups, Mohammed Siddique Khan, had been a well-respected community worker in West Yorkshire so the imperative issue pushed to the top of the counter-terrorism response was why this had occurred. It was considered an issue of upmost urgency to firstly discover not only what made Khan and others become so alienated and secondly work out how to improve community relations to make ethnic minorities feel more British. Here we see a clear turning point in the focus of the developing the counter-terrorism policy that is solely concerned with the alienation of minorities who want to carry out a ‘jihadist-style’ attacks on British soil, rather than being on the potential wider-ranging concerns of terrorism as the fears about the ‘home-grown’ nature of Islamic radicalisation meant that the UKs CONTEST policy was revised in 2006 following the 7/7 bombings, with further revisions in March 2009 and April 2014.

The updated strategy placed a much greater focus on the Prevent strand of CONTEST.

This brings us onto the third strand of the new narrative, which was thrown to the forefront of policy development with the terror attack carried out in London whereby the suicide bombers were not unknowns trained in a distant land, but by British-born attackers. The ‘home-grown’ narrative was one in particular that captured the nation’s attention as it was chilling in its pointing toward British citizens acting as a ‘fifth column’ in our midst. The most terrifying thing for the British was that the leader of the 7/7 bombings, Mohammed Siddique Khan, spoke with a broad Yorkshire accent when he delivered his ‘martyr’s testimony’, bringing home for many just how ‘home-grown’ the threat appeared to be. When this was followed by a government advisor who declared shortly after the 7/7 bombings that it was the belief of the state that one in five British Muslims ‘may’ support militant jihadist violence, the narrative took on new tone, and in turn the counter-terrorism strategy had to respond. The rhetoric too responded and Blair spoke up stating that the home-grown

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25 Croft, S & Moore, C – The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror – p828
radicals may have been born in Britain, but that the ideology itself wasn’t, and “that is why it has to be taken on everywhere”. This response shows a clear differentiation again between the ideology and the criminal act, blaming a belief for the attack rather than the people behind it, which is a factor that will be further examined later in this work.

Home-grown terrorism and historical parallels

The rhetoric told us that this third-strand was the most terrifying aspect of this ‘new age of terror’ as it meant that Britain now had to contend with the fact it had to look at its own people as potential suspects, as well as reflect on why radicalisation was occurring on home-soil. And yet, Peter Hart, in looking at the issue of home-grown terrorism, makes an interesting point about the IRA attacks of the early 1920s that has some parallel to the post-9/11 period in saying that: “[T]his was as much a British as an Irish movement, largely composed of people who had been born or brought up in England and Scotland, or who had settled there as employed and permanent residents... The IRA in Britain was thus a very rare phenomenon: a guerrilla movement arising from an immigrant population as part of a struggle against the host country’s rule of their ‘native’ land.”

Thus, Hart writes, the ‘uniqueness’ seen from the young British-born and raised attackers from Yorkshire can be considered very much as part of a narrative seen over 100 years earlier whereby a group of young and disenfranchised men felt that the foreign policy of the British government was a cultural attack on their heritage, thus leading to a terrorist response. And the British response to the IRA attacks was similar to that following the London bombings, whereby there was widespread panic followed by an erratic and heavy-handed response from the British authorities. Human intelligence figured prominently in the development of the counter-terrorism strategy in the 1920s as Scotland Yard organised a campaign against radicalism, including the opening of mail, while the police used draconian powers such as the power of deportation against ‘anyone suspected of acting, having acted, or being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the restoration or maintaining of order in Ireland’. Although this ultimately left the British government humiliated due to the Court of Appeal finding the ruling and subsequent deportation of seven men unlawful, leading to them being allowed to return to Britain and receiving plentiful compensation, the immediately heavy-handed response shows important parallels with that following the 2005 attack on London.

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26 Croft, S & Moore, C – The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror – p828
27 As quoted from Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p13
Some analysts noted in response to the 7/7 attack that the parallels with Ireland cannot be drawn, as the Irish terrorist attacks were limited to a single aim; to cause maximum disruption to force the British government’s hand on the issue of Ireland. The very fact that the ‘new age of terror’ was linked to an amorphous group of networks meant that the counter-terrorist response had to be different, in that it was an ideological and therefore unlimited attack. As such, it was argued, it had become necessary to criminalise the ideology, not just the act, in order to root out potential suspects. Yet, the differentiation between ‘home grown’ terrorism pre and post-9/11 is not that cut and dried when looked at historically. For instance, over three weekend, David Copeland, the infamous nail bomber, killed three people and injured 129 not to further ‘jihad’ but to attempt to initiate a ‘race war’. Copeland, in speaking with the police, admitted that his aim was politically motivated saying that he hoped that his attacks would lead to a “backlash from ethnic minorities. I’d just be ... the spark that would set fires to this country”28 Copeland was an example of a home-grown terrorist inspired by a network of contemporary Nazism that was both UK-based and international. While such men are often seen as loners, it would be remiss to view Copeland and others like him, such as Timothy McVeigh with the Oklahoma bombings, to not be embedded in an ideological network; all of which raises the question as to whether the home-grown terrorists embedded in a fundamentalist Islamic ideology should be treated differently from those who are part of other organisations and considered to be lone-wolves. Taking this into account, the next stage in the development of the UK counter-terrorist response should have taken into account the historical events relating to terrorist attacks in the UK and abroad, and learn from them in putting together a strategy to handle the terrorist threat post-7/7. This though did not happen, and the strategy that was developed instead focussed on criminalising the ideology associated with ‘jihad’, and in turn treating all those considered potentially associating with this ideology, with suspicion.

The fourth strand to the new threat narrative: the development of the ‘ideological threat’

Part of the answer as to why this occurred may lay with the fourth strand of the changing narrative of the ‘new terrorism threat’, which seems to have become so pronounced as to now be synonymous with a certain type of attacker and ideology, whereas every other facet of terrorist threat is treated separately. The ‘new terrorists’ are associated with being a threat that is fundamentally different from those seen in the past. Irish terrorism gave warning, and was visibly

28 Croft, S & Moore, C – The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror – p829
connected to a political strategy. As Peter Clarke, former head of Counter Terrorism Command stated in 2007: “The use of warnings restricted the scale of carnage, dreadful though it was. The warnings were cynical and often misleading, but by restricting casualties, were a factor in enabling the process to move forward, however haltingly.”29 In contrast, the ‘new’ terrorists and form of terrorism, it was said, simply wanted to kill as many people as possible, more as a form of punishment, or terrorism with no real end point beyond the act itself, meaning there was very little to work with in the form of diplomacy. Indeed, when Prime Minister, Tony Blair said in 2005 on the issue of the ‘new terrorism’, in line with that of the home-grown threat: “I don’t think you can compare the political demands of republicanism with the political demands of this terrorist ideology we’re facing now... I don’t think the IRA would ever have set about killing 3000 people... In America, it could have been 30,000 instead of 3,000 and they would prefer that. My entire thinking changed from 11 September – the belief that you have a different form of terrorism.”30

This change in approach and the thinking that the UK was facing a ‘new’ form of terrorism was also different in the supposed scale of what could be expected. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attack the media and politicians were all predicting attacks that would be new in scope and scale, selling apocalyptic visions of the perceived threat that the country now faced. From the former director of the British Security Services noting that “the terrorist threat from AQ and related groups is, quite simply, unprecedented in scale, ambition and ruthlessness: they have a global reach, and they are willing to carry out mass casualty attacks, without warning. It remains a very distinct possibility that they may, some time, somewhere, attempt a chemical, biological, radiological or even nuclear attack.”31 Thus, part of the new narrative of ‘new terrorism’ is not only the fear of attack as seen previously, but the fear that not only will they attack us, but that ‘they’ will try to destroy us. This development of fear has gone hand-in-hand with the development of 24-hour media coverage which not only plays to our fears, but also to the need for publicity born from the terrorist acts. Violence and bloodshed is a necessary part of terrorism because this excites the base human instincts. The drive to gain coverage and recognition inevitably leads terrorists to carry out acts of increasingly destructive violence, with the corollary of liberal democracies to produce evermore frightening threat narratives building to a theme of fear of apocalyptic outcome. Croft and Moore go on to note that his theme has been conjoined with repeated references to no-warning, mass-casualty terrorism, often linked to suicide attacks, as part of a religious agenda etc. and so a cycle develops: ‘they’ want

29 Clarke, P – Learning From Experience – Counter-Terrorism in the UK since 9/11
30 Ibid
31 Manningham-Buller, E – Partnership and continuous improvement in countering twenty-first century terrorism – p43
to threaten ‘us’; ‘we’ are genuinely worried about ‘their’ determination to kill; ‘they’ notice ‘our’ fears, and speak and act accordingly.\textsuperscript{32}

The argument that has been made in relation to this ‘new terrorism’ is that it is distinctly different from previous forms of terrorism because the means are considered to be radically different; the goals are presumed to be unlimited and non-negotiable, and it is defined so as to mobilise both public and elite support for costly responses with long-term and uncertain pay-offs. The shock of 9/11 allowed a defining of ‘new terrorism’ narrative that allowed a top-down processing of information because policy-makers rely on metaphors, narratives and analogies that make sense of what is otherwise difficult to comprehend but is undeniably linked to the changing system of media and the influence that it has had on defining and spreading the new narrative. Again, Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, the head of Counter Terrorism Command reinforces this message when in 2007 he said:

“Colleagues from around the world often say to me ... that the experience gained during some 30 years of an Irish terrorist campaign would have equipped us for the new challenges presented by Al Qaeda and its associated groups. To an extent that is true – but only to an extent. The fact is that the Irish campaign actually operated within a set of parameters that helped shape our response to it... It was essentially a domestic campaign using conventional weaponry, carried out by terrorists in tightly knot networks who were desperate to avoid capture and had no wish to die.”\textsuperscript{33}

As a result, the narrative of the post-9/11 world has been that this is a ‘new age of terror’ and the counter-terrorism response has treated it as such. However, many argued that the defeat of the IRA bomb attack between the 1970s and 1990s occurred because there was a focus on carrying on normally without overacting and cutting back on civil liberties; indeed it has already been shown that the draconian measures resulted in a more focussed level of attack on the British mainland, endangering far more lives than the intelligence-led and diplomatic approach. (Although it is important to note that many analysts consider that diplomacy was only possible due to the implementation of harsher measures, which proved necessary to bring all parties to the table). However, it is clear that the new narrative has a defined focus on the ideological nature of the attacks over the acts themselves, leading to a counter-terrorist response that is driven by the pursuit of those considered part of the ideology in one way or another. The result is profiling of communities as well as the alienation of those the government is attempting to work with. This is

\textsuperscript{32} Croft, S & Moore, C – The Evolution of Threat Narratives in the Age of Terror – p830
\textsuperscript{33} Clarke, P – Learning From Experience – Counter-Terrorism in the UK since 9/11
seen as a particular problem in relation to the lack of an holistic approach to the counter-terrorism strategy. As was seen in Northern Ireland, the government needed to consider the bigger picture when opening a dialogue to end the Troubles. In part this meant addressing some of the root-causes of the violence, including impact of foreign policy from the British government in relation to Ireland. This is something that also needs to be addressed by the modern counter-terrorism strategists, but the new narrative of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ leaves very little scope for such an approach.

UK Foreign Policy and the Counter-Terrorist Agenda

The cause for the ‘home-grown threat’ has been much discussed, but Sageman believed that reason was clear saying that “Iraq is the moment when British jihadists started focussing attacks inside the UK”.34 One common perception was that Britain’s foreign policy, especially the war in Iraq, had dangerously alienated British Muslims. The invasion of Iraq played nicely into bin Laden’s efforts to portray the campaign against terrorism as a war against Islam in the form of a clash of civilisations, the result in the first five years following the invasion being, according to the statistical evidence, a sevenfold increase in worldwide terrorism since March 2003, or a 33 per cent increase since the invasion if the numbers take out attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan.35 However, as the government approach was to stick with the line that ‘there is no excuse for terrorism’, rather than focus on the issues brought to the UK as a direct result of its foreign policy, the emphasis of the British government and media commentators, particularly since 2007, has been focussed on cultural differences, often referred to as ‘multiculturalism. Thus, issues such as polygamy and the wearing of the niqab are highlighted without any effort to explain their relevance to terrorism beyond being an obvious sign of ‘difference’. Attacking Muslims for this, and other cultural practices, aids the cause of terrorism because it discourages integration, encourages a sense of persecutions, and reinforces the exact message that terrorists wish to propagate. That this desire to win ‘hearts and minds’ through community engagement strategies seen with Prevent are directly damaged by such political attempts to demonise the enemy abroad is only one part of the mismatching approach as the cross-over between in discourse occurred after 2005.

Despite many agreeing with Sageman that UK foreign policy is a key driving force behind British citizens becoming radicalised, many others, especially politicians rejecting any link between British

34 Hasan, M – The Bulletproof Case against Blair
35 Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p5
foreign policy and the issue of ‘home-grown’ radicalisation. Conservative MP Michael Gove in relation to this issue singled out John Major for not continuing the hard-line of the Thatcher period saying, in a link what he viewed as the meek response to Al-Qaeda prior to 9/11 that peace in Northern Ireland “showed once again that Western nations didn’t have the stomach for protracted campaigns... If terrorists persist, terrorism will pay off.” A similar response was seen from then-Defence Secretary Jack Straw in relation to the Iraq invasion in 2003 saying that the UK must not be an apologist state for terror. But five terror attacks in the UK in 2017 means that another update to CONTEST is due, but will the question of the causes of the increase in terrorist activity will again be taking a backseat to the offensive and defensive rhetoric that has been omnipresent since 9/11? There are signs that the government may be reaching it ‘moment of reflection’, as was seen over Ireland after decades of failed counter-terrorist policy. At the recent Westminster counter-terrorism conference, a top security official affirmed that the heightened terror threat in the UK is strongly connected to conflicts overseas, especially the situation in Syria and Iraq and those inspired by Islamic State (IS). The 2011 version of CONTEST placed no such emphasis on peacebuilding but calls for the 2018 revision to break with the policies that have been proving counter-productive are getting louder. To this point there are two reasons why the UK has tended to focus on the domestic agenda over that of foreign policy; the first is that the domestic debate from 9/11 to the present day has revolved around the idea, as argued by Jack Straw, that there can be ‘no excuse for terrorism’. Yet, this very ideology suggests any change to the thinking that a different approach to foreign policy could reduce the terrorist threat to the UK is almost a treasonable offence. As such, the lack of holistic thinking and the fear politicians have of stepping away from this response for fear of the reaction means that the UK counter-terrorist policy remains stuck where it was in 2001, despite all of the national and international developments since. This, despite the fact that it seems obvious to much of the British public, as well as to most experts, that the threat in the UK is of course deeply connected to conflicts overseas and the grievances that underpin them. Whether we like it or not, the Palace of Westminster, Manchester Arena, London Bridge and Parsons Green attackers – and indeed the July 7 bomber – were either connected to or inspired by groups fighting in wars in which Britain has played an important role overseas and if CONTEST, and more specifically the Prevent strategy, fails to take this into account, it is clear that the community-based approach will not achieve the success it is aiming for as there will always be a driving force for radicalisation.

36 Gove, M, as quoted from Hewitt, S – The British War on Terror – p27
37 Attree,L – Counter-terrorism: new UK strategy must learn obvious lessons
38 Ibid
The second tendency for counter-terrorist strategists in relation to foreign policy is to bow to the pressure to avert domestic attacks pushes by taking short-term actions that have been shown time and again to be long-term failures, as seen in the adverse reaction to the Prevent strategy from the Muslim community. This is also reflected in the UK support of states which are abusive, corrupt or repressive in an attempt to build stability overall, as seen with Egypt whereby Egyptian state enjoys military and political support from the UK in branding all opposition to the regime – particularly supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood – as terrorists, incarcerating and torturing thousands in an increasingly repressive regime. The support offered by the UK government in order to keep stability in the region in the long-term is both irresponsible and counter-productive on both global and domestic levels. As Attree argues, “if Britain fights ISIS hand-in-hand with regimes that behead dissidents, and tear the fingernails from their journalists, and if it destroys whole cities while failing to provide for refugees and reconstruction in the process”, then the cause is diminished and the state will win enemies faster than it makes friends, making any counter-terrorist strategy weakened from the get-go. As such, it seems clear that achieving peace in conflict environments needs to be reasserted as the highest strategic aim of UK foreign policy. Yet, instead of foreign policy and the impact of the British, European and US approach to invasion and regime change on those at home and abroad, the essence of the argument that has dominated government discourse since 9/11 has been the grievances against what is viewed as the illiberal nature of the Islamic culture, which has been put forward as the primary cause of terrorism carries out by Muslims. This line of argument follows that, Muslims around the world, no matter their ethnic background, strand of religious belief and practice, their level of devotion, or where they choose to set up home, become involved in terrorism because they want to impose sharia law on their societies or enslave women, or destroy Christianity. While the academic roots of such arguments lie with those such as Samuel Huntington and his ‘Clash of Civilisations’ theory, the political roots stem back to the Bush administration’s response to 9/11, as shown in President Bush’s speech to Congress on 20th September, 2001 when he said of the attackers: “They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other”. Yet, by not actually discussing the causes of radicalisation, wherever it falls on the political spectrum, the current counter-terrorist in the UK strategy is criminalising the ideology itself, rather than the act, resulting in fear and suspicion of anyone associated with aspects of the ideology. Additionally, by not focussing on the root cause of the growth of terrorist acts, such as issues related to UK foreign policy, the disenfranchisement of the youth (from all sides of the political spectrum) and the economic drivers

39 Attree,L – Counter-terrorism: new UK strategy must learn obvious lessons
40 President Bush’s address to a joint session of Congress, 20/09/2001
contributing to these, the issue becomes worse as scapegoats are easily being offered up for the problems in society. This is also an issue when considering the way that the ‘new narrative’ is so focussed on the ideological nature of the threat. As a result of criminalising the ideology, the government widens the remit for pursuit dramatically, but also vastly increases the risk that innocents are targeted by association, thus making the issue of working with communities to reduce tensions far more difficult a task.

The criminalisation of non-violent extremism

In the wake of the terror attack on London Bridge in 2017, UK Prime Minister Theresa May said of all the recent attacks that they “are bound together by the single, evil ideology of Islamist extremism that preaches hatred, sows division, and promotes sectarianism”. In 2015, as Home Secretary, May wrote that where “non-violent extremism goes unchallenged, the values that bind our society together fragment”, and in the 2017 Conservative manifesto, the party called for a new approach whereby “We will consider what new criminal offences might need to be created... to defeat the extremists”. Lying behind this push for new legislation targets is the continuing ideology of criminalising the motivations behind an action in the belief that this can prevent it from happening, something that International Conflict Analyst Daniel Kirkpatrick refutes as sound reasoning. Kirkpatrick argues that his research shows that current UK counter-terrorist legislation in defining acts of violence committed to advance a political, ideological, or religious cause, has led to the criminalisation of not just political violence, but the criminalisation of a much broader range of non-violent forms of political expression. He goes on to state that, because politicians are linking certain ideologies to acts of violence, these ideologies are regarded as being just as criminal. All corresponding non-violent expressions of these ideologies – such as certain extreme interpretations of Islam – are then also considered to be criminal, and ascribed to similar terminology such as being a “pernicious ideology”, as then Prime Minister David Cameron stated following the terror attack in Brussels in 2016. Harsh lessons were learned in this arena with regards to the Troubles, whereby Sinn Fein was censored, as were many others, leading to a silencing of the political debate. At the same time, those who openly challenge the IRA and other violent extremists, but who also

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41 Kirkpatrick, D – Why criminalising non-violent extremism won’t prevent terrorism
42 Ibid
43 Ibid
advocated their goals, were accused of being terrorist sympathisers, raising tensions and reducing attempts at dialogue.

Kirkpatrick concludes by saying that, in relation to the current counter-terrorism strategy, a similar approach is having just as negative an impact as it leads to groups seeing their goals in opposition to each other, and frames that any gains made by one side means that the other side makes losses. Instead, recent research in Canada has shown that engaging with, rather than criminalising, those who are moving towards political violence is essential to prevention and that, holding a belief, no matter how disagreeable one may find it, does not make a person a perpetrator.44 This is the thinking behind the ongoing Prevent strand of CONTEST, whereby the purpose is to enable the authorities to engage with those communities considered the most at risk from radicalisation. The aim of Prevent is to use a community-based strategy to target those suspected of being vulnerable or attracted to radical ideology, and to work with the community to reduce this risk through the dedicated deradicalisation programme, Channel, or through the criminal justice programme if steps have already been taken toward terrorist activities. Yet, recent research has shown that the very counter-terrorist strategy aiming to reduce radicalisation could in fact be causing more problems than it is solving by creating an atmosphere of suspicion and fear instead of openness. As such, it is important to know the extent to which the new narrative is contributing or leading to the approach whereby the concern of the people is linked to a particular group in society that can be considered a terrorist threat and therefore should be targeted by the counter-terrorism strategy. This led to a push for a community-based approach to counter-terrorism in order to fight the radicalisation that threatened to turn UK citizens into active terrorists.

**Counter-terrorism: a community-based approach**

Initially the view of terrorism as a domestic issue was clearly secondary to the view that it was essentially an external threat, and despite the British Security Service having warned that an attack on British soil was a matter of ‘when, not if’, the focus remained on efforts overseas and bolstering defences at home. This approach remained until 2005 firmly anchored radicalisation, intertwined with the so-called ‘home-grown dimension’ was at the heart of UK counter-terrorism endeavours. One major characteristic of European thinking on terrorism is the focus on prevention, through the identification of underlying factors that can lead to terrorism. Rik Coolsaet argues that this is a

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44 Kirkpatrick, D – *Why criminalising non-violent extremism won’t prevent terrorism*
crucial difference between European and American approaches, despite both tackling the problem using the same narrative.\(^{45}\) In the US, Coolsaet states, the idea of ‘roots’ was initially a taboo for the Bush administration, with ‘evil’ being the only acceptable explanation for the attacks on 9/11. But, partly because of its long history and experience with terrorism, and partly because of its much more multicultural make-up, Europe never wholly shared the American paradigm, instead formulating its own strategies which included noting the importance of understanding what drove this new wave of terrorism in order to be able to dry up the sources of individuals’ involvement.\(^{46}\) Although the government struggled initially to get support for the breadth of legislation it wanted in relation to the counter-terrorism strategy, such as the controversial 90-day hold without charge, the July 2005 London bombings acted as a booster for necessary cooperation. As such the government was able to rush through legislation, including securing a 28-day arrest without charge policy (doubling of the earlier legislation). In the course of 2004 and 2005, the consensus in Europe of the nature of the terrorist threat started to shift as a result of attacks on European soil, certainly so in the discourse than at the institutional and operational level and ‘radicalisation’ readily emerged as the focal point in combating terrorism.

The 7/7 attacks brought a community-based approach back to the centre stage of the counter-terrorism strategy with the realisation that, to deal with terrorism there needs to be a strong and unified response, but that this must also be a nuanced and intelligent approach. Police forces and intelligence services have a part to play in this, but they also function in the broader context of politicians, who must ensure not to over-react to the threat, and in the process, through repression, violence and/or cultural insensitivity, generate more terrorist recruits and more terrorism. One way that this has been attempted has been through a ‘community-based approach’. The Prevent policy was introduced in 2003 with the aim of reducing the radicalisation of individuals to terrorism. As well as increasing resources for intelligence and policing agencies to ensure they were equipped to interdict planned attacks and break up terrorist cells, the government acknowledged the need to work in partnership with Muslim communities to prevent young people from being radicalised in the first place, and to ensure that communities were resilient enough to respond to, as well as to challenge, extremists from within. Prevent was reviewed in 2011 by the Coalition government in order to separate direct counter-terrorism activities from integration work with communities. It is a UK-wide strategy (although it is not delivered in Northern Ireland) that is the responsibility of the government, but is delivered differently around the country depending on the assessment of needs and the where it is being delivered. Under the Prevent strategy, organisations such as councils and

\(^{45}\) Coolsaet, R – EU counterterrorism strategy: value added or chimera? – p857  
\(^{46}\) Ibid – p860
schools develop projects to reduce the risk of people becoming radicalised and drawn in to terrorist activity. The focus on a community-based approach shows a distinctive change in the UKs counter-terrorism strategy as from this point on it was clear that the aim was to focus on the potential ‘enemy’ within who was at risk from radicalisation. Yet, because the focus was inward, it was key for the government to not use the same narrative as had been used in relation to Al-Qaeda in relation to them being ‘evil’ and part of distinct terror cells that were a threat to the West. Such an approach would be impossible if the hunt for the terrorist was focussed on the domestic front as the risks of profiling the wrong people while whipping up hysteria based on an abstract threat could lead to civil unrest. As such the discourse of the new narrative needed to take on a new tone for the post-7/7 world.

The adaptation of the new narrative for the ‘home-grown’ threat

As has been shown, the British government framed their counter-terrorism strategy along the changing narrative of a ‘new age of terror’ post-9-11, but as has also been shown, the focus of the counter-terrorism strategy changed markedly as a result of the 7/7 bombing in London in 2005. As a result of the change, the counter-terrorist discourse also changed, with a much greater focus on ‘home-grown’ radicalisation and how to best prevent this from occurring. The difference in tone can be seen with the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to government statements in relation to the second strand of the CONTEST strategy, Prevent. Vasiliki Stergiopoulou used the CDA theory of framing to examine the changes to the Prevent strategy over time, looking at the central words in the discourse of the strategy, the assumption on which the Prevent discourse is based, a thematic framing of Prevent and assessment of the tone.\footnote{Stergiopoulou, V, Two governments, one policy – p1} To carry out the research Stergiopoulou used twenty ministerial speeches on Prevent, collected via a random search and the result of his study showed that there had been a significant change in the focus of the Prevent strategy between Gordon Brown’s New Labour government (2007-2010) which produced the revision to CONTEST in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombing, and David Cameron’s Coalition government (2010-2015). He found that the tone of anti-radicalisation had become far more entrenched and focussed far more on the idea of the domestic sphere with a focus on ‘British values’ and the importance of ensuring that citizens adhered to these values in order to make the country safer. In contrast, the earlier strategy had been focussed more on the bigger picture with
relation to the fear of violent extremism linked to outside forces such as Al-Qaeda and that while “both [governments] frame Prevent as a ‘dilemma between security versus liberties’ strategy. Cameron frames Prevent as a ‘shared effort strategy’ and takes institutions as central. The tone of Brown ministry towards Prevent is mostly positive while Cameron’s is mostly negative.”

Also in an attempt to understand the changing nature of discourse in relation to the issue of terrorism in the UK Malcolm Macdonald carried out a study whereby he analysed a corpus of 110 documents produced by the UK government relating to security in the wake of the 7/7 attacks between 2007 and 2011. His aim was to look at the “discursive constitution of the Foucaultian themes of regulation, knowledge and population, though carrying out a qualitative analysis of relevant key words, patterns of collocation, as well as features of connotation and semantic prosody.”

He found that the counter-terrorism documents showed that the issue of national security is continuously being reconfigured and that the three aspects of governmentality as proposed by Foucault – regulation, knowledge and population – can be seen through analysis of these documents. Firstly, he noted, the keywords ‘community’ and ‘cohesion’ indicated that population remains of central importance to the modern state, but that the fact that the 7/7 attacks were carried out by UK citizens has meant that there was increased concern about the homogeneity of the population of the state. Analysis of the discourse showed that the government reports therefore began to refer to an ‘in-group’ and an ‘out-group’ within the nation state.

Of key interest though the study showed, as did that by Stergiopoulou, that there was a distinct change in the previous discourse, which focussed on identifying an enemy in order to demonise it with the rhetoric clearly looking to gain support for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan to fight the terrorist ‘enemies’ and protect the UK. In contrast, the post-7/7 narrative indicated in MacDonald’s study, an absence of precise specification of any source that could prove a threat to the nation state through terrorist activity. Alongside this there was evidence of a “consistent identification of a discreet ‘Muslim community’ can be seen as stigmatising or ‘unhelpful’” but also that there was “considerable discursive work being carried out to constitute this social group as being an integral part of the population of the nation state.”

These findings are important in examining the application of the new narrative to UK counter-terrorism strategy. This becomes especially significant when considered alongside the amplified focus on the word local, which appears throughout the corpus showing the increased importance of the role of ‘local government’ as playing a key role in both the shaping and security of the places

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48 Stergiopoulou, V, Two governments, one policy - p4
50 Ibid - p137
51 Ibid
we call home. As the police are the principal agent of both local and national government responsible for doing just that, the discourse analysis also showed that the police have been given a remit to be engaged in ‘community cohesion’ so much so that their concerns seem to mirror exactly those of the ‘community’ itself. Yet, the narrative of the of the Prevent strategy has extended beyond that able to be carried out by the police alone, rather it is now shared by a whole range of different agencies, some state, others community-based, working in what is another keyword identified by the discourse analysis partnership to make the community safe.\textsuperscript{52} The implication being that state is not taking over and running the Prevent programme in a way that is invasive or can be considered to be state surveillance, rather the discourse shows that the state has delegated out responsibility to local agencies (considered less intrusive than the state at large) and that these state agencies are working together, in partnership, with community agencies. Thus, the discourse analysis shows that there has been a change from targeting the enemy outside the state in the post-9/11 and pre-7/7 strategy, to targeting home-grown radicalism within the state but in a working partnership with the community. The result of this changing discourse has been a focus by the state, through the Prevent strategy, on targeting those considered to be at risk of becoming radicalised by a rogue ideology, and this is being done with implicit and complicit community help as the discourse has informed the population that this is necessary to secure their safety.

\textbf{The development of the community-based approach through the Prevent strategy}

Despite ongoing criticism of the Prevent strategy, the government insists that it is working by targeting potential home-grown terrorists and has made a significant impact in preventing people being drawn into terrorism. However, there is sound evidence to suggest the importance of a community-based approach. Firstly, if terrorists are well integrated, communities may be able to act as an early warning system for the police and intelligence services should they come across information. This was shown to be an essential model for counter-terrorism in relation to Ireland, as well as in infiltrating groups in the 1990s related to environmental terrorism. Indeed, as during the period of the Troubles, the Metropolitan Police has established an anti-terrorism hotline in response to the current threat from Al-Qaeda as well as a dedicated website to report suspicions of terrorist activity. Secondly, by working in a preventative way, the police and youth workers can play an important role in diverting young people from harm. Thirdly, if the government wants to gain the

\textsuperscript{52} MacDonald, M - Security, Population and Governmentality – p138
confidence of Muslim communities, it needs to show how it is committed to tackling the injustices faces by Muslims domestically and abroad, which can be communicated via community work. Finally, it is obvious to most that sustaining an effective response would not be possible in the long-term without the trust and partnership of the Muslim community, again as shown historically with the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. As such, funding for the Prevent strand of CONTEST increased in response to the importance placed on the strategy, from £6 million in 2006 to £140 million in 2008/9. Although figures show that this has dropped in recent years and the annual Prevent budget is not yet published, it is thought it will still be around £40 million a year (around £36 million from the Home Office and £10 million from the Foreign Office). In total, David Anderson, the former independent reviewer of terror legislation, has said that Prevent receives 1 percent of the overall counter-terrorism budget. It is being delivered by local authorities, community organisations and other groups. However, Rachel Briggs has done research into the impact of the application of Prevent within local communities and the work of the (local) state authorities alongside those of the community. She identifies that problems arise from the fact that the many arms of the state continue to struggle with the principles and practicalities of the essence of partnership with non-state actors on matters relating to security and counter-terrorism. Briggs goes on to note that local authorities, on the whole, have poor or non-existent relationships with Muslim communities, leading to an inevitable negative impact on their ability to deliver, and attempts to act on, such difficult and sensitive policy priorities, especially in a hostile media and political environment. Briggs, among many others, highlights the problems relating to Prevent and the alienation that the strategy is causing amongst many in the Muslim community as a result of the local government attempting to engage the community in the wholesale counter-terrorism strategy.

Concerns relating to the application of the Prevent strategy

Prevent’s breakthrough came in June 2008 with the launching of a concept that had a decentralised approach with a limited scheme promoting the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Pathfinder Fund of £6 million in October 2006 to support 70 local authorities in developing programmes of activity to tackle violent extremism. In 2008 the Prevent strategy was rolled out nationally along

53 HM Government – Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: the United Kingdom’s strategy for countering international terrorism – p16
54 BBC News Website – Reality Check: What is the Prevent Strategy?
55 Briggs, R – Community engagement for counter-terrorism: lessons from the United Kingdom – p972
56 Ibid
57 Briggs, R – Community – p975
with an increased budget; Channel, the discrete referral process to provide support for individuals vulnerable to violent extremism; Prevent engagement officers introduced in local police forces; and a national toolkit for schools on their role of preventing violent extremism. This was followed by a revision to CONTEST in 2009 which outlined a shift in focus from ‘violent extremism’ to challenging ‘extremism more broadly’, stating: “We shall continue to challenge views which fall short of supporting violence and are within the law, but which reject and undermine our shared values and jeopardise community cohesion. Some of these views can create a climate in which people may be drawn into violent activity.” However, Briggs argues that this raises a number of questions about the role of Prevent and who is deciding on what kinds of extremism should be considered dangerous in a national security context. This is particularly important when considering that Prevent infers a duty on all teachers and doctors in England, Scotland and Wales to report signs of so-called ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalisation’ in their pupils and patients. This does not sit well with many who argue that they are not only not qualified to make a judgement on such an issue, but that it also breaks down trust. One teacher in London was approached by one of his Muslim students who expressed their anxiety over Prevent being a state surveillance strategy which was targeting her family as a result of racial profiling. Worryingly, however, the student confided that she and her friends hadn’t talked to other adults about this anxiety for fear that their vocal opposition would result in them being reported to the security services for their views. The teacher wrote that it was clear to him that the Prevent strategy was altering the behaviour of students, which is a concern from the perspective of young people being anxious and feeling under state surveillance, but more so because the programme is actively closing down the potential for authentic dialogue in the classroom – something Prevent is reliant upon. That teacher, Rob Faure Walker, is now undertaking research on the government’s counter-extremism policy and, though analysing over a million words within policy documents, has found that the definitions of ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalisation’ have progressively changed between 2005 and 2015 to become synonymous with violence. This, he goes on to say, is problematic not only in relation to the current focus, but could have far-reaching consequences as silencing dissenting voices undermines democracy, and labelling those who oppose the status quo adds a catalyst to an already dangerous situation. Furthermore, the lack of definition of what ‘extremism’ actually relates to means it is difficult to reduce political violence as the Prevent programme has received referrals relating to students caught involved in activity that some consider to be potentially radical, such as anti-fracking protests. At the National Union of Teachers 2016 conference in Brighton, the union members voted overwhelmingly against the

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58 HM Government – Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare
59 Walker, RF – By casting teachers as informants, British counter-extremism policy is promoting violence
Prevent strategy and supported its removal altogether, citing ongoing concerns over how the strategy was expected to be implemented by staff and how it caused “suspicions in the classroom and confusion in the staffroom”.\textsuperscript{60} In June 2016 MPs Lucy Allen and Norman Lamb introduced a failed Private Member’s Bill to repeal provisions in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to require staff to report possible signs of extremism or radicalisation amongst primary and nursery aged children, following a number of high-profile cases where the provision was inappropriately used in relation to the Prevent strategy.\textsuperscript{61} However, the disproportionate targeting of British Muslims intertwined with the dual role of students as both at risk and, simultaneously, a risk, reveals that the Prevent Duty in educational institutions is deeply flawed in its implementation and has significant potential to alienate and radicalise the British Muslim population.

**An assessment of Prevent in action**

The issue is concerning also when identifying those who are being targeted through Prevent. How will the government ensure that responses are proportionate and that the system is not vulnerable to abuse by individuals or groups with a vested interest? If the Prevent strategy targets only terrorism related to, and inspired by, Al-Qaeda, does this automatically mean that Muslims will be held up to standards not expected in other areas of society? If this is the case, how can the government ensure that such actions do not lead to alienation? An essential quality for the Prevent programme to work is that communities need to be trusted as equal and respected partners of the local authorities, the police and other state agencies. However, research – including that commissioned by the government – shows that the picture on the whole in relation to this is mixed. In practice, many Muslims feel alienated and disinclined to engage in Prevent because they do not feel their views are valued or that their involvement will make any practical difference. Briggs highlighted one government study in her research on Prevent, which showed that the Muslim audience can be divided into roughly three ‘segments’. First, the ‘angry and alienated’, those who feel their views are not being taken into account by the government and, despite being keen to have their say, rarely do as they feel they will not be listened to. Second are the ‘frustrated but open to dialogue’ group, those who share the frustrations of the first group but are more measured in their approach. This group is willing to be involved but needs to be convinced of the value of engaging with the government. Thirdly, the ‘engaged and concerned’ group are mainly men over the age of 25 or

\textsuperscript{60}Adams, R – Teachers back motion for Prevent strategy to be scrapped
\textsuperscript{61}BBC News Website – Reality Check: What is the Prevent Strategy?
women who recognise the need to work with the government. Overall the research implies that the government’s own behaviour has contributed to the lack of engagement and mistrust between communities and the state.

The Local Government Committee was critical of Prevent in 2010 saying that it stigmatised and alienated Muslims the government wanted to work with. As a result of growing fears over the importance of this strategy, in 2015 the Prevent policy became a legal duty for public sector individuals, meaning that its reach has extended much deeper into society than any other aspect of CONTEST. However, recent research, such as that carried out by Fahid Qurashi, shows that the Prevent strategy, by framing the terror threat in the ‘war on terror’ as an ‘Islamic threat’ due to the nature of those targeted and involved in the programme, has afforded a surveillance infrastructure to become embedded into Muslim communities, which has securitised relations with local authorities. Qurashi goes even further than this in concluding that his analysis uncovers a systemic practice of Islamophobia at the heart of the Prevent strategy. Whether this is the case or not, the very notion that it could be, speaks volumes about how Prevent is received by the communities it is targeting.

Many faith leaders believe that the Prevent strategy stigmatises young Muslims and their families, including the chairman of Birmingham Central Mosque who says that “many Muslims regard it as an intrusive, Big Brother-style system of surveillance” and reports of misplaced interventions only fuel perception that Prevent is little more than a spying initiative. The public also seems to be as unimpressed as the communities Prevent is targeting with 96 per cent of those asked saying that they believed Prevent was not keeping the country safe. The government disagree with this belief reporting in official government figures that around 42,000 people participated in 142 projects in 2015/16 and in 2016 the government reported that Prevent stopped 150, including 50 children, from travelling to Iraq and Syria. 7,500 referrals were made to Prevent last year and action was taken in one in every ten cases, with no action being taken in 37 per cent of cases, while 28 per cent are still being considered, and of those referred to Channel for deradicalisation, 68 percent related to Islamic extremism.

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62 Home Office Research as quoted from Briggs, R – Community – p977
63 Casciani, D – Prevent extremism strategy ‘stigmatising’, warn MPs
64 Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p2
65 The Week.co.uk – The truth about the Prevent counter-terrorism strategy
66 Ibid
67 BBC News Website – Reality Check: What is the Prevent Strategy?
Despite this evidence of success on the surface, commentators write that it is virtually impossible to fully assess Prevent’s overall effectiveness as there is no way to show what the result might have been without the referrals. Indeed, many are concerned that one of the key problems with Prevent is that it is too limited in its approach as it is so limited to Muslim communities in most local authorities. This focus remains despite the fact that over recent years police have conducted raids showing the threat from the far-right is on the rise, including those carried out by West Yorkshire police which found a group in possession of 80 bombs; Neil Lewington was arrested in 2008 on the cusp of waging a terror campaign after the discovery of a bomb factory he had built in his parents’ house. In February 2018 the out-going head of counter-terrorism, Mark Rowley, stated that the threat from the far-right is a growing concern saying that four major far-right plots were foiled that year, while ten Islamist-inspired plots were foiled\(^{68}\). Despite this the focus of the counter-terror strategy remains on the Muslim community, with the budget to fight the far-right and preventative work with fragile white communities having been axed in 2010 while the Prevent programme was massively expanded.\(^{69}\)

**Criticisms of the Prevent programme’s community-based approach**

There have been growing concerns about the ability of local authorities to deliver the Prevent agenda, with reports suggesting that many relied on ‘gatekeepers’ within the Muslim community and that their community cohesion strategies were problematic and divisive. There are also

\(^{68}\) The Independent online – *Four far-right UK terrorist plots foiled since Westminster attack, police reveal*

\(^{69}\) Briggs, R – *Community* – p978
concerns about the negative media reporting about Muslims and the growing Islamophobia naturally influencing the way in which Muslim communities view efforts at engagement. Over the period of implementation, incidents of negative reporting have continued to rise, with a report by the Instead Consultancy in 2007, the year that Prevent was attempting to build community bridges, finding that 96 per cent of tabloid coverage related to Muslims and 89 per cent of broadsheet coverage was negative. It also found that Muslims were portrayed in the national press as being a threat to traditional British customs, implying that there was little or no common ground between the West and Islam.70 Such coverage, in addition to fears regarding a surveillance state and the belief that they are being indiscriminately targeted by anti-terrorist laws, has resulted in Muslim communities feeling attacked and alienated.

Further to this, analysts such as Fahid Qurashi, have used ongoing ethnographic fieldwork to show that the dynamic of the Prevent strategy have been used to develop infrastructures of embedded surveillance in Muslim communities, and that the consequence of this has been to contain and direct Muslim political agency and activism. He goes on to attest that Prevent, in its overt focus on Muslims and Islam on the ‘war on terror’ has energised Islamophobia and enhanced the precariousness of the Muslim experience in Britain, leading to the strategy overall failing as it actively promotes radicalisation in some as a result.71 As has been shown, in the new ‘war on terror’ a key component of deradicalisation programmes hinges on the idea of a cultural transformation of Muslim identity to view the west and all that it stands for with a more positive attitude, as the ‘us versus them’ ideology pitted the idea that Muslims were inherently not able to live within the boundaries of the West as a result of the doctrine of their faith. Through this process, Qurashi writes, the Prevent strategy has been at the forefront of disseminating and normalising Islamophobia because the strategy ties the problem of extremism and terrorism to Muslims and Islam. “Through its emphasis son ‘British values’, it framed the threat in a way that not only ‘others’ Muslims, but the ‘otherness’ narrows the public perception of Muslims down to terrorist violence and inscribes the characteristics onto the public consciousness.”72 It appears, therefore, that the cultural ‘threat’ of Islam has come to dominate the construction of Islam in the public imagination so much that it has become commonplace to view Muslims through this lens.

Prevent has been criticised by many commentators, including Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty, as a domestic spying programme collecting intelligence about the beliefs of British

70 Insted Consultancy, The Search for common ground, as quoted from Briggs, R – Community – p979
71 Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p2
72 Ibid - p4
Muslims not involved in criminal activity. Qurashi goes further in arguing that Prevent has “fundamentally reshaped relations between Muslims, the state and wider society” and that it has made visible strategies of surveillance and monitoring to allow interventions in the process. Several Muslim organisations across the country funded by the Prevent strategy claimed that police and Prevent officers regularly requested, by pestering and pressuring, specific and detailed information about the young Muslims using their services. They report that at peak times outside mosques (Friday prayers and during Ramadan) there was always a police presence, and that the pretext of project management and support allowed local authorities to meet regularly with the Prevent funded organisations and build informal relations. There have also been concerns raised by the community about the funding provided by Prevent for those who are setting up organisations to prevent extremism, with questions being asked about how many Prevent funded organisations having a deep reach into the local Muslim community that, while seemingly benign, afforded local authorities a pathway of access into Muslim communities.

Prevent officers, while also appearing benign, were viewed with suspicion by some groups as they always seemed to have a reason for being among the community, with one Muslim leader who was interviewed saying of a Prevent officer who turned up unannounced to a youth meeting: She does that all the time. She wasn’t here to make small talk, on one of the coldest nights of the year. She came in to check whether we were open. It’s her way of keeping an ear to the ground.” Another youth leader spoke of ‘the price of opening a youth club’ is that they have to expect the presence of the police Prevent officers, as they wouldn’t have been allowed to open otherwise. However, the impact on the community of such action is notable, with one leader saying “The pressure is immense. They want to be my friend so they can get access, they want me to collect personal information by spying for them. What can I do? I want to tell them to fuck off and leave me alone. But they can arrest me easily.” The implications of surveillance are obvious in the tone of the interviews carried out by Qurashi in his fieldwork, whereby he interviewed everyone from parents to youth workers to those who attended the projects. Everywhere he went he came across young Muslims who were unable to openly and freely discuss the politics of the ‘war on terror’, or express their religiosity and culture (for example by growing a beard or wearing a hijab) leading to underlying tensions. A young Muslim at one focus group in Leeds articulated his apprehensions of the system as it stands today saying:

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73 Dodd, V – Government anti-terrorism strategy ‘spies’ on innocent
74 Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p4
75 Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p7
76 As quoted from Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p8
77 Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p9
“I see Muslims... as tongue tied. They have to be careful what they say so as to not say something out of lime because anything you say today can be classed as ‘extremism’. Because of that I think Muslims are restricted. We’re under extreme stress... our identity is being challenged, we’re under the microscope a lot more. And they way we’re defined keeps us under the microscope. We haven’t got freedom of speech.”

Using his fieldwork, Qurashi strongly advocates that the operation of the Prevent strategy illustrates the way in which a logic of Islamophobia sits at the heart of the ‘war on terror’ and its resulting counter-terrorist strategy, especially through the promotion of Prevent. Community engagement is not something that can be done half-heartedly or in a societal vacuum, and one of the most limiting factors in the ability for community engagement to work is whether those who are being targeted trust and want to build a relationship with the authorities; research to date shows that this is not the case. While the programme reports to have had some levels of success, including the fact that the leader of the June 2017 London Bridge attack and his brother were involved with Prevent, while the perpetrator of the Parsons Green bombing had been referred to Prevent (showing that the community-based approach was working, even if the stages beyond that were not set up to deal with what happened beyond the identification), hostility toward Muslims through repressive measures or attacks on their freedom of expression. Indeed, one of the main concerns if that Muslims feel that through the excessive presence of local government within their community means that they are unable to criticise the counter-terrorism strategy and stand up for their rights not to be profiled and placed under suspicion for having nothing other than a vague ideological connection to that linked to radicalisation in some spheres of interest. Yet, it is important to consider the extent to which the perception of the Prevent strategy as being a tool of power used by the state actually matches the reality on the ground. In order to assess this further, this work will round off by utilising theories of Critical Discourse Analysis to two recent pieces presented by former Home Secretary Amber Rudd on the issue of counter-terrorism and Prevent. These were chosen at random from a Google search using the words ‘Home Secretary’ ‘Prevent’ and ‘Strategy’. The aim will be to use CDA methodologies to see if the analysis matches the findings of Stergiopoulou and MacDonald in that the discourse is continuing along its narrative of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ approach to countering terrorism and if the focus remains on community-based partnership in order to tackle the issues of extremism.

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78 Qurashi, F – The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’ – p10
Applied methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis of government counter-terrorism policy in 2017

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the general label for an approach to the study of text and talk which has emerged from critical linguistics, semiotics and the investigation of language, discourse and communication\textsuperscript{79}. In this instance, CDA will be used with the intention of applying an explicitly critical approach to the study of text with the purpose of considering the relation between discourse and society in relation to how the terror threat is framed by the state and the implications of the underlying ideology that the discourse imparts on those who are responding to governmental guidance through the Prevent strategy. CDA developed from the discipline of Critical Linguistics (CL), which looks analyses how language and grammar can be used as ideological instruments to promote a certain viewpoint (either knowingly or unknowingly) for example when a geography teacher discusses the ‘poor quality of soil for farming in Africa’, the implication is that all of Africa is in this state, and no account is given to the positive values of soil on the continent. There is an understanding within both CDA and CL that language is intertwined with how we act, maintain and, importantly for this piece, regulate society, with many schools of both discipline believing that what we think of as culture is inseparable from our use of language. CL also analyses what is absent from text, as the absence of language can often lead to or imply assumptions that can drive a message in a particular direction. Where CDA diverges from CL, however, is that it is critical of CL’s lack of focus on the link between language, power and ideology, and CDA works to bridge the gap between the analysis and the reasoning behind the choice of application. CDA is also openly committed to political intervention and social change as a result of its findings. Ultimately, CDA aims to ‘denaturalise’ language in order to reveal the kinds of ‘ideas, absences and taken for granted assumptions in texts’\textsuperscript{80}. In addition, many CDA researchers focus on the role of power within discourse, with Fairclough and Wodok investigating how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse to reveal connections between language, power and ideology that are hidden from people, and the extent to which this is being carried out without most people being aware of how much this power-play is occurring within everyday texts.\textsuperscript{81} CDA will typically analyse texts in relation to this issue of power, so look at news text, political speeches, advertisements, school books etc. to analyse strategies that may appear neutral on the surface but may in fact be ideological in purpose. There are, of course, criticisms of CDA, with one being that On the other hand, with some accusing it “of operating somewhat randomly, moved by personal whim rather than well-grounded

\textsuperscript{79} Van Dijk, TA – Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis – p17
\textsuperscript{80} Machin, D & Mayr, A – How to do Critical Discourse Analysis: A multimodal introduction – p4
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid – p5
This limitation is balanced by the argument that discourse is subjective and serves a purpose which in the case of Prevent is political. As was shown earlier with the research undertaken by Stergiopoulou and MacDonald, the discourse relating to counter-terrorism changed over time and the nation’s narrative changed alongside. Evidence from other researchers such as Rob Faure Walker have gone on to show that the very definitions of words have changed over the last five years, meaning that the expectations of the national ideology in relation to terrorism and radicalisation have also changed. This has had a negative impact on many in the Muslim community, as shown by Qurashi, but has also meant that expectations of the UK as a nation have been moved to align with this narrative. To see the extent to which this changing narrative is prevalent in the government discourse, three speeches were chosen at random given by the then Prime Minister David Cameron delivering a speech on the government’s strategy to counter extremism in July 2015 at a school in Birmingham, (see Appendix 1a); and two speeches from then-Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, in relation to the development of UK counter-terrorism strategy and its focus on preventing extremism. One was an interview for *The Sun* newspaper, published in August 2017, (see Appendix 1b) the second was a speech made in October 2017 at the Conservative Party Conference (see Appendix 1c).

CDA posits that our way of thinking is determined by our language, although scholars have varying ideas about the extent to which this occurs. Most, according to Machin and Mayr, believe that we might be influenced by the kind of language we use and in turn, the kind of language we use is influenced by the way we see the world. Thus, through the individual semiotic choices made from the range available, authors are able to place events and ideas into broader frameworks of interpretation that are referred to in this discourses. For example, a speech made saying that ‘immigrants are a threat to our national culture’ makes assumptions that the nation is a unified under one identifiable national identity and that ‘we’ need to defend ourselves against a clear and determined threat. Despite the fact that the ‘we’ is an unknown quantity and that the sentence implies that all ‘immigrants’ are one body with the same threatening purpose or ability. It is through language that we share things like ‘British culture’, ‘nationalism’, what ‘immigrants’ are like, and who to fear as a ‘terrorist’ and those who apply CDA argue that it is the use of such ideological characteristics in language that certain discourses become accepted and help to secure power relations. As researchers look over text they as whether the author has chosen certain words and not others, and whether those choices signify ‘lexical fields’, which carry with them specific kinds of identities, values and sequences of activity, which are not necessarily explicit. Van Dijk writes of

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82 Breeze, R, *Critical discourse analysis and its critics*, p498  
83 Machin, D & Mayr, A – *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis* – p16
this that the CDA is therefore “the study of ‘implicit’ or ‘indirect meanings’ in texts that are alluded to without being explicitly expressed.” Perhaps the easiest way to understand the way that discourse can carry with it multiple meanings is through the description of Fowler who wrote that the lexical field is like a map. Maps contain ‘symbolic’ representations of a territory depending on the purpose of the map, so areas of interest on one map may be absent from another. This is because the map maker is foregrounding some features and suppressing others depending on the purpose of the map. This is similar to the lexical choices made by authors who make their choice based on certain types of preoccupation or specific social purpose.

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis to Cameron’s ‘Extremism’ Speech – Discourse is both Constitutive and Constituted

Jørgensen and Phillips describe discourse practices – through which texts are created and consumed – as an important form of social practice that ultimately contributes to the constitution of society, including social practice and relations. Fairclough on this issue argues that “the discourse constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people’s heads, but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures” arguing that to only view discourse as constitutive is tantamount to viewing social reality emanates from people themselves. There is some discussion on this subject, however, with others, including Laclau and Mouffe arguing against Fairclough and the belief accusation of idealism saying that the conception of discourse as constitutive does not imply that physical objects do not exist, rather that they acquire meaning through the discourse. When looking at the Cameron speech, taken in the context of the historical examination of counter-terrorism from 9/11, it seems insightful to agree with Fairclough in his belief that “language-as-discourse is both a form of action through which people can change the world, and a form of action which is socially and historically situated with other aspects of the social.” This is because, Cameron’s speech is taking on ideas put forward by previous governments in relation to the ‘enemy of extremism’, but now that the discourse is placing this enemy within the domestic sphere, it is necessary to reshape the discourse in order to make it

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84 Machin, D & Mayr, A – How to do Critical Discourse Analysis – p16
85 ibid
87 Fairclough, N – as quoted from Jørgensen M & Phillips, L – Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method – p62
89 ibid
work within the domestic sphere without actively promoting a backlash against the approach or encouraging civil unrest. As such the discourse has to adapt to the societal understanding of terrorism and extremism (the constituted reality) while working to reshape the parameters of the strategy within a fairly wide-remit in order to give the government scope to work within the strategy without arousing suspicion or criticism (the constitutive element). This can be seen first off when looking at how Cameron is defining the ‘problem’ facing Britain in relation to the treat of terrorism. As we shall see, immediately the discourse moves away from using the word terrorists (so as to not imply that British citizens are or will become terrorists) instead framing the discourse around the familiar ‘us’ and ‘them’ parameter of the post-9/11 strategy, but not the ‘them’ is a pernicious ideological threat, keen to take British citizens down the wrong path via radicalisation

**Applying Critical Discourse Analysis to Cameron’s ‘Extremism’ Speech – the naturalisation of ‘extremist ideology’**

The first text to be examined is a speech delivered by then Prime Minister of the Conservative government, David Cameron. The speech was given in August 2015, only months after the Conservatives won a majority in the UK election. Prior to this they had been in a Coalition government with the Liberal Democrats. The speech sets out a new tone for counter-terrorism and the discourse is immediately framed with an ideological focus of ‘us’ (a united British nation) versus ‘them’ (the terrorist element). Importantly though, Cameron refers to the ‘enemy’ that needs to be fought, the potential terrorists, not a a group or an individual, but as an ideology: “It begins – it must begin – by understanding the threat we face and why we face it. What we are fighting, in Islamist extremism, is an ideology. It is an extreme doctrine.” Cameron goes on to refer to this extremist ideology 18 times in the speech, on each occasion he is referencing it with loaded lexicon such as ‘extreme’, ‘barbaric violence’, ‘overpowering’, ‘subversive’, ‘brutal reality’, ‘hateful’, and ‘poisonous’ and saying that the nation of Britain must work to ‘counter’, ‘confront’, ‘challenge’, ‘deal with’ this ideology. By using the process of over-lexicalisation of the term ideology, Cameron is, according to Machin and Mayr, giving a sense of over-persuasion, which is evidence that something is problematic or of ideological contention. Thus, as Cameron is over-using the word and making a conscious effort to place it consistently within a negative framework, it appears as though there is some anxiety in reference to this word and is excessive use and description implies

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90 Machin, D & Mayr, A – *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis* – p38
that he feels it necessary to justify the that that the counter-terrorism strategy is fighting an ‘ideology’ rather than a concrete threat. It is likely that this is the case for a number of reasons.

Firstly it is more difficult to explain a policy that of targeting a threat when there is no specific and known ‘enemy’ and so the anxiety may stem from a need to get the point across enough so that it becomes ‘naturalised’ within to the ears of his audience. More likely, however, is that the anxiety is due to the criticisms that have been laid before the government prior to this speech, which Cameron is attempting to address, in relation to the fact that the government is using the term ‘ideological’ as thing that is definable and therefore the government is able to tackle it. By reducing the issue of extremism and radicalisation to one root cause of ‘pernicious ideology’, Cameron’s language strategy is breaking a complicated problem into something that the audience can all agree upon. No one wants to support a ‘hateful ideology’ and by framing the argument within this one word he is able to encompass a wide-variety of more complex problems within this one word in an attempt to get the audience on-side by not questioning the motive behind his words.

Critical linguists have pointed out that this use of language manipulation is inseparable from the way that we build our societies.\(^{91}\) Ergo, when abstract and undefined ideas such as ‘an extremist ideology’ become naturalised in the public consciousness, they can come to comprise the ways that we go about viewing the world around us and our actions in attempting to combat the ideology. Critical linguists point to the assumptions that underline the text while remaining implicit;\(^{92}\) that there is an identifiable and isolatable things called ‘extremist ideology’ that has an agreed upon definition that is understood by all and that this needs to be tackled by a unified response as the vast majority not only recognise the problem but wish to work with the government to destroy it. Thus, by Cameron over-using a term that is vague but applying it consistently to the government’s counter-terrorism message, he is naturalising the audience to the message and getting them on-board behind the strategy to combat the ‘ideology’ in order to prevent the radicalisation of terrorists in the UK.

**Discourse and hegemony**

For Fairclough, in CDA ideology is “*meaning in the service of power*” and according to his definition, ideological discourses are those that contribute to the maintenance and transformation of

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\(^{91}\) Machin, D & Mayr, A – *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis* – p4

\(^{92}\) Ibid
power relations. He goes on to argue that ideology is not necessarily all-encompassing and that people can be positioned within different and competing ideologies, which can lead to a certain level of uncertainty. This in turn threatens a hegemonic response to a discourse as the existence of competing ideological elements can lead to a foundation of resistance. Such resistance is of course an issue for governments who are trying to get a hegemonic agreement to a policy, meaning that a discourse has to take on elements of manipulation to ensure a unified response. This is certainly seen in the Cameron text, as well as in the later Amber Rudd texts, whereby the government is encouraging a united approach through the oppositional framing of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. As will be discussed more with the Rudd texts, the use by politicians of the words ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’, unified’, one nation’ etc. encourage the audience to feel as though they are an explicit player in the discourse and that it is imperative that they align themselves on the side of the united nation, against the ideological extremism.

However, one strand of the discourse that can be seen throughout the government’s roll-out of Prevent, and is mirrored in all three texts, most specially Cameron’s, is that of ‘community involvement’. This is an interesting tool used within the discourse because it posits the assumption that the ‘community’ are working with, and not on behalf of or to the tune of the government agents, and that the governmental agents are doing this on behalf of the community in the micro, for the good of the country on the macro level. As was shown by the research carried out by Stergiopoulou, the foci of the Prevent documentation on the word ‘local’ showed that the discourse was no longer being framed as a national effort against a foreign enemy, but a local fight against a pernicious ideology attempting to radicalise vulnerable members of the nation. This issue of community relations is something that is shown again through over-lexicalisation, implying again a form of anxiety on behalf of the author, But they way that the discourse discusses the issue of community shows the intent by the government to encourage a hegemonic response to what could otherwise be a divisive policy.

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis to Cameron’s ‘Extremism’ Speech – Semiotic choices through word connotations

Different lexical word choices can denote an implicit or explicit meaning within a discourse. In Cameron’s ‘Extremism’ speech we see him over-lexicalise the word ‘community’ or

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93 Jørgensen M & Phillips, L – Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method – p75
94 Ibid – p76
‘communities’, which on the surface appears to mean that the government are looking to work with and within communities in tackling the problem of extremism. The words community or communities are used a total of 34 times throughout the speech, being by far the most referenced topic within the speech. However, applying CDA methods it can be considered that the way the words are used means that Cameron is attaching an ideological significance to them that is promoting a message that fits within the discourse framework of ‘us’ (a unified country) versus ‘them’ (those who harbour extreme ideologies), but also that the government is attempting to gain an hegemonic response to the counter-terrorism policy. As shall be shown in the Rudd speeches, Cameron also picks up on the criticisms that have been put to the government in relation to its counter-terrorism policy. Again they are framed to show that the critics are wrong, either through being misinformed: “Now others might say: it’s because terrorists are driven to their actions by poverty. But that ignores the fact that many of these terrorists have had the full advantages of prosperous families or a Western university education...” or because they are siding with the extremist ideology over British values: “Some argue it’s because of historic injustices and recent wars, or because of poverty and hardship. This argument, what I call the grievance justification, must be challenged.” This attack on critics will be examined further when analysing the Rudd speeches, but it is clear from the outset that Cameron is attempting to promote a unified backing of the government agenda, first through framing the country as one against extremism, then by undermining critics as misinformed or working against the liberties the state is trying to protect.

But one of the most important ways that Cameron then works to build an hegemonic response to the government policy, is through the use of the word community and the connotations that are taken alongside these words. Firstly this is done through identifying that some ‘communities’ are not acting in the way that the government would like:

“For all our successes as multi-racial, multi-faith democracy, we have to confront a tragic truth that there are people born and raised in this country who don’t really identify with Britain – and who feel little or no attachment to other people here. Indeed, there is a danger in some of our communities that you can go your whole life and have little to do with people from other faiths and backgrounds.”

Here Cameron is not specifying particular actors, but makes it clear what the expectation of the ‘community’ in Britain is, and the connotation applied to the word is that all other communities in Britain are adhering to the expected standard. Thus, the word ‘community’ or ‘communities’ takes on a specific connotation within the discourse that it is representative of the nation itself. That Britain is made up of multiple communities, that each are unified in their belief in and
approach to British values, and that each will work together to root out any potential threat to these values. This is a powerful tool because, by this early point in the speech, Cameron has not only framed the ‘them’ as extreme ideologues who are largely outside agents attempting to infiltrate a Britain united in favour of British values, but he has also appealed to a much wider group of people through referring to the word ‘community’ than if he had talked about the nation itself. This is because another connotation of the word community is that the people are the driving force, and that it is separate from the body of the state, thus implies that it is the role and responsibility of the people to work against the country on the macro, or the community on the micro.

The speech then goes on to build on the word connotation to deliver the government’s counter-terrorism discourse through Prevent: “We need everyone – government, local authorities, police, schools, all of us – to enforce our values right across the spectrum.” Here we see the discourse framed through the ‘us’ and ‘them’ approach, but with the addition of the demands upon the people to work with the government to end the threat. By taking this approach Cameron is placing the onus on the community by implying that the government will only be able to carry out its work with the community being on-board. This is of course true in some instances, but the lexical choices also serve to attack criticism of Prevent as being a tool of state surveillance, particularly in Muslim communities. Through over-lexicalisation and word connotations, Cameron’s speech is placing the onus on the audience to accept the help of government, rather than seeing the policy as intrusive and in breach of civil liberties.

The final point to note is that the word connotation with community is also used to sell the ideology of ‘British values’ even to those who feel marginalised or attacked by Prevent, in order to ensure that the discourse retains the Muslim communities aligned on the ‘us’ side. The word ‘Muslim’ is used 30 times in the speech, and in every instance it is shown within the framework of ‘us’: “young Muslims need to feel a sense of belonging”; “proud to be both British and Muslim”; “violence against fellow Muslims – who don’t subscribe to its sick worldview”. By utilising the word ‘Muslim’ in this way, Cameron is depersonalising everyone who belongs to that religion, but by applying positive lexical choices that are linked to the positive British and community values, Cameron is aiming to show that this ‘otherness’ (Muslims as a group) doesn’t need to be the case as they can be integrated into the ‘community’ throughout Britain. Thus, by using a representational strategy that could be seen as negative – the grouping of all ‘Muslims’, Cameron is instead applying the work to encourage the group to be seen as ‘us’ and therefore separate from ‘them’.
This technique is then applied in relation to Muslims and the ‘community’ to show the importance of the community within the strategy, but also the importance of Muslim communities within the discourse. This again is likely to be framed this way as a direct response to criticisms about Prevent in relation to the Muslim community as shown by Qurashi and others earlier in this work, but the clever use of lexical choices, whereby Cameron puts the positive representation of ‘Muslim’ with the positive representation of ‘community’ together, encourages the audience to believe that this is the only way to work to counter the threat of extremism. We see this in multiple instances such as “our strategy is to embolden different voices within the Muslim community”, “so that our Muslim communities can be free of the poison of Islamic extremism”, “Muslim communities have a crucial part to play”. Through the use of language, Cameron is therefore showing the importance of everyone in Britain who doesn’t want to be threatened by terrorism (the vast majority) and framing the discourse to imply that this means they are all unified in their complex approaches to the multiple issues related to terrorism, which have been boiled down to one simple term “extremist ideology” and that this fight must occur through the people in communities, with the help of government.

By the end of the speech then the audience is left feeling as though the government are not taking a heavy-handed approach that risks destroying civil liberties, but that it is the people who are in charge of the situation, with the aid of state actors such as the police and local government agencies, and that this includes all groups including the Muslim communities who had critiqued the policy for its targeted and surveillance-led approach. We see this message become further entrenched over the following years, to the point that when Amber Rudd, then Home Secretary, gives an interview and a speech on the counter-terrorism strategy, with a focus on Prevent, she frames her text in a very similar way to that of Cameron, despite the increase in criticism in the intervening two years.

**Applying Critical Discourse Analysis a speech and an interview by Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, on the counter-terrorism strategy**

The framing of the two speeches made by Amber Rudd in relation to counter-terrorism, specifically in relation to the Prevent strategy, as based on the assumption upon which the Prevent discourse is based; that of the threat that terrorism poses to British society. Both speeches can then be divided up into two themes into which the framing of Prevent in 2017 fall, those being: the rejection of stigma
and the security versus liberty debate and the engagement of communities in the strategy. In every case the speeches take on an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ scenario, and in every case there is the implied assumption that if you are not on-board with ‘us’ then you are siding with ‘them’. The discourse framing in this instance is very much targeted at those who are critical of the government policy, far more so than the terrorists of potential terrorists themselves. This is seen consistently in the Conference speeches whereby a representational strategy is used to show the lack of personalisation of Britain whereby Rudd readily refers to the need for a ‘British response’, to ‘keep Britain safe’, ‘keeping our country safe’. Phrased this way, Rudd is concealing individuality meaning that the reader is forced to feel an implicit sense of responsibility to be part of the ‘team’ that is working to protect Britain and keep the nation safe. This process can be seen in direct opposition to the individualisation of those groups Rudd wants to be viewed as outsiders, who are given more of an identity, if not a personalised one, such as ‘lone-wolf actors’, ‘Da’esh’, ‘those radicalised online in their bedrooms’. Because these groups are pointed out separately as wanting to carry out ‘threats to British Nationals and our interests overseas’, the reader is drawn into the ideology of united nationhood and the ‘us’ against ‘them’ agenda of the speech’s framework.

CDA researchers have written that pronouns like ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘them’ are used to align us alongside or against particular ideas throughout both speeches and work effectively at creating an ‘other’ in opposition to these shared ideas. This can be clearly seen throughout both speeches, but the message is absolutely prevalent in the first whereby Rudd is actively seeing to align the reader in favour of the government’s Prevent policy."

“Stopping people committing appalling acts of terror in the UK is something we should all want. It should go without saying... Yet there are some who actively seek to undermine the Prevent programme without offering any meaningful alternatives.... They say it is about spying on communities. But asking teachers and others to be alert to signs of radicalisation and refer those who may need help works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drug abuse, and sexual abuse... Next they claim Prevent stifles free speech.... Or they claim Prevent is about targeting Muslims. This is not true.... Our Prevent programme will necessarily reflect this by prioritising support for vulnerable British Muslims, and working in partnership with civil society groups to tackle this problem.”

95 Jørgensenm M & Phillips, L – Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method – p84
In a few short extract from the speech it is clear how pronouns are being used to create a narrative of pro-government policy means protecting the vulnerable and acting for the safely of Britain, against anti-government policy being those who wish to work on the side of the terrorists to make Britain an unsafe place. Every time ‘they’ is mentioned it is with a negative connotation: “they say it is about spying”, whereas every time government policy is mentioned it is with positive connotations for the well-being of those vulnerable in society: “to safeguard processes designed to protect people”. This overt use of opposition leads to what Van Dijk describes as ‘ideological squaring’ whereby evaluation by the reader takes place through the presented oppositions.96 In the both texts we can see two very different sets of words used to represent both sides of the divide.

“...mothers terrified for their children and grateful for the intervention and tireless efforts of Prevent workers...”; “...daily danger in which our police force and intelligence agencies put themselves, to keep the rest of us safe...”; “...defiance of those who would harm us.”

“But it was not just her son who had been groomed by Da’esh’s toxic influence...”; “They have spent three decades opposing anti-terrorist laws. They’ve talked of their ‘friends’ in Hamas and Hezbollah. They are silent on the anti-Semitism that festers in their Party.”

In the first three examples from the ‘us’ alignment the speech talks of the positivity of state workers putting their lives at risk to protect the masses, while the use of the personal word ‘mother’ alongside ‘terrified; ensures the reader feels a more emotional connection to the actor in the text. The second set of examples taken from the ‘them’ camp uses negative examples in direct opposition to those on the ‘us’ side to show how the unity of those who want and deserve to be protected is put under threat by groups who are terrorists or working to undermine the strategy of the government to prevent terrorism. By putting the two groups together in the same implied lexical ideology, the speech and the interview both serve to frame the discourse in favour of the government policy while working to turn the reader away from criticising their approach. We can also see that the use of quoting verbs chosen by Rudd in reference to those who call government policy into question are carefully chosen to call into doubt the certainty of their case. She repeatedly uses the word ‘claim’ when quoting the opposition, and refers to them as ‘critics’ implying a purposeful negativity rather than a reasoned approach. All of which is designed to undermine the opposition in contrast to the neutral quoting verb ‘said’ used for ‘Commander Dean Haydon of Metropolitan Police, who was not only personalised to make him stand out within the text, but also given his title in order to show the authority of his words, in opposition to ‘they’ and ‘those’.

96 Machin, D & Mayr, A – How to do Critical Discourse Analysis – p41
The second theme of the discourse is the focus on the importance of community partnership. This is also down through the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ ideological framework as the implication is that you are with the nation in working for a community-based approach or against the nation and therefore in favour of terrorism. We see the drive for a community approach through the interchangeable focus on state authorities and the community, but also through the specific mention of community agencies in the short interview text:

“schools and colleges should provide a safe space in which children and young people can understand the risks associated with terrorism...”; “…prioritising support for vulnerable British Muslims, and working in partnership with civil society groups to tackle this problem.”; “...of grassroots organisations, including British Muslim led organisations, leading the way in countering the risk posed by radicalisation. They do amazing work to protect our society and our country. Over the summer I will continue visiting communities, talking to organisations, families and individuals to hear their views, understand their concerns and talk about what more we can do to help.”; “...keeping our families, communities and country safe.”

In fact, in an interview of just 618 words, the work community or communities was mentioned 10 times, with associated words such as partnership, civic society, and grassroots organisations making up 15 more mentions, the focus of the interview is made clear through the over-lexicalisation of the words associated with the community drive. The two themes are then drawn together in the conference speech whereby Rudd states:

“In London earlier this year, I met a mother whose son had travelled to Syria to fight for Da’esh. She had no idea of his plan. She was devastated. But it was not just her son who had been groomed by Da’esh’s toxic influence. Her daughter’s school had concerns that she too might travel to Syria. The local Prevent team provided counselling to both mother and daughter. Without the support that Prevent provided, it is likely she simply would not have known where else to turn. Conference, Prevent works. This is not to say that we cannot improve it. But I would issue this challenge today to its detractors: work with us, not against us. We all have a role to play. Prevent isn’t some ‘Big Brother’ monolithic beast. It’s all of us working together, through local initiatives set up by local people, schools, universities and community groups.”

Here we can see that the speech focuses closely on the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ discourse, but that this is framed through setting out the importance of the community-based approach on ensuring that
the counter-terrorism strand of Prevent works. The tone of both pieces is very clear, that there has been criticism of the government’s approach, but that in line with the new narrative of terrorism that the UK will stand strong against outside threats, but that it will continue to work specifically on countering the risk of home-grown threats by taking an approach of local state authorities working in conjunction with community projects. While it has been shown, both historically and in the present, that there are important reasons to engage in a community – based programme, it has also been shown that Prevent not only has the potential to undermine ‘inclusive’ safe spaces in schools but may also hold the danger of further alienating the British Muslim population through a heavy-handed ‘surveillance-based’ approach. Certain terminology such as ‘safeguarding’ students who are ‘vulnerable’ to extremist ideas is misleading when used by politicians such as Rudd as they are abstract terms being used as things to prevent rather than as part of an holistic process. As such their use in speeches and policy is inflated in order to legitimise the Prevent Duty and facilitate its smooth implementation. It is perhaps not surprising that Rudd is taking this stance given the outcry from unions and analysts such as Briggs and Qurashi, but it is clear that through the use of ideologically-laden lexicon, the government is attempting to keep control of the counter-terrorism agenda by framing criticism of its policy as tantamount to supporting terrorism and radicalisation. This is a powerful tool, especially when it is employed in an environment that is already hyped by fear and paranoia, and risks undermining an important debate to be had over the handling of counter-terrorism. As we have seen from examination of the Troubles, it was only through critical calls against the counter-terrorism strategy that a period of reflection was engaged in and lessons were learned. If the government continues to frame the debate as unnecessary and counter-productive, it risks not learning from the mistakes that many are saying Prevent is engaging in right now.

Conclusions

It has been shown that the UKs counter-terrorism strategy evolved initially at the start of the 1900s as a result of attacks on the mainland from Irish republicans. Starting out as a set of reactive policies, no actually strategy was put in place as a long-term aim as a result of underestimating the scope and ability of those who threatened attacks. The strategy then developed over the decades to again be reactive, but with a long-term plan of infiltration through community-based intelligence gathering. While the reactive and heavy-handed policies such as deportation without trial caused a backlash and further violence, it was shown that the intelligence-based approach was effective in
reducing the threat of terrorism. Lessons were learned by successive governments and security services about dealing with the threat of counter-terrorism, including the importance of working with the community in order to establish compromises that enable both sides to work together, and that heavy-handed tactics only lead to further bloodshed. However, these lessons appeared to have been ‘unlearned’ as a result of the changing western narrative toward terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. In following this ‘new narrative’ which suggested that the West was at threat from an amorphous enemy based on an ideological desire to destroy the Western way of living, a new counter-terrorism strategy was developed that was again reactive and heavy-handed, depicting the enemy as ‘evil’ and legitimising war first with Afghanistan, then Iraq, through the development of popular discourse that showed the necessity of destroying those governments who harboured and encouraged terrorists through the lens of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ approach. This approach took a marked turn as a result of the 7/7 bombings in London following the realisation that the attack on home soil had been committed by home-grown actors, and therefore the government and faced a new problem in development of its narrative, which had become too entrenched to remove entirely, but which had to be adapted in line with the new nature of the threat. As a result the UK counter-terrorism strategy focussed inwards on the issue of deradicalisation and the necessity of preventing terrorism on the domestic sphere, rather than focussing exclusively on foreign fields.

The decision to change the course of the discourse following the bombings meant that once more lessons were ‘unlearned’ from Northern Ireland as CONTEST placed a great deal of energy and funding into its second strand of Prevent. Aiming to use a community-based approach to infiltrate the communities of those who posed the greatest risk to society, Prevent aimed to use local state agencies who would work alongside community agencies to ensure that the government’s anti-radicalisation policy and methods were adhered to. Yet, as hysteria over terrorism ramped up following numerous foiled and active threats in the UK and Europe, Prevent too was ramped up. Funding was increased under Cameron’s Coalition government and the scope of Prevent widened so that the definitions of the strategy became more vague and open to interpretation, meaning more and more people could come under suspicion. Yet, because the strategy, while promising to tackle all forms of radicalisation, seemed to exclusively target Muslim communities, the strategy began to be called out for its repressive and Islamophobic approach, as communities began to feel ostracised and unable to speak out for fear of being called out as radicals during a hostile environment that could place them in grave danger from either government agencies or the populace at large who were starting to associate all forms of radicalisation with Islamic ideology as a result of the entrenched discourse of the new narrative of terrorism.
Successive governments tried to create a storyline of how Prevent should be interpreted and tried to influence a dominant view of Prevent. For example, New Labour under Gordon Brown discussed Prevent as a strategy that focuses on radicalisation, violent terrorism and extremism and that it was essentially a community policy with national and international influence. This then developed further under Cameron’s Coalition government as ministers spoke Prevent as the strategy that focuses on radicalisation, on all forms of terrorism and all forms of extremism, developing the new narrative to show that Prevent has only one strand which is a community-based counter-terrorism policy. This development though, it was shown, worked to alienate and spread fear through Muslim communities who felt targeted for their way of living, while analysts worry that the policy itself is driving some toward radicalisation as a result of the government not addressing the central concerns of young Muslims with regards to foreign policy, while making them feel disenfranchised and angry toward the counter-terrorism approach. All of this playing into the hands of the terrorists who, like the IRA during the Troubles, have capitalised on any suggestion that Muslims in the UK are being suppressed by the state or that the West is suppressing Islam abroad. Recent ethnographic research, including that carried out by the UK government itself, has shown that the counter-terrorist agenda is having some successes, but that these are difficult to quantify and that the damage the strategy is doing in the long-term is also difficult to assess, with most concluding that it is a very real problem in actively promoting radicalisation in some communities.

Finally, Critical Discourse Analysis methods were used to assess the long-term approach of Prevent with CDA proved a good analytical tool for identifying the mechanisms, central words, phrases and assumptions and tone that construct the Prevent discourse. This showed that the nature of that terrorist concern following the 7/7 attack broadened from the post-9/11 discourse of identifying an enemy in order to demonise it to one of an ideological war fighting a war in the community between ‘us’ – those who share ‘British values’ and ‘them’ – those who wish to radicalise British citizens away from sharing British values (the them usually being painted as a non-British citizen who is influencing the British citizen in order to secure the narrative of the enemy without). This war was to be shared by different agencies, working together in partnership with the government to root out ‘vulnerable’ (though unspecified) subjects and working to de-radicalise those who had been affected through Channel referrals. It was shown that there is plentiful criticism of this approach and that the very nature of the Prevent strategy was causing suspicion and alienation amongst the young Muslims in targeted communities, but the final analysis using CDA of PM David Cameron and Home Secretary Amber Rudd shows that the continuation of the new narrative is still in place up to 2017 with Rudd explaining that the ‘us’ (the unified British state standing firm against terrorism) versus ‘them’ (an amorphous fundamentalism ideology that aims to radicalise British
citizens to carry out terror attacks on British soil) discourse being perpetuated. As a result the discourse leaves very little wriggle room and, sixteen years on from 9/11 it seems as though the government still hasn’t reached its ‘moment of reflection’ as seen with Troubles whereby the counter-terrorism strategy was adapted to work with the situation on the ground, taking an holistic approach to government strategy including the foreign policy and a community-based approach whereby the state worked actively with citizens rather than forcing an agenda upon them that leaves many feeling targeted and suppressed. All in it will be interesting to see where the government goes next with its counter-terrorism strategy, and whether it learns from the mistakes of the past and starts to listen to the concerns of those on the ground in order to develop a strategy with a more collaborative approach which works for the good of all in the communities it is working in partnership with.
Appendix

Appendix 1a. Prime Minister David Cameron’s extremism speech, 20 July 2015

David Cameron extremism speech: David Cameron said young Muslims need to feel a sense of belonging

Speaking in Birmingham, the Prime Minister has vowed to tackle the "poison" of extremism in a speech laying down the Government's strategy for the next five years. Taken from the Independent website: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-extremism-speech-read-the-transcript-in-full-10401948.html

It's great to be here at this outstanding school, Ninestiles School. Your inspiring teachers and your commitment to British values means you are not just achieving outstanding academic success, but you are building a shared community where children of many faiths and backgrounds learn not just with each other, but from each other too.

And that goes right to the heart of what I want to talk about today. I said on the steps of Downing Street that this would be a 'one nation' government, bringing our country together.

Today, I want to talk about a vital element of that. How together we defeat extremism and at the same time build a stronger, more cohesive society.

My starting point is this. Over generations, we have built something extraordinary in Britain – a successful multi-racial, multi-faith democracy. It's open, diverse, welcoming – these characteristics are as British as queuing and talking about the weather.

It is here in Britain where different people, from different backgrounds, who follow different religions and different customs don't just rub alongside each other but are relatives and friends; husbands, wives, cousins, neighbours and colleagues.

It is here in Britain where in one or two generations people can come with nothing and rise as high as their talent allows. It is here in Britain where success is achieved not in spite of our diversity, but because of our diversity.

So as we talk about the threat of extremism and the challenge of integration, we should not do our country down – we are, without a shadow of doubt, a beacon to the world.

And as we debate these issues, neither should we demonise people of particular backgrounds. Every one of the communities that has come to call our country home has made Britain a better place. And because the focus of my remarks today is on tackling Islamist extremism – not Islam the religion – let me say this.

I know what a profound contribution Muslims from all backgrounds and denominations are making in every sphere of our society, proud to be both British and Muslim, without conflict or contradiction. And I know something else: I know too how much you hate the extremists who are seeking to divide our communities and how you loathe that damage they do.
As Prime Minister, I want to work with you to confront and defeat this poison. Today, I want to set out how. I want to explain what I believe we need to do as a country to defeat this extremism, and help to strengthen our multi-racial, multi-faith democracy.

**Roots of the problem**

It begins – it must begin – by understanding the threat we face and why we face it. What we are fighting, in Islamist extremism, is an ideology. It is an extreme doctrine.

And like any extreme doctrine, it is subversive. At its furthest end it seeks to destroy nation-states to invent its own barbaric realm. And it often backs violence to achieve this aim – mostly violence against fellow Muslims – who don’t subscribe to its sick worldview.

But you don’t have to support violence to subscribe to certain intolerant ideas which create a climate in which extremists can flourish. Ideas which are hostile to basic liberal values such as democracy, freedom and sexual equality. Ideas which actively promote discrimination, sectarianism and segregation. Ideas – like those of the despicable far right – which privilege one identity to the detriment of the rights and freedoms of others.

And ideas also based on conspiracy: that Jews exercise malevolent power; or that Western powers, in concert with Israel, are deliberately humiliating Muslims, because they aim to destroy Islam. In this warped worldview, such conclusions are reached – that 9/11 was actually inspired by Mossad to provoke the invasion of Afghanistan; that British security services knew about 7/7, but didn’t do anything about it because they wanted to provoke an anti-Muslim backlash.

And like so many ideologies that have existed before – whether fascist or communist – many people, especially young people, are being drawn to it. We need to understand why it is proving so attractive.

Some argue it’s because of historic injustices and recent wars, or because of poverty and hardship. This argument, what I call the grievance justification, must be challenged.

So when people say “it’s because of the involvement in the Iraq War that people are attacking the West”, we should remind them: 9/11 – the biggest loss of life of British citizens in a terrorist attack – happened before the Iraq War.

When they say that these are wronged Muslims getting revenge on their Western wrongdoers, let’s remind them: from Kosovo to Somalia, countries like Britain have stepped in to save Muslim people from massacres – it’s groups like ISIL, Al Qaeda and Boko Haram that are the ones murdering Muslims.

Now others might say: it’s because terrorists are driven to their actions by poverty. But that ignores the fact that many of these terrorists have had the full advantages of prosperous families or a Western university education.

Now let me be clear, I am not saying these issues aren’t important. But let’s not delude ourselves. We could deal with all these issues – and some people in our country and elsewhere would still be drawn to Islamist extremism.

No – we must be clear. The root cause of the threat we face is the extremist ideology itself. And I would argue that young people are drawn to it for 4 main reasons.
One – like any extreme doctrine, it can seem energising, especially to young people. They are watching videos that eulogise ISIL as a pioneering state taking on the world, that makes celebrities of violent murderers. So people today don’t just have a cause in Islamist extremism; in ISIL, they now have its living and breathing expression.

Two – you don’t have to believe in barbaric violence to be drawn to the ideology. No-one becomes a terrorist from a standing start. It starts with a process of radicalisation. When you look in detail at the backgrounds of those convicted of terrorist offences, it is clear that many of them were first influenced by what some would call non-violent extremists.

It may begin with hearing about the so-called Jewish conspiracy and then develop into hostility to the West and fundamental liberal values, before finally becoming a cultish attachment to death. Put another way, the extremist world view is the gateway, and violence is the ultimate destination.

Three: the adherents of this ideology are overpowering other voices within Muslim debate, especially those trying to challenge it. There are so many strong, positive Muslim voices that are being drowned out.

Ask yourself, how is it possible that when young teenagers leave their London homes to fight for ISIL, the debate all too often focuses on whether the security services are to blame? And how can it be that after the tragic events at Charlie Hebdo in Paris, weeks were spent discussing the limits of free speech and satire, rather than whether terrorists should be executing people full stop?

When we allow the extremists to set the terms of the debate in this way, is it any wonder that people are attracted to this ideology?

Four: there is also the question of identity. For all our successes as multi-racial, multi-faith democracy, we have to confront a tragic truth that there are people born and raised in this country who don’t really identify with Britain – and who feel little or no attachment to other people here. Indeed, there is a danger in some of our communities that you can go your whole life and have little to do with people from other faiths and backgrounds.

So when groups like ISIL seek to rally our young people to their poisonous cause, it can offer them a sense of belonging that they can lack here at home, leaving them more susceptible to radicalisation and even violence against other British people to whom they feel no real allegiance.

So this is what we face – a radical ideology – that is not just subversive, but can seem exciting; one that has often sucked people in from non-violence to violence; one that is overpowering moderate voices within the debate and one which can gain traction because of issues of identity and failures of integration.

So we have to answer each 1 of these 4 points. If we do that, the right approach for defeating this extremism will follow. In the autumn, we will publish our Counter-Extremism Strategy, setting out in detail what we will do to counter this threat. But today I want to set out the principles that we will adopt.

**Counter-ideology**

First, any strategy to defeat extremism must confront, head on, the extreme ideology that underpins it. We must take its component parts to pieces - the cultish worldview, the conspiracy theories, and yes, the so-called glamorous parts of it as well.
In doing so, let’s not forget our strongest weapon: our own liberal values. We should expose their extremism for what it is – a belief system that glorifies violence and subjugates its people – not least Muslim people.

We should contrast their bigotry, aggression and theocracies with our values. We have, in our country, a very clear creed and we need to promote it much more confidently. Wherever we are from, whatever our background, whatever our religion, there are things we share together.

We are all British. We respect democracy and the rule of law. We believe in freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, equal rights regardless of race, sex, sexuality or faith.

We believe in respecting different faiths but also expecting those faiths to support the British way of life. These are British values. And are underpinned by distinct British institutions. Our freedom comes from our Parliamentary democracy. The rule of law exists because of our independent judiciary. This is the home that we are building together.

Whether you are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian or Sikh, whether you were born here or born abroad, we can all feel part of this country – and we must now all come together and stand up for our values with confidence and pride.

And as we do so, we should together challenge the ludicrous conspiracy theories of the extremists. The world is not conspiring against Islam; the security services aren’t behind terrorist attacks; our new Prevent duty for schools is not about criminalising or spying on Muslim children. This is paranoia in the extreme.

In fact that duty will empower parents and teachers to protect children from all forms of extremism – whether Islamist or neo-Nazi.

We should challenge together the conspiracy theories about our Muslim communities too and I know how much pain these can cause.

We must stand up to those who try to suggest that there is some kind of secret Muslim conspiracy to take over our government, or that Islam and Britain are somehow incompatible.

People who say these things are trying to undermine our shared values and make Muslims feel like they don’t belong here, and we will not let these conspiracy theorists win.

We must also de-glamourise the extremist cause, especially ISIL. This is a group that throws people off buildings, that burns them alive, and as Channel 4’s documentary last week showed, its men rape underage girls, and stone innocent women to death. This isn’t a pioneering movement – it is vicious, brutal, and a fundamentally abhorrent existence.

And here’s my message to any young person here in Britain thinking of going out there:

You won’t be some valued member of a movement. You are cannon fodder for them. They will use you. If you are a boy, they will brainwash you, strap bombs to your body and blow you up. If you are a girl, they will enslave and abuse you. That is the sick and brutal reality of ISIL.

So when we bring forward our Counter-Extremism Strategy in the autumn, here are the things we will be looking at:

- using people who really understand the true nature of what life is like under ISIL to communicate to young and vulnerable people the brutal reality of this ideology
• empowering the UK’s Syrian, Iraqi and Kurdish communities, so they can have platforms from which to speak out against the carnage ISIL is conducting in their countries

• countering this ideology better on the ground through specific de-radicalisation programmes

I also want to go much further in dealing with this ideology in prison and online. We need to have a total rethink of what we do in our prisons to tackle extremism. And we need our internet companies to go further in helping us identify potential terrorists online.

Many of their commercial models are built around monitoring platforms for personal data, packaging it up and selling it on to third parties. And when it comes to doing what’s right for their business, they are happy to engineer technologies to track our likes and dislikes. But when it comes to doing what’s right in the fight against terrorism, we too often hear that it’s all too difficult.

Well I’m sorry – I just don’t buy that. They – the internet companies - have shown with the vital work they are doing in clamping down on child abuse images that they can step up when there is a moral imperative to act. And it’s now time for them to do the same to protect their users from the scourge of radicalisation.

And as we do all of this work to counter the Islamist extremist ideology, let’s also recognise that we will have to enter some pretty uncomfortable debates – especially cultural ones. Too often we have lacked the confidence to enforce our values, for fear of causing offence. The failure in the past to confront the horrors of forced marriage I view as a case in point. So is the utter brutality of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

It sickens me to think that there were nearly 4,000 cases of FGM reported in our country last year alone. Four thousand cases; think about that. And 11,000 cases of so called honour-based violence over the last 5 years – and that’s just the reported cases.

We need more co-ordinated efforts to drive this out of our society. More prosecutions. No more turning a blind eye on the false basis of cultural sensitivities. Why does this matter so much? Well, think what passive tolerance says to young British Muslim girls.

We can’t expect them to see the power and liberating force of our values if we don’t stand up for them when they come under attack. So I am glad we have gone further than any government in tackling these appalling crimes. And we are keeping up the pressure on cultural practices that can run directly counter to these vital values.

That’s why the Home Secretary has already announced a review of sharia courts. It’s why we have said we will toughen the regulations. so schools have to report children who go missing from school rolls mid-year – some of whom, we fear, may be being forced into marriage. It’s why we legislated for authorities to seize the passports of people they suspect are planning on taking girls abroad for FGM – new protection orders which came into force last Friday and were used immediately by Bedfordshire police to prevent two girls being taken to Africa. And it’s why today I can also announce we will consult on legislating for lifetime anonymity for victims of forced marriage, so that no-one should ever again feel afraid to come forward and report these horrific crimes.

There are other examples of this passive tolerance of practices running totally contrary to our values. The failure of social services, the police and local authorities, to deal with child sex abuse in places like Rotherham was frankly unforgiveable.
And look what happened in Tower Hamlets, in the heart of our capital city. We had political corruption on an epic scale: with voters intimidated and a court adjudicating on accusations of ‘undue spiritual influence’ for the first time since the 19th century. As the judge said: those in authority were too afraid to ‘confront wrongdoing for fear of allegations of racism’.

Well this has got to stop. We need everyone – government, local authorities, police, schools, all of us – to enforce our values right across the spectrum.

**Non-violent and violent**

Second, as we counter this ideology, a key part of our strategy must be to tackle both parts of the creed – the non-violent and violent. This means confronting groups and organisations that may not advocate violence – but which do promote other parts of the extremist narrative.

We’ve got to show that if you say “yes I condemn terror – but the Kuffar are inferior”, or “violence in London isn’t justified, but suicide bombs in Israel are a different matter” – then you too are part of the problem. Unwittingly or not, and in a lot of cases it’s not unwillingly, you are providing succour to those who want to commit, or get others to commit to, violence.

For example, I find it remarkable that some groups say “We don’t support ISIL” as if that alone proves their anti-extremist credentials. And let’s be clear Al-Qaeda don’t support ISIL. So we can’t let the bar sink to that level. Condemning a mass-murdering, child-raping organisation cannot be enough to prove you’re challenging the extremists.

We must demand that people also condemn the wild conspiracy theories, the anti-Semitism, and the sectarianism too. Being tough on this is entirely keeping with our values. We should challenge every part of the hateful ideology spread by neo-Nazis – so why shouldn’t we here?

Government has a key role to play in this. It’s why we ban hate preachers from our country. It’s why we threw out Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada. And it’s why, since my Munich speech in 2011, we have redirected public funds from bodies that promote non-violent extremism to those that don’t. We also need to do more in education.

We undertook an immediate review when it became apparent that extremists had taken over some of our schools in the so-called Trojan Horse scandal here in Birmingham. But I have to be honest here – one year on, although we are making progress, it is not quick enough. It has taken too long to take action against the governors and teachers involved in the scandal and to support the schools affected to turn themselves around.

So as we develop our Counter-Extremism Strategy, I want us to deal with these issues properly, and we will also bring forward further measures to guard against the radicalisation of children in some so-called supplementary schools or tuition centres.

And there’s something else we will do.

We need to put out of action the key extremist influencers who are careful to operate just inside the law, but who clearly detest British society and everything we stand for. These people aren’t just extremists. There are despicable far right groups too. And what links them all is their aim to groom young people and brainwash their minds.
And again let's be clear who benefits most from us being tough on these non-violent extremists – it’s Muslim families living in fear that their children could be radicalised and run off to Syria, and communities worried about some poisonous far right extremists who are planning to attack your mosque.

So as part of our Extremism Bill, we are going to introduce new narrowly targeted powers to enable us to deal with these facilitators and cult leaders, and stop them peddling their hatred. And we will also work to strengthen Ofcom’s role to enable us to take action against foreign channels that broadcast hate preachers and extremist content.

But confronting non-violent extremism isn’t just about changing laws, it’s about all of us, changing our approach. Take, for example, some of our universities. Now, of course universities are bastions of free speech and incubators of new and challenging ideas. But sometimes they fail to see the creeping extremism on their campuses.

When David Irving goes to a university to deny the Holocaust – university leaders rightly come out and condemn him. They don’t deny his right to speak but they do challenge what he says. But when an Islamist extremist goes there to promote their poisonous ideology, too often university leaders look the other way through a mixture of misguided liberalism and cultural sensitivity.

As I said, this is not about clamping down on free speech. It’s just about applying our shared values uniformly. And while I am it, I want to say something to the National Union of Students. When you choose to ally yourselves with an organisation like CAGE, which called Jihadi John a “beautiful young man” and told people to “support the jihad” in Iraq and Afghanistan, it really does, in my opinion, shame your organisation and your noble history of campaigning for justice.

We also need the support of families and communities too. The local environment, their families, their peers, their communities, are among the key influencers in any young person’s life. So if they hear parts of the extremist worldview in their home, or their wider community, it will help legitimise it in their minds.

And government will help where it can. I know how worried some people are that their children might turn to this ideology – and even seek to travel to Syria or Iraq.

So I can announce today we are going to introduce a new scheme to enable parents to apply directly to get their child’s passport cancelled to prevent travel.

Together, in partnership, let us protect our young people.

Islam

Now the third plank of our strategy is to embolden different voices within the Muslim community. Just as we do not engage with extremist groups and individuals, we’re now going to actively encourage the reforming and moderate Muslim voices. This is a significant shift in government approach – and an important one.

In the past, governments have been too quick to dismiss the religious aspect of Islamist extremism. That is totally understandable. It cannot be said clearly enough: this extremist ideology is not true Islam. I have said it myself many, many times, and it’s absolutely right to do so. And I’ll say it again today.
But simply denying any connection between the religion of Islam and the extremists doesn't work, because these extremists are self-identifying as Muslims. The fact is from Woolwich to Tunisia, from Ottawa to Bali, these murderers all spout the same twisted narrative, one that claims to be based on a particular faith.

Now it is an exercise in futility to deny that. And more than that, it can be dangerous. To deny it has anything to do with Islam means you disempower the critical reforming voices; the voices that are challenging the fusing of religion and politics; the voices that want to challenge the scriptural basis which extremists claim to be acting on; the voices that are crucial in providing an alternative worldview that could stop a teenager’s slide along the spectrum of extremism.

These reforming voices, they have a tough enough time as it is: the extremists are the ones who have the money, the leaders, the iconography and the propaganda machines. We need to turn the tables. We can’t stand neutral in this battle of ideas. We have to back those who share our values. So here’s my offer.

If you’re interested in reform; if you want to challenge the extremists in our midst; if you want to build an alternative narrative or if you just want to help protect your kids – we are with you and we will back you – with practical help, with funding, with campaigns, with protection and with political representation.

This should form a key part of our Counter-Extremism Strategy.

And let’s remember that it’s only the extremists who divide people into good Muslims and bad Muslims, by forcing their warped doctrine onto fellow Muslims and telling them that it is the only way to believe. Our new approach is about isolating the extremists from everyone else, so that all our Muslim communities can be free from the poison of Islamist extremism.

Now for my part, I am going to set up a new community engagement forum so I can hear directly from those out there who are challenging extremism. And I also want to issue a challenge to the broadcasters in our country. You are, of course, free to put whoever you want on the airwaves. But there are a huge number of Muslims in our country who have a proper claim to represent liberal values in local communities – people who run credible charities, community organisations, councillors and MPs – including Labour MPs here in Birmingham – so do consider giving them the platform they deserve.

I know other voices may make for more explosive television – but please exercise your judgement, and do recognise the huge power you have in shaping these debates in a positive way.

**Isolation and identity**

The fourth and final part of our strategy must be to build a more cohesive society, so more people feel a part of it and are therefore less vulnerable to extremism. And I want to say this directly to all young people growing up in our country.

I understand that it can be hard being young, and that it can be even harder being young and Muslim, or young and Sikh, or young and black in our country. I know that at times you are grappling with huge issues over your identity, neither feeling a part of the British mainstream nor a part of the culture from your parents’ background.
And I know that for as long as injustice remains – be it with racism, discrimination or sickening Islamophobia - you may feel there is no place for you in Britain. But I want you to know: there is a place for you and I will do everything I can to support you.

The speech I was proudest to give in the election campaign was where I outlined my 2020 vision for our black and minority ethnic communities.

20% more jobs; 20% more university places; a 20% increase in apprenticeship take-up and police and armed forces that are much more representative of the people they serve.

And it’s not just about representation – it’s about being in positions of influence, leadership and political power. That also means more magistrates, more school governors, more Members of Parliament, more councillors, and yes, Cabinet Ministers too.

When we discussed childcare at Cabinet last week (political content), the item was introduced by a Black British son of a single parent – Sam Gyimah, who was backed up by the daughter of Gujarati immigrants from East Africa – Priti Patel – and the first speaker was the son of Pakistani immigrants – Sajid Javid – whose father came to Britain to drive the buses.

So we’ve made good progress in recent years, including I am pleased to say – in my own political party. But we need to go further. Because it comes down to this.

We need young people to understand that here in the UK they can shape the future by being an active part of our great democracy.

Achieve this and more people from ethnic minority backgrounds will feel they have a real stake in our society. And at the same time we need to lift the horizons of some of our most isolated and deprived communities. At the moment we have parts of our country where opportunities remain limited; where language remains a real barrier; where too many women from minority communities remain trapped outside the workforce and where educational attainment is low.

So we need specific action here. So I can announce today I have charged Louise Casey to carry out a review of how to boost opportunity and integration in these communities and bring Britain together as one nation. She will look at issues like how we can ensure people learn English; how we boost employment outcomes, especially for women; how state agencies can work with these communities to properly promote integration and opportunity but also learning lessons from past mistakes - when funding was simply handed over to self-appointed ‘community leaders’ who sometimes used the money in a divisive way.

Louise will provide an interim report early next year. And we will use this report to inform our plans for funding a new wider Cohesive Communities Programme next year, focusing resources on improving integration and extending opportunity in those communities that most need it.

But as well as tackling isolation, there is one other area we must look at if we are to build a truly cohesive society – and that is segregation.

It cannot be right, for example, that people can grow up and go to school and hardly ever come into meaningful contact with people from other backgrounds and faiths. That doesn’t foster a sense of shared belonging and understanding – it can drive people apart. Now let’s be clear that these patterns of segregation in schools or housing are not the fault or responsibility of any particular community. This is a complex problem that dates back decades.
But we do need to recognise the scale of the challenge in some communities. Areas of cities and towns like Bradford or Oldham continue to be some of the most segregated parts of our country. And it’s no coincidence that these can be some of the places where community relations have historically been most tense, where poisonous far right and Islamist extremists desperately try to stoke tension and foster division.

Now let me be clear. I’m not talking about uprooting people from their homes or schools and forcing integration. But I am talking about taking a fresh look at the sort of shared future we want for our young people. In terms of housing, for example, there are parts of our country where segregation has actually increased or stayed deeply entrenched for decades.

So the government needs to start asking searching questions about social housing, to promote integration, to avoid segregated social housing estates where people living there are from the same single minority ethnic background.

Similarly in education, while overall segregation in schooling is declining, in our most divided communities, the education that our young people receive is actually even more segregated than the neighbourhoods they live in.

Now, bussing children to different areas is not the right approach for this country. Nor should we try to dismantle faith schools.

Many faith schools achieve excellent results and I’m the first to support the great education they provide. I chose one for my own children. Today I visited King David’s school, a Jewish school here in Birmingham where the majority of children are from faith backgrounds.

But it is right to look again more broadly at how we can move away from segregated schooling in our most divided communities. We have already said that all new faith academies and free schools must allocate half their places without reference to faith.

But now we’ll go further to incentivise schools in our most divided areas to provide a shared future for our children, whether by sharing the same site and facilities; by more integrated teaching across sites; or by supporting the creation of new integrated free schools in the most segregated areas.

At the same time, we will continue to back National Citizen Service, which is bringing together 16 and 17 year olds from every background and every part of our country.

Because when you see how NCS changes the perceptions that young people have of other communities – I’ve seen it myself many, many times – it should give us all the hope and the confidence that our young people can be the key to bringing our country together.

**Conclusion**

So this is how I believe we can win the struggle of our generation. Countering the extremist ideology by standing up and promoting our shared British values. Taking on extremism in all its forms – both violent and non-violent.

Empowering those moderate and reforming voices who speak for the vast majority of Muslims that want to reclaim their religion. And addressing the identity crisis that some young people feel by bringing our communities together and extending opportunity to all.
And I hope I have given a sense of how we have all got to contribute to this process. This isn't an issue for just any one community or any one part of our society – it's for all of us. Of course, Muslim communities have crucial parts to play. You are part of the solution. But we in government have got to deal with failure, like dealing with extremism in schools.

We need the police to step up and not stand by as crimes take place. We need universities to stand up against extremism; broadcasters to give platforms to different voices; and internet service providers to do their bit too. Together, we can do this.

Britain has never been cowed by fear or hatred or terror.

Our Great British resolve faced down Hitler; it defeated Communism; it saw off the IRA's assaults on our way of life. Time and again we have stood up to aggression and tyranny.

We have refused to compromise on our values or to give up our way of life. And we shall do so again.

Together we will defeat the extremists and build a stronger and more cohesive country, for our children, our grandchildren and for every generation to come.
Appendix 1b. Home Secretary, Amber Rudd’s speech on counter-terrorism, October 2017

Safeguarding our young people from becoming radicalised is difficult but vital work: article by Amber Rudd

An article by Home Secretary Amber Rudd on the Prevent strategy, published in the Sun.


From: Home Office and The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP

Stopping people committing appalling acts of terror in the UK is something we should all want. It should go without saying. Safeguarding our young people from becoming radicalised, either by the extreme right wing or Islamist extremists, should not be a controversial aim. Yet there are some who actively seek to undermine the Prevent programme without offering any meaningful alternatives.

The truth is, as Commander Dean Haydon of the Metropolitan Police said this week, many of the most vocal opponents do not want Prevent to work in the first place.

They say it is about spying on communities. But asking teachers and others to be alert to signs of radicalisation and refer those who may need help works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drug abuse, and sexual abuse.

Next they claim Prevent stifles free speech. On the contrary, schools and colleges should provide a safe space in which children and young people can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. This is what Prevent encourages.

Or they claim Prevent is about targeting Muslims. This is not true; Prevent deals with all forms of extremism. I am the first Home Secretary to ban an extreme right wing group, National Action, for their links to terrorism. Prevent aims to protect all those who are targeted by the terrorist recruiters who seek to weaponise them.

Currently the greatest threat comes from terrorist recruiters inspired by Daesh. Our Prevent programme will necessarily reflect this by prioritising support for vulnerable British Muslims, and working in partnership with civil society groups to tackle this problem.

Some claim they have yet to see evidence of Prevent’s success. Say that to the 150 people – including 50 children – it has helped to stop from leaving Britain to fight in Syria and Iraq in 2015. I have spoken to mothers terrified for their children and grateful for the intervention and tireless efforts of Prevent workers. I have travelled the country and seen inspiring examples of grassroots organisations, including British Muslim led organisations, leading the way in countering the risk posed by radicalisation. They do amazing work to protect our society and our country. Over the summer I will continue visiting communities, talking to organisations, families and individuals to hear their views, understand their concerns and talk about what more we can do to help.
As well as working together with communities, Prevent also involves challenging internet companies to stop their platforms being used to spread terrorist messages and propaganda, which is why I travelled to Silicon Valley last week to keep up the pressure on the internet giants and make sure they play their part.

So I want to say to these critics, Prevent has made a significant impact in preventing people being drawn into terrorism and it is here to stay. In light of the horrific terror attacks in London and Manchester, we are reviewing all aspects of our counter terrorism strategy to make sure we keep pace with the changing terrorist threat. This will ensure that we are doing everything possible to address the threat from terrorism, including stopping people being radicalised in the first place. Prevent will continue to play a major part in our future counter terrorism approach.

I am happy to engage those with constructive criticisms to make, who want to discuss and debate how the Prevent programme can be improved. But I am clear that when it comes to keeping our families, communities and country safe, doing nothing is simply not an option.

It is difficult work but it is vital. And nobody should be able to stop it from happening.
Appendix 1c. Home Secretary, Amber Rudd’s speech on counter-terrorism, October 2017


Building a safer Britain: Rudd’s speech in full

Conference,

Standing here in Manchester it is impossible to forget the sight of this proud city, shrouded in grief, after a pop concert in May.

It is impossible to forget the images of the terrified concert-goers … the images of the injured and the dead – some so very young.

The toll of those who have been the victims of such violence this year is grim. It includes those targeted outside Finsbury Park Mosque, and in London Bridge. It includes the innocent people mown down on Westminster Bridge. It includes Police Constable Keith Palmer who paid with his life in the line of duty, trying to stop that attack.

His death is a reminder of the daily danger in which our police force and intelligence agencies put themselves, to keep the rest of us safe. They have our utmost gratitude and so too the brave men and women of the Fire Service, for their extraordinary heroism, in battling the Grenfell Tower fire. Their job, like mine, is to do everything in their power to keep this country safe. And this year, more than ever, it’s right that we thank them.

There are other images from this year that I choose to remember. And they are these.

I remember the doctors and nurses from Guys Hospital, with so little regard for their own safety, running towards the carnage on Westminster Bridge. Their only thought was to get to those who needed help.

I remember the courage of Mohammed Mahmoud, Imam at the Finsbury Park Mosque, and the small group who, in his own words, “managed to calm people down to extinguish any flames of anger or mob rule”.

There are those who after the failed device at Parsons Green opened their homes, and offered to ‘put the kettle on’ – a uniquely British response.

And in the aftermath of the attack here in Manchester, communities came together in a great expression of solidarity. United in sadness with a desire to show the city was not beaten.

It is such displays of courage in the face of terror, of resilience, and of compassion, that I think should make us proud. Proud of the spirit which pulls us all together, in defiance of those who would harm us.

This is what I believe Britain is about. And this is the spirit we must harness to build a safer, more united Britain.

I was struck by what Bear said about the multi-faith nature of the scouts. It’s a powerful reminder of the civic groups that bind our society together. The united Britain we all want to see.

As Home Secretary, you see the sorts of initiatives around the country that are doing excellent work, to build stronger, more resilient communities.
After the year we have faced, we will need more of them.

I’ve spoken to mothers learning about what their kids do online, so they know where they could be vulnerable to pernicious influences. I’ve seen groups set up to challenge racism in sports, and places where those same sports are being used to encourage greater integration in communities.

Establishing the new Commission on Countering Extremism will further support this agenda, by exposing extremism and division. It will be key in challenging those who preach hatred.

The task of tackling the warped Islamist ideologies that have inspired terrorist attacks this year is without a doubt amongst the greatest we have faced. But it is not the only one. Violent and non-violent extremism in all its forms – Anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, Islamophobia, intolerance of women’s rights – these, and others, cannot be permitted to fester. Our values are far, far better than this. And we owe it to ourselves to root this hatred out wherever it emerges.

The safer Britain I want to help build as Home Secretary is a united one.

As we have seen all too painfully this year, the UK faces an unpredictable threat from terrorism. From “lone wolf actors”, to those radicalised online in their bedrooms, to Da’esh groups hiding in the ruins of Raqqah. We face random attacks at home, and well-planned threats to British Nationals and our interests overseas.

We also face a real and growing threat from the extreme right. We all remember the tragic murder of the excellent MP, Jo Cox, as she took part in our democratic process. Last year, I made the first terrorist proscription for an extreme right-wing organisation – National Action. And just last week I banned two more repugnant mutations of that organisation.

What I can tell you today is that while five plots got through this year, seven were also stopped by our world class security services. Be in no doubt, the huge investment we are making in our counter terrorist efforts is saving lives, even when we tragically have seen so many lost.

If we’re to do better then we have to be a step ahead. And that means being nimble and responsive as the threat evolves.

Over the last months, I have been reviewing our counter-terrorism powers and legislation.

We have seen what could be interpreted as a shift towards crude attacks, with lone or few attackers, using everyday items. There also appears to be a trend towards shorter timescales, from aspiration to attacks.

If we’re going to keep people safe we need to disrupt plots in their early stages. Many such plots will include some element of online radicalisation.

Extremists and terrorist material can still be published online, and is then too easily accessible on some devices within seconds…Messages of hatred and violence accessible from any laptop or smart phone.

Progress has been made, but this has got to stop.

Today I am announcing that we are tightening our laws for individuals looking at this type of material online.

We will change the law, so that people who repeatedly view terrorist content online could face up to 15 years in prison. This will close an important gap in legislation. At present, the existing offence applies only if you have downloaded or stored such material – not if you are repeatedly viewing or streaming it online. A critical difference.

We will also change the law in another important way. If someone publishes information about our police or armed forces for the purpose of preparing an act of terrorism, then they could face up to fifteen years in prison.

My job isn’t just to protect the public.
It's also to protect those who put their lives on the line for us. These changes will do both.

But it is not just Government who has a role here. In the aftermath of the Westminster Bridge attack, I called the internet companies together. Companies like Facebook, Google, Twitter and Microsoft. I asked them what they could do, to go further and faster.

They answered by forming an international forum to counter terrorism. This is good progress, and I attended their inaugural meeting in the West Coast.

These companies have transformed our lives in recent years with advances in technology.

Now I address them directly. I call on you with urgency, to bring forward technology solutions to rid your platforms of this vile terrorist material that plays such a key role in radicalisation.

Act now. Honour your moral obligations.

We all need to move more quickly to keep Britain safe.

Removing harmful material from the internet is a core activity of Prevent, our prime counter-radicalisation programme. But there is also a clear, human safeguarding element.

In London earlier this year, I met a mother whose son had travelled to Syria to fight for Da’esh. She had no idea of his plan. She was devastated.

But it was not just her son who had been groomed by Da’esh’s toxic influence. Her daughter’s school had concerns that she too might travel to Syria. The local Prevent team provided counselling to both mother and daughter. Without the support that Prevent provided, it is likely she simply would not have known where else to turn.

Conference, Prevent works.

This is not to say that we cannot improve it. But I would issue this challenge today to its detractors: work with us, not against us.

We all have a role to play. Prevent isn’t some ‘Big Brother’ monolithic beast. It’s all of us working together, through local initiatives set up by local people, schools, universities and community groups.

Now, I know I have done something very unusual for a politician in current times … I’ve spoken for this long without mentioning Brexit.

Back in June 2016 everyone had their say.

The country made a clear decision. I have said it before, and I say it again – I fully respect the result.

We chose to leave and we must make a success of Brexit. Our children’s futures depend on it.

These negotiations are going to be challenging. But great challenges also bring great opportunities.

With David Davis, I have proposed an ambitious new security treaty. So that even as we leave the EU, we can continue to work with our European allies to keep us safe.

And later in the year we will publish a paper on our future immigration system – showing how we will have greater control over our immigration rules in the future. But also how there will be no cliff edge for businesses. Because I appreciate it will take time for them to adjust after over 40 years of free movement.

As we build that new immigration system and deliver on the result of last year’s referendum, I’m committed to working with businesses, both large and small, to make sure we don’t impose unnecessary burdens, or create damaging labour shortages.
We'll be taking these decisions on the basis of comprehensive new evidence. I have commissioned the Government's independent advisers on migration to prepare reports – for the first time ever – on both the impact of free movement on the British economy and the value that international students bring to our world class university sector.

A new security treaty. A new immigration system. Decisions based on evidence and consultation. That's how we can bring the country together, restore the public's confidence in immigration, and keep British citizens safe, as we leave the European Union.

Put simply: my job as Home Secretary is to make Britain safer. I have talked today about terrorism. But it also includes protecting the most vulnerable in our society...Those who have been exploited, abused, made victims of crime.

Among them there will be those suffering abuse that see no escape or refuge. There will be those who have been failed before, whose trust and belief in the system is gone.

The injustices they have suffered must not simply be allowed to fade away uncorrected. The scale of abuse suffered by children over decades in this country is shocking.

Before 2010, child sexual abuse was simply not a sufficient enough priority.

Measures we have implemented in recent years have changed that. But as with all crime, it is evolving, rapidly.

Technology has made content and online abuse easier to find and participate in, through peer to peer file sharing, through chatrooms and online forums. And it has created conduits that enable abusers to search out and make contact with their victims in new ways.

The National Crime Agency tell me there has been an exponential surge in the volume of child sexual abuse referrals. They tell me it is one of the most challenging threats we face.

This is a vile crime, with thousands of victims around the world.

Today I can announce the UK Government is investing in a ground-breaking technology, which partners in Canada have developed.

It is called Project Arachnid. An apt name. It is software that crawls, spider-like across the web, identifying images of child sexual abuse, and getting them taken down, at an unprecedented rate.

Our investment will also enable internet companies to proactively search for, and destroy, illegal images in their systems. We want them to start using it as soon as they can.

Our question to them will be 'if not, why not'. And I will demand very clear answers.

This is a global technology solution to a global technology problem. It would not be possible without the efforts of partners and internet companies around the world. And their efforts are to be commended.

But we also know that end to end encryption services like Whatsapp, are being used by paedophiles. I do not accept it is right that companies should allow them and other criminals to operate beyond the reach of law enforcement. There are other platforms and emerging trends that are equally worrying.

We must require the industry to move faster and more aggressively. They have the resources and there must be greater urgency. If not, the next generation of our children will have been needlessly failed. That is not acceptable to me. And I can tell you Conference, on my watch that simply will not be happening.

A year ago, I stood before you and set out my priorities as Home Secretary. Keeping your neighbourhoods and our country safe. Protecting the vulnerable. Moving at a pace with evolving crime to better disrupt it.
Where crime is moving increasingly online, we are expanding our efforts. With billions invested in cyber security and hundreds of millions invested in police transformation. There’s a renewed focus on combatting fraud. And we’re introducing new offences to protect women and girls.

We will also shortly publish our consultation outlining how we intend to crack down on violent crime and offensive weapons. It will be complemented next year by a new strategy to combat serious violence. We are going to prevent children purchasing knives online, and we are going to stop people carrying acid in public if they don’t have a good reason.

Acid attacks are absolutely revolting. You have all seen the pictures of victims that never fully recover. Endless surgeries. Lives ruined. So today, I am also announcing a new offence to prevent the sale of acids to under 18s. Furthermore, given its use in the production of so-called ‘mother of Satan’ homemade explosives, I also announce my intention to drastically limit the public sale of sulphuric acid.

This is how we will help make our communities safer as crime changes.

None of this would have been achieved without the dedication of my ministerial team: Brandon Lewis, Ben Wallace, Nick Hurd, Sarah Newton, Susan Williams.


I am so grateful for all your hard work.

But, as an MP in a marginal seat, I know the most important thank you should go to you.

I know more than most how nerve-wracking it can be to see a handful of ballot papers representing the future – not just remaining an MP… but continuing this job as your Home Secretary, with the essential work that needs doing.

I cannot overstate my appreciation for all the people that chose to go out with me in the rain on a Saturday morning. Who scrabble on hands and knees to shove a leaflet through those irritating letter boxes located at the bottom of the door – my personal hate. Who negotiate ferocious dogs, or in the case of Hastings and Rye swooping seagulls, to get those pledge letters through every door.

There is no question that you made the difference. Without it, I wouldn’t be standing here today. Please know that I am so grateful to you for your time, and belief, and when it’s that close… as in my case 346 votes close… it gives the phrase ‘every vote counts’ a whole new meaning.

Conference, thank goodness Diane Abbott wasn’t doing the sums that night.

A year on from standing here for the first time as your Home Secretary my priorities remain unchanged.

We live in dangerous times, as we have so tragically seen in the past few days with the events in Canada, France and now Las Vegas.

In Britain, there is still much more work to do to build a safer country.

Not just to tackle the increased threat from terrorists. Crucial as that is. But also to help those shackled in domestic servitude. To better support through a new bill the victims of domestic violence, and more effectively hunt the perpetrators.

To make sure we never forget the commitment of our police, our Police and Crime Commissioners and our intelligence forces, by whose diligence and vigilance we are kept safe.

That’s why my department is working with the Police Federation on its campaign to Protect the Protectors. We’ve already funded a new national police welfare service. We’re reviewing the law so the police can pursue the appalling thugs on mopeds who attack people on our streets. And we’re
also examining whether we need clearer rules so anyone who assaults an emergency service worker faces a tougher sentence.

The police protect us and it’s my job to make sure we protect them.

Conference, I would like to share two final thoughts with you.

When the country is facing so many complex threats, I do not believe that our country would be safe in the hands of Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott. The Conservative Party has always been, and always must be, the party of law and order. And I will give credit to previous Labour Home Secretaries that took important steps to improve our security.

But this lot are different.

They have spent three decades opposing anti-terrorist laws. They've talked of their ‘friends’ in Hamas and Hezbollah. They are silent on the anti-semitism that festers in their Party. They won’t clearly condemn the actions of the IRA. They don’t support police officers shooting to kill. They’ve called for the dismantling of the police, the disbandment of MI5 and the disarming of police officers.

Saying you condemn all violence when specifically asked if you’ll condemn one groups’ actions isn’t good enough. Staying silent when your supporters abuse and insult people because of their religion, sex or political views isn’t good enough. Simply paying lip service to demonstrate your commitment to our security isn’t good enough.

Their record proves they are not serious. And your safety would not be their priority as a result.

Britain deserves better leadership than this in these difficult times. And it has it with my distinguished predecessor, Theresa May, and the Conservative Party.

My second conviction is one that I hope you will also share.

Throughout history our nation has faced many threats. In the twentieth and twenty first century, these threats have at times been acute.

But we have faced them. And we have faced them down.

Westminster, Manchester Arena, London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green … some of the worst terrorist attacks in decades.

They have tested our resolve. It will likely be tested again.

What terrorists want is for us to fear, to turn away from each other, and to become divided.

We will not.

We will stay united, together.

Because this is our Britain not theirs.

It is our way of life that defines us as a country. It is our values, our freedoms and the communities we’ve built that make us a proud, strong and united nation.

They will always do so.

Thank you."
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