Beat: Local

Director General MI5

Andrew Parker ““ Speech ““ 17/10/17

London, 17.10.2017, 23:13 Time

USPA NEWS - Director General Andrew Parker - 2017 Speech

MI5 Director General (DG) Andrew Parker addressed an audience in Central London today, in which he spoke about the international counter terrorism threat that we are facing and how MI5 works with partners to tackle it.

Director General MI5, Andrew Parker ““ Speech ““ 17/10/17

Good morning. Thank you all for coming today.

It is rightly for Ministers to speak and account for Government to Parliament and the public. The Home Secretary, to whom I am accountable, does so regularly on security and other matters. As does the Prime Minister. My predecessors have made occasional public speeches over the past 25 years to help public understanding of our work. I´ve done so several times myself. I´m doing so again today to offer my perspective on the current threat situation, particularly terrorism and what we are doing about it.

In 2017, with all that has happened and much that has not, it is clear that we are contending with an intense UK terrorist threat from Islamist extremists. That threat is multi-dimensional, evolving rapidly, and operating at a scale and pace we´ve not seen before. But so too is our response. I want to tell you today about what that looks like.

I´ll begin with the threat. We´ve seen a dramatic upshift in the threat this year. It´s at the highest tempo I´ve seen in my 34 year career. Today there is more terrorist activity, coming at us more quickly, and it can be harder to detect.

I said in my Mansion House speech two years ago that I feared that even after a string of successful disruptions we had not yet reached the high water mark. Sadly that has proved to be the case. Islamist terrorism is an acute and enduring challenge that requires a sustained and comprehensive approach.

Twenty attacks in the UK have been foiled over the past four years. Many more will have been prevented by the early interventions we and the police make. There have been record numbers of terrorism related arrests: 379 in the year to June. Just in the last seven months, we and the police have thwarted seven terrorist plots by Islamist extremists, intending to maim and kill in Great Britain.

But tragically four such attacks have taken place, plus a further attack at Finsbury Park. 36 innocent people have lost their lives and many more have been injured or affected in some way by these despicable acts.

I know that I spoke on behalf of every member of MI5 when I wrote at the time about our hearts going out to everyone affected by these terrible events.

There has been a similar picture across Europe and beyond where we have seen a steady drum beat of attacks, including particularly in France, Belgium, Germany, and of course recently in Spain.

The scale at which we are operating is greater than ever before. We are now running well over 500 live operations involving around 3000 individuals known to be currently involved in extremist activity in some way. As well as those we are looking at today, risk can also come from returnees from Syria and Iraq and also the growing pool of over 20,000 individuals that we have looked at in the past in our terrorism investigations. And there will be some violent extremists not yet known to us at all.

This upshift is driven by Daesh´s murderous strategy and online propaganda. Daesh directing mass casualty plots. Daesh encouraging particular extremists in the UK to kill. Daesh inspiring attacks generally, by lone actors or small groups or anyone who will listen to their poisonous message.

We´ve also seen that terrorism breeds terrorism. Would-be attackers take encouragement from the acts of others and can be galvanised into taking action themselves. Acts of violence become normalised in their twisted thinking.

Meanwhile, Daesh itself is under military pressure and is rapidly losing ground in its heartland in Syria and Iraq. So much so that it´s now advising would-be fighters to choose other countries. Their false idea of a caliphate has been shown for what it is. At the same time the Daesh brand has taken root in some other countries where areas of low governance give it space to grow.

Tackling it as a movement will require sustained international focus for years to come. And of course Daesh isn´t the only group that despises our values and way of life. We are actively working against Al Qaeda and others who share their violent ideology.

The threat is more diverse than I´ve ever known. Plots developed here in the UK, but plots directed from overseas as well. Plots online. Complex scheming and also crude stabbings; lengthy planning but also spontaneous attacks. Extremists of all ages, gender and backgrounds, united only by the toxic ideology of violent victory that drives them.

These threats are sometimes now coming at us more quickly, whether crude but lethal attack methods - for example using a knife or a vehicle - or more sophisticated plots when in today´s world terrorists can learn all that they need online to make explosives and build a bomb. Attacks can sometimes accelerate from inception through planning to action in just a handful of days. This pace, together with the way extremists can exploit safe spaces online can make threats harder to detect and give us a smaller window to intervene.

And of course alongside all of that work against Islamist terrorism, MI5 remains a multi-dimensional organisation. We continue to bear down on terrorism in Northern Ireland with our police partners, and to work against espionage and other clandestine activity by Russia and other foreign states who seek to do Britain harm.

I´d like to say a few words about our response to this situation. I´ve always been clear that we can´t hope to stop everything. But I can tell you that MI5 and our partner agencies are bringing the full weight of our growing capabilities to counter this new intensity of threat. Day in and day out we are identifying and disrupting threats: stopping terrorism. Our response is unrelenting. Those that wish our country harm can expect to meet MI5 and the police. And they will face the full force of the law and be brought to justice.

We face this new order of challenge from a position of strength. The UK has world-class intelligence agencies and counter terrorism policing. We are developing, growing and sharpening our capabilities all the time. And we have the strongest possible partnerships. With SIS and GCHQ, with the police, and with many other organisations here and overseas. We stand with our European partners and of course work very closely with the US and all our other allies. Let me say a bit more about Europe. We don´t just stand with our European colleagues, we work with them. We share intelligence. We run joint operations. Every single day. Only last week I met again with my counterparts from 30 European security services, known together as the Counter Terrorism Group or CTG, as we decided on the next stages of collective action. It might help illustrate how close our working is if I say that we have a joint operational centre, which happens to be based in the Netherlands, where officers from across our services are working alongside each other every day in joint facilities with shared data in joint endeavour against the terrorists.

This delivers real results. Together we have stopped attacks. More than a dozen terrorists are in custody today who might not otherwise have been found in time.

The women and men of MI5, growing from 4,000 to 5,000 over the next couple of years, are of course members of the public, who are drawn from across the society that they protect. They get up and come to work every single day to make terrorist attacks less likely and to keep the country safe. They are constantly making tough professional judgements based on fragments of intelligence: pin pricks of light against a dark and shifting canvas. That is the job of MI5.

When an attack happens everyone in MI5 is deeply affected, on a personal as well as a professional level. But we are all driven by the mission to keep the country safe. And we are in a position to make a difference and do something about it. And so of course that is our focus. Our values, never more important as we face the current challenge, are strong. These enduring qualities that define the core of MI5 are fourfold: making a difference, professionalism, teamwork and innovation. My officers give their best even when they feel at their worst in the wake of attacks. They are up for - and are meeting - the challenge, and the energy is palpable.

Throughout our history MI5 has been all about innovating to meet the changing threat and the shifting technological environment. We review every major operation and learn from our successes. And when an attack happens we are determined, using the harsh light of hindsight, to squeeze out every last drop of learning so that we can be the very best we can be, now and in the future. This is what

guides our response to the attacks we have seen in 2017.

We are constantly evolving to stay ahead. That´s why, with the police, we´ve been conducting detailed reviews over recent months, both to extract all the lessons and to look at new ways of doing things. We welcome David Anderson QC´s role in independently validating what we are doing. But all this is just one part of the whole of Government response. To address the wider societal challenge of extremism in communities and online, and counter the narrative and underlying drivers that feed it. And the response goes beyond Government. It must include deepening partnerships with the private sector.

We all rely on a myriad of brilliant technological advances in everyday life. But an unintended side effect is that these advances also aid the terrorists. Whether it´s the ease of online purchasing, social media content, or encrypted communications. Addressing these challenges is about partnerships and ethical responsibility. No company wants to provide terrorists with explosive precursors. Social media platforms don´t want to host bomb-making videos. And communications providers don´t want to provide the means of terrorist planning beyond the sight of MI5. Some helpful action is being taken. But there is a challenge of pace, volume and reach as these technologies continue to develop so rapidly. We have a shared responsibility to do all that we can to prevent terrorist exploitation of internet carried services. And with the Government and the police, MI5 is committed to working together with the companies to tackle it.

It may well be that for as long as the drivers persist, there will remain a high risk of terrorist attacks. But most attempts will continue to be found and stopped. And the terrorists will certainly fail in their aim to change our society.

Finally, I want to take a moment to pay tribute to the dedication and skill of the men and women of MI5, our police, SIS and GCHQ partners, and all the agencies at home and overseas who together make up the team that´s pressing down on this threat. And I want to record special thanks to our agents, sometimes known as human sources. Those who courageously work for us in secret, close to the extremists, who do so much to help us prevent terrorist atrocities. We all owe them a debt of gratitude.

To conclude, the challenge that we face is undoubtedly a stark one. More threat, coming at us more quickly, and sometimes harder to detect. But it is a challenge that we and our partners are rising to and are facing down. We are committed to this for the long haul. Our unrelenting focus will remain on doing everything in our power every day to keep Britain safe.

Thank you.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-12183/director-general-mi5.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Daren Frankish - GOV

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Daren Frankish - GOV

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619