

## **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

### **INTRO: WESTMINSTER ATTACKS**

On my first day as Home Secretary I had the honour of attending the Police Federation's Bravery Awards. PC Sean Cannon was the winner that evening after rescuing four children and their great aunt from a burning building.

His heroism was the sort of thing you thought only happened in films. Emerging from a building engulfed in billowing black smoke with a small child under each arm. Not once, but multiple times.

Soon after I'd presented Sean with his award, I was passed a note by my private secretary. With the ceremony still in

full flow, it read: 'There has been a terrorist attack in Nice'.

That moment will stay for me for the rest of my life.

As I watched our brave police officers being recognised for their extraordinary acts of courage, the horrible events on the streets of Nice were unfolding.

The best of our values, embodied in the actions of our policemen and women, set in stark relief against the very worst of human behaviour.

We owe you, the police, an incredible debt, for the courage and bravery you exhibit in the line of duty. For your willingness to put yourself in harm's way, day after day, in order to protect the rest of us.

Never have I felt that more keenly than on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

When PC Keith Palmer heroically confronted Khalid Masood at the gates to the Palace of Westminster.

Keith had devoted his life to public service, and tragically lost his life serving the public. He was a soldier in the Royal Artillery and then a member of the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command.

His sacrifice in the line of duty was a sacrifice to protect the values that unite us as a country.

Liberty, human rights, the rule of law and free speech.

Khalid Masood didn't wield his knife in Westminster at random. This was a deliberate attempt to strike at the most ancient of parliaments.

A building that has always stood, and will always stand, as a symbol for government by the people, for the people. A building that has always stood, and will always stand, as a symbol for everything Daesh and their poisonous ideology seeks to tear down.

A building that was burnt down nearly 200 years ago, but whose values can never be extinguished. Because within six years the first stones of the great building that we know today had been laid.

Five years before that famous fire in Westminster, the Metropolitan Police Service was founded by an Act of Parliament. It created the world's first modern police force.

These 'Justices of the Police' were charged with protecting the public from those 'he shall have just Cause to suspect of any evil Designs'.

Nearly 200 years on PC Keith Palmer did exactly that. His name already appears on the Police Roll of Honour and his sacrifice in the line of duty must be remembered permanently. That is why I am committed to doing everything I can as Home Secretary to support the Police Memorial Trust to build the UK Police Memorial in Staffordshire.

Keith was the only member of the police to lose his life that day. But three other officers were seriously injured.

Alongside four members of the public who lost their lives and more than 50 who suffered injuries.

We don't know how many people Khalid Masood planned to slaughter that day. But we do know that number would have been much higher without the courage and professionalism of our emergency services.

When I took this job I was told we have the best police and security services in the world. But it's only when you witness the response to a tragedy like this that you really understand that to be true.

And we must remember here that PC Keith Palmer is one of seven police officers to lose their life while working to protect the public this year.

- PC Gareth Browning
- PC Austin Jackson
- PC Paul Briggs
- Inspector Mark Estall
- DC Joe Mabuto
- PC Douglas Wiggins

The public will never forget that when the worst happens it is the police that run towards danger, as others run from it. And today it's right that we thank you for it.

## **MY VISION FOR POLICING**

One month ago I began to think seriously about what I wanted to say here today.

This was going to be my first Police Federation Conference as your Home Secretary.

And, for some of you, your first Police Federation Conference with a different Home Secretary.

For some of the Federation's longer serving members, before Theresa May's six year tenure, seeing a different Home Secretary each year must have become something of a habit.

I'm told that at one stage there were five different Home Secretaries in six years.

Well I hope you won't mind me saying I hope those days are now long behind us!

Obviously my predecessor made something of a name for herself speaking to you.



So one month ago, as I was coming home from a short Easter break, I began to sketch out how I would set out my vision for policing.

And after nearly a year in the job it seemed like the perfect moment to do so.

I was going to say how impressed I had been by the courage, dedication and compassion I had seen from police officers across the country.

But also that it was clear the job of reforming the police must not finish.

Because as crime is changing, you will need to keep changing too.

Keep changing so that you do more to protect victims from the new criminals who use the internet and technology to prey on vulnerable victims. And we've seen over the past week just how crucial it is that we adapt to the emerging threats from cyber security. Because these attacks will continue to grow – in frequency, in sophistication, in volume.

Keep changing so that you continue to confront the uncomfortable truths that have emerged about the extent of child abuse in our society over recent years.

Keep changing so that you treat the threat of modern slavery like the heinous crime that it is.

This Government has brought forward Europe's first Modern Slavery Act. It is a world leading piece of legislation. But we can't just stop there if we're serious about trying to eradicate this crime.

If we are honest, we know that our response on the ground is patchy. There must be better intelligence gathering, and better use of that intelligence so we relentlessly pursue the perpetrators and people traffickers. There must be more investigations; domestically and internationally.

There must be better training so that modern slavery in all its forms is better recognised.

And there has to be far more effective coordination and information sharing between all the agencies, so that we are neither failing victims, nor letting the criminals who prey upon the vulnerable slip through the cracks and away into the shadows.

But a lot has changed since that bank holiday. If a week is a long time in politics, then a month is a lifetime.

The day after that bank holiday the Prime Minister called me into her office before Cabinet to tell me there was going to be a general election on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

In 22 days' time you will now be voting for who you want to run this country: Theresa May or Jeremy Corbyn.

So rather than come here today and tell you what I expect from the police over the coming years, I want to say what you, the police, can expect from the Conservative Party over the next five years.

### **THE CONSERVATIVES RECORD**

The Conservative Party has, and always will be, the Party of law and order. We believe in freedom and opportunity. But we know that these values don't exist in an ether. They have to be fought for. They have to be defended. And you are at the front line in that fight.

Because without order there can be no freedom.

It's a basic truth that we acted upon nearly two hundred years ago when that Act of Parliament established the Metropolitan Police – because of course, it was a Conservative, Robert Peel, who helped found the modern police. Just as he helped found the modern Conservative Party.

But you don't do your jobs to defend abstract values. You do your jobs so that our children can enjoy abuse-free childhoods, so that violent parents are punished, so our neighbourhoods are kept safe and so that criminals pay for their crimes.

And before 2010 it had become too hard for you to get on with your jobs. There was too much paperwork and too many targets.

The public don't pay their taxes so that the police sit in their office filling out meaningless forms.

And you didn't come into policing to waste your time on paperwork when you could be out serving the communities you swore to protect.

So we have cut pointless red tape. With 4.5 million hours of police time saved – that's the equivalent of 2,100 police officers no longer sitting in a back office and instead fighting crime in their community.

And we've cut the target culture. No longer does the Home Office send dozens of 'policy' documents each year with thousands of central diktats.

It's not for me to tell the police how to do their jobs. And as long as I'm Home Secretary there will be no return to the constant interfering from Westminster.

Without that constant interference we've seen the proportion of police officers on the front line rise. With priorities now set by locally elected PCCs and delivered by you, ensuring once again that the 'police are the public and the public are the police'.

I know the theme of your Conference this year is Protect the Protectors. And we have done that.



You asked us to change the law so that anyone who kills a cop gets a mandatory life sentence. We listened, and now anyone convicted of murdering an officer faces a life sentence.

You asked us to do more to stop police officers doing the work of a doctor or nurse, caring for mentally ill members of the public. And we've taken steps to significantly restrict the circumstances in which a police station may be a "place of safety" with £15 million invested into health based alternatives.

And if I'm re-appointed as your Home Secretary I will continue to work with the Health Secretary so that the police do not do the jobs of other public servants, so you are not the service of first resort.

You asked me to bring in a new two shot Taser gun, and i've done that because you keep us safe and it's right we keep you safe too.

You asked us to better fund mental health services for officers up and down the country. And if I'm returned to this post in 22 days, signing off that bid Steve will be one of the first things I do.

But I'm not going to stand here and pretend you've agreed with everything we have done over the past seven years.

Or that you're going to agree with everything we will want to do if we're elected for another five years.

You haven't agreed with the changes we've made to pay and pensions, but they were right for the country and the public to tackle the huge deficit we inherited.

You haven't agreed with the drive for greater efficiency in policy budgets, but it's been right for the country and the public – and the police are more efficient and better equipped to deal with modern crime as a result.

You haven't always agreed with beginning to change the culture of policing so that victims of sexual abuse are not ignored, or complex cases like modern slavery not investigated because police leaders prefer to deal with so-

called 'traditional' crimes. But it's been right for the country and the public. And let me be clear today, that if the Conservatives are re-elected this work must continue. You haven't agreed with the steps we've taken to bring more people from outside policing into the force. But it's been right for the country and the public. And if the Conservatives are re-elected we will go further and open up the very top jobs in policing so that we get the broadest possible skills and talent at the very top of our police forces.

And you haven't always agreed with the steps Steve, and many other Fed members in this room, have taken to reform the Federation.

But it's been right for the country and the public – beginning to rebuild trust in the police after a series of damaging revelations. And I'm glad to say today that 28 out of 36 recommendations from the Normington Review have been implemented and look forward to working with you to deliver on the remaining recommendations.

So the Conservatives will always back the police, but we also won't shy away from taking the difficult decisions for the long-term good of policing and the public.

And if you look at what you have achieved over the past 7 years.

275,000 fewer burglaries.

189,000 fewer robberies.

376,000 fewer violent crimes.

Crime down by more than a third.

That's a record everyone in this room should be proud of, and one that I want to build on if the Conservatives are re-elected back into power on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **THE CHOICE: JEREMY CORBYN AND DIANNE ABBOTT AS THE ALTERNATIVE**

I know you heard from Dianne Abbott yesterday and that she will have set out her stall.

Although I can't imagine her proposals for a new annual salary of £30 a year will have gone down well with Federation members.

Obviously Diane misspoke. But the truth is the threat of Jeremy Corbyn being put in charge of this country's security is not a joke.

You might not have agreed with everything we have done in government, but the Conservative Party has always passionately backed the police and our security services.

Sadly the same cannot be said of Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott.

Jeremy Corbyn, while leader of the Labour Party, has said that he does not support police officers shooting to kill.

Diane Abbott has said we should 'dismantle' the police to replace you 'with our own machinery of class rule'.

And we've discovered yesterday that she called for MI5 and Special Branch to be abolished. Why? Because they were 'conspiratorial groups'.

John McDonnell has signed a letter calling for the police to be disarmed, the end of MI5 and the abolition of special police squads.

Dismantle the police. Disband MI5. Disarm the police.

These would be the three most senior politicians in the country if Jeremy Corbyn is elected. And they sound like a group of Marxists in a sixth form debating society.

I'm not saying this for petty, party political reasons. I'm saying it because when you cast your vote it's important you know what the choice is in this election.



This isn't like the elections of recent decades. You're not choosing between Tony Blair and John Major; Gordon Brown and David Cameron; even David Cameron and Ed Miliband. You're being asked if you want to put three people, who have spent their entire political life attacking the police and security services' very existence, in charge of our nation's security.

You are choosing between a party that have always stood for law order, and Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell.

## **CONCLUSION: SUMMING UP THE CHOICE**

Because this election is between a Conservative Party that will back the police to do your jobs, but won't shy away from taking difficult decisions when it's in the public's interest.

Listen to you when things need to change. But tell you when you need to change.

So when you go to vote on June 8<sup>th</sup>, I hope you will choose Theresa May.

Choose a party that will stand by the police when you need us too.

Choose a party that will challenge the police to change, when it is change that is needed.

Choose a party that will always put our country's security first.

Thank you