

Sajid Javid speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Sajid Javid MP, Home Secretary, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

“Thank you conference for that welcome.

It’s a huge privilege to be standing here as Home Secretary.

Now I know the question on your mind.

So let’s just deal with it upfront.

Yes, I did watch Bodyguard.

No, it wasn’t very realistic...

For a start, my codename is not Lavender...

And she didn’t even do the power stance!

But let me tell you about another story.

A story which started in the 1960’s.

Abdul-Ghani Javid left Pakistan and landed in Heathrow.

He spent what little he had on a coach ticket...

had his first night here in Birmingham,

then continued up north to Lancashire to find work in a cotton mill.

After standing outside the mill for weeks, he got that first job, and started a family.

Eventually, there were seven of us living in a two-bedroom flat...

on what the papers called “Britain’s most dangerous street”.

That’s my story.

And if you’d have told me back then what I’d be doing now...

...I’d have told you that it was less believable than any TV drama.

That makes me proud not just for myself and my family – but for my country.

So, what does the Conservative party offer a working class son-of-an-

immigrant kid from Rochdale?

You made him Home Secretary.

This new challenge is one that I am giving absolutely everything to.

So I'm especially grateful to have one of the best ministerial teams.

We've got Caroline Nokes, Ben Wallace, Nick Hurd, Victoria Atkins, and Susan Williams.

Backed up by our parliamentary team Simon Hoare, Rachel Maclean, Paul Masterton, Paul Maynard, and Zahida Manzoor.

So thank you to my whole team at the Home Office.

There is something profound about that word 'home'.

Most of my counterparts around the world run 'Ministries of the Interior'.

Interior ministry – it has a cold, brittle feel to it.

Home – is where you feel safe, comfortable and in control.

It reflects your identity and your values.

And it is your base for going out into the wider world.

That's exactly the kind of place we want the UK to be.

Here's the pledge of this Party:

Britain, a home for all its citizens.

Together, we will build a stronger home.

Beyond Britain, outside our home...

the winds of division and extremism are blowing strong.

All over the world,

we see the appeal being made to intolerance,

to closed societies,

to aggressive nationalism,

to autocracy.

Well not here.

Not in Conservative Britain.

It might not always feel like it, but our mainstream cultural values unite us

all.

We are – and will continue to be –
the home of the rule of law,
of civil liberties,
of firm but fair immigration rules,
of racial equality,
of respect for every citizen.

We will fight fear with optimism,
prejudice with tolerance,
hate with hope.

That's our Conservatism.

We choose the path of Modern Britain.

Tolerant Britain.

Global Britain.

That is the opportunity and challenge that leaving the European Union represents.

And to meet our best potential, we need to bring the country together.

The worst way to do that, would be to backtrack on the referendum result.

If Brexit feels like a dividing line in our country now...

just imagine what it would feel like if we didn't follow-through with the result of the referendum.

There's something very 'Liberal Democrat' about saying...

"That referendum was a total nightmare, let's have another one!"

We all agreed to honour the result.

So let's get on with it.

No second-guessing.

No best-of-three.

One vote...

one mandate...

one nation moving forwards together.

This is the time to reaffirm our identity and values as a country.

To renew our sense of citizenship – what it means, who is part of it.

And to do whatever we can to protect our society and its values in the years to come.

So I want to talk today about how we keep our home safe...

How we should and will continue to welcome people into our home...

And how we will make sure that our rules and values are upheld, for the good of everyone.

We are going to get these things right.

We are going to heal those divisions.

And we will build that stronger home.

The first duty of government is keeping our nation and our people safe.

Security underpins our liberty and our prosperity.

Last year, we experienced five terror attacks on British soil.

This year, we've seen a brazen attack in Salisbury by a hostile state.

For every successful attempt that makes the news, many other plots are disrupted.

Many cyberattacks neutralised.

Many journeys to radicalisation cut short.

I've been deeply impressed by the smart, committed people who spend their careers protecting us.

And I want to pay tribute to both Amber Rudd and the Prime Minister.

What dedication, firmness and integrity they brought to this role.

They deserve our profound thanks.

But I'd like to add something else.

Something that's a little uncomfortable, but it needs to be said.

Not all threats come from outside.

Anything that undermines our response to threats is a threat itself.

Imagine having someone in no.10 who has voted against vital counter-terrorism

legislation.

Someone who refuses to condemn the Kremlin over an attack on our soil.

Someone who seriously suggested sending a nerve agent sample to Vladimir Putin, to see if the Russians could tell us what it was.

Who compared the actions of the US military, our closest ally, to Daesh.

Who voted against banning Al Qaeda.

This is the truth. These are the facts.

And on these facts alone:

Jeremy Corbyn is a threat to our national security.

And let me tell you something else, this isn't a party political point.

Because a vast number of Labour MPs know this is right.

If Mr Corbyn were ever to be prime minister this behaviour wouldn't just be naïve,

it wouldn't just be misguided, it would be downright dangerous.

And it is our duty to stop him.

Keeping our liberal, tolerant democracy safe is about more than national security.

Threats to our law-abiding society are evolving quickly.

We must evolve with them and step-up our response.

Online there are new threats to cyber security and keeping our children safe.

I won't flinch in responding to these challenges.

That includes standing up to the tech giants and demanding that they take their responsibility seriously.

And they should be in no doubt: we will legislate.

How we legislate will be influenced by the actions they choose to take now.

Offline, the scandal of child grooming gangs is one of the most shocking state failures that I can remember.

I will not let cultural or political sensitivities get in the way of understanding the problem and doing something about it.

It is a statement of fact – a fact which both saddens and angers me – that most of the men in recent high profile gang convictions have had Pakistani heritage.

This behaviour is a disgrace to that heritage.

So I've instructed my officials to look into this unflinchingly.

And where the evidence suggests that there are certain cultural factors driving this...

I will not hesitate to act.

Just as there is damage in insensitive words or actions...

these cases have shown the cost of being over-sensitive.

As well as the awful cost to victims, if problems like this are left unchecked, they will also give fuel to those who want to stoke division between our communities.

This is how the seeds of destructive populism are sown.

I'm in a position to deal with this confidently – and I will.

Those who break the law undermine the foundations of our home.

That's why Conservatives will always be the party of law and order.

I know that some people are starting to feel a sense that law enforcement is becoming too detached from day-to-day crime...

... too distant from rural areas.

Faced with increasing demands and finite resources, our police forces do a fantastic job ...

... and I will always support them.

The rise in serious violence in London and our cities is especially worrying.

There's no time for sitting around when young people are dying on our streets.

We need to bring everything – and everyone – to bear on this.

Through our Serious Violence Strategy we have already brought together all the key parts of government, law enforcement and society.

And now we will do more.

We will take steps to introduce a statutory duty for all agencies to tackle this problem together.

That means those in health, education, social services, local government, housing – the whole lot.

I'm also pleased to announce today a new £200 million endowment fund, that

will target young people at risk of starting a life of crime and violence.

We know that one of the causes of the rise of serious violence is changes in the market for illegal drugs.

We need a much better understanding of who drug users are, what they take, how often they take it, and so much more.

So I will launch a major review of the market for illegal drugs.

Armed with this evidence, I will step up our fight against drugs gangs that prey on our children.

On my watch, illegal drug use will never be tolerated.

It is fundamental to our sense of security that the homes and streets we live in feel safe.

I do have a confession to make, though.

It's a confession I had to tell the Police Federation.

When I was younger, I was in a gang.

A gang of two.

It involved me and my brother Bas.

I was eleven, he was nine.

We called ourselves The Crime Busters.

Our mission: to find crime and stop it.

Our equipment: two knackered old bikes, and two cheapo walkie-talkies.

Years later, my little brother is still a crime buster – only this time, for real.

He's a Chief Superintendent – right here, in the West Midlands.

I am so so proud of him.

And I know we are all grateful to West Midlands police, and to supporting forces, for keeping us safe here at conference.

So you can believe me when I say:

I will be the champion of giving police the tools and protection they need to do their job.

We must trust our police to do that job.

They are the enforcers of our rules.

If those rules break down then so does a sense of fairness, mutual trust, and security.

It doesn't matter who you are, how old you are, or where you are from.

In Britain everybody plays by the same rules.

Because we all share the same home.

Sometimes you have to be tough in enforcing shared rules.

But being strong and safe doesn't have to mean being closed and unwelcoming.

We are so lucky to live in an open, welcoming society.

I'm proud of the welcome we give to people from other countries...

And the openness to the world that has helped us to thrive.

If you look at some countries across Europe, populist, nationalist – even outright racist – parties have won significant numbers of seats.

Not here.

We see people from diverse backgrounds succeeding in all walks of life, and at all levels.

This progress is happening in our politics too.

That requires role models and pioneers.

People on all sides.

Including people we wouldn't normally praise in our Party conference.

People like Diane Abbott.

Yes, Diane Abbott.

We might disagree with the Shadow Home Secretary on almost all her policies.

But it takes guts and determination to become the first black woman to be elected to the House of Commons.

And we should pay tribute to that.

As Conservatives:

we focus not on where you're from, but on where you can go.

We believe in opportunity for all.

We believe in respect for all.

And I mean all.

Every individual and every community must feel safe to live their lives in our society.

But at this moment that is not true.

That's something I never expected to say in 21st century Britain.

It is deeply shocking to see an entire community – our Jewish community – united in their fears and concerns about a major political party.

And to see that party – especially its leader – repeatedly failing to respond to those concerns with the seriousness that's required.

This party will root out antisemitism wherever and whenever we find it. Anti-Muslim prejudice is also completely unacceptable.

It is a prejudice that is sometimes turning into violence.

I know from many friends, and family, that the Muslim community needs reassurance.

We stand with them too.

Together, for all our citizens, we will build a stronger home.

This is my view of what it means to be British.

Following the decision to leave the EU,

we have both the need and the opportunity...

to define our country once more.

To define ourselves at home and abroad.

So I want to talk about our shared British values.

And what we should be as a country.

Britain at its best is open, welcoming and tolerant.

And Britain has high expectations too of the behaviours, standards and values of which we are all proud.

I stand before you as the first Home Secretary in a generation...

that is actually able to define an immigration system, without being constrained by the EU.

This is an incredible opportunity.

And it falls to us to ensure that these rules are not just a technocratic exercise.

But that they are an expression of our values – our British values.

We shouldn't brush aside the legitimate concerns that many people – most people – have had about the way immigration has been managed, especially the anxieties of those on low pay or in low skilled jobs.

The irresponsible way Labour increased immigration, without any real mandate, has understandably undermined the public's trust.

They lost faith that politicians will manage immigration sustainably.

But that doesn't mean they are hostile to individuals.

Just look at the reaction to difficulties faced by Afghan interpreters who helped our troops.

Or Caribbean families who started coming here in the 1950's.

When the British public cries out for decency, they're usually right.

The Windrush scandal was a public policy failure many years in the making.

These were people who rightfully settled here from the Commonwealth decades ago and became pillars of our communities.

The way the system had been treating them – over many years – deeply offended our sense of fairness.

So we are doing everything to put it right.

Our eyes were opened in a different way by the tragedy of Grenfell.

That fire affected a truly diverse community of residents.

For me, even responding to it was the most moving and harrowing experience of my life.

And it laid bare how some communities have not been given the same standards and opportunities that we all expect.

We have to put that right too.

But there is a wider, more positive story here.

It is my strong belief that immigration has been good for Britain.

We have adopted many of the best bits of other countries.

It has made us a global hub for culture, business and travel.

It has broadened our horizons and boosted our economy in so many ways.

It has made our home stronger.

And after Brexit we will still need it to stay strong and prosperous.

We want to welcome people to this country.

And I say to those EU citizens, who have already made the UK their home...

You have benefited our country.

You are part of our country.

Part of many of our families.

Part of our home.

So let me be very clear:

Deal or no deal...

We want you to stay.

We need you to stay.

You can stay.

Thanks to the referendum we now have a unique opportunity to reshape our immigration system for the future.

A skills-based, single system that is opened up to talent from across the world.

A system that doesn't discriminate between any one region or country.

A system based on merit.

That judges people not by where they are from, but on what they can do.

What people want – and they will get – is control of our own system.

With a lower, and sustainable level of net migration.

And above all, that has to mean one thing: an end to freedom of movement.

A safe home.

An open, welcoming, tolerant home.

And finally, a home of shared values.

A home where all the different residents and guests come together under one roof.

With one common set of values to live by, for everyone's benefit and comfort.

We welcome newcomers.

In turn, we expect them to live by our British values.

And it is only right that we make it clear to all new citizens what we are for, and what we are against.

The existing “Life in the UK” test for new citizens is not enough.

Maybe it is helpful for people to know the name of the sixth wife of Henry VIII.

But far more important to me, is that they also understand the liberal, democratic values that bind our society together.

Citizenship should mean more than being able to win a pub quiz.

We need to make it a British values test – and that’s exactly what I will bring in.

It’s about signing up to those values that we share and live by together.

It’s about starting as you mean to go on.

It’s about integration, not segregation.

And I’m determined to break down barriers to integration wherever I find them.

Take for example, the most basic barrier of all: language.

When I was the Communities Secretary, we found that over 700,000 people in the UK cannot even speak a basic level of English.

700,000.

How can we possibly make a common home together if we can’t even communicate with each other?

That’s why I created a new Integrated Communities Fund, to work with people already in our country.

And now, as Home Secretary, I will apply these principles to those who arrive in our country.

So not only will there be a new values test...

...but we will also strengthen the English language requirements for all new citizens.

Getting integration right also means breaking down barriers to our values.

I think especially of oppressive, medieval practices affecting women like forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so-called honour-based violence.

We already have some of the toughest laws in the world against these crimes.

But we need to do more.

So we will consult on making it a mandatory duty for professionals to report

forced marriage whenever they come across it.

And when women have the courage to come forward ...

... and inform us that they have been forced to sponsor a spousal visa against their will ...

... we will not only protect their anonymity ...

... but we will do everything we can to deny or revoke that visa.

It is not liberal to stay silent about illiberal practices – that's just weakness. If we see people undermining our values and don't do anything about it, we undermine our values still further.

We cannot allow that.

We will not allow that.

And we will not stand back when some people go absolutely against everything we stand for.

If you leave our home to go abroad to join Daesh or other terrorist groups, you are rejecting our values, and endangering our security.

That's why, in the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Bill, we will introduce a new Designated Area offence.

This gives the Home Secretary the power to criminalise travel to terrorist hotspots – like Daesh's so-called caliphate.

You have to have a damn good reason to go somewhere like that.

If you don't, you will be prosecuted.

And if you are actively engaged in fighting for these groups...

you should also know that you're putting your citizenship at risk.

The Home Secretary has the power to strip dual-citizens of their British citizenship.

It is a power used for extreme and exceptional cases.

It should be used with great care and discretion – but also determination.

In recent years we have exercised this power for terrorists who are a threat to the country.

Now, for the first time, I will apply this power to some of those who are convicted of the most grave criminal offences.

This applies to some of the despicable men involved in gang-based child sexual exploitation.

So our message to the very worst criminals is clear:

If you grossly abuse the laws of this country.

You will no longer be welcome in our home.

It is when we're comfortable in our own security, identity, and values...

that we are also comfortable being open with others...

whether at home or abroad.

That means building that safe home...

That tolerant and welcoming home...

That home where everyone plays by the same rules.

We are the party that can make this happen.

Driven by a patriotic belief in what our country is about...

and what we are capable of.

Proud of who we are.

Proud of what we do.

And proud of where we're going.

I speak with feeling about this country...

because for my family, Britain was a choice.

They came here for freedom, security, opportunity and prosperity.

It is because of these strengths that I have always been an optimist about Britain's future.

And now it is my duty as their son, and a child of this country,

to help secure for this generation –

and for future generations –

all of the things that make this country a beacon for the world.

Together, we will build that stronger home."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.