

UK government officials back Trump demands for Internet censorship following London bombing

By Paul Mitchell and Robert Stevens
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Moves by the ruling elites, in the US and internationally, to censor and even shut down access to the Internet, are gathering pace following Friday's detonation of a bomb on a London Underground train.

Within minutes of the bombing at Parsons Green tube station that injured 30 people, US President Donald Trump called for the Internet to be shut off. Within hours, senior government UK officials were repeating his demands in increasingly hysterical terms.

The government of UK Prime Minister Theresa May quickly used the bombing to increase the UK terror threat level from "severe" to the highest level, "critical," triggering Operation Temperer, the mobilisation of heavily armed soldiers working alongside armed police on the streets of the capital and other major urban areas.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, national lead for counterterrorism policing, declared, "Military personnel have been drafted in to protect national infrastructure sites, allowing additional armed police officers to carry out patrols." These would "be patrolling at crowded places, iconic sites, transport hubs and ports."

On Saturday, the *Daily Star* reported that troops from the Special Air Service (SAS) have been deployed in pairs on the London Underground "with orders to kill terrorists." A source told the newspaper, "The unit is composed of some of both male and female personnel from the Special Reconnaissance Regiment who are trained killers and can pose as couples while travelling on public transport."

Within hours of the explosion, an 18-year-old was arrested in the departure hall at the port of Dover on suspicion of planting the homemade bomb.

The *Guardian* reported that he is "suspected to have planted the device on the tube carriage, which was detonated by a timer, and would have caused much more

extensive casualties had it fully exploded. Investigators do not believe the person who placed the homemade bomb on the train was present when it exploded."

A second man, 21 years old, was arrested in Hounslow, west London, shortly before midnight on Saturday night.

Both are being held under Section 41 of the draconian Terrorism Act, allowing police to keep them detained without a warrant.

Following the arrest of the second person, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) based at MI5 reduced the threat level from critical back to severe. However, armed police will still be on Britain's streets for days to come. Rowley said Sunday, "The military support we have had in place under Operation Temperer will start to phase out as we move through the coming week."

Trump tweeted that the bombers were "sick and demented people who were in the sights of Scotland Yard. Must be proactive!" He declared, "Loser terrorists must be dealt with in a much tougher manner ... The internet is their main recruitment tool which we must cut off & use better!"

Trump's remarks about the attackers being known to the British authorities were borne out by a report in the *Daily Mail*. It cited neighbours of the 18-year-old's foster carers, Ronald and Penelope Jones, who live in Sunbury-on-Thames, who said he was detained by police at the same tube station days before the attack. Serena Barber said, "I know about two weeks ago he was arrested by police at Parsons Green, for what I don't know and returned back to Penny and Ron. After that Penny said she was going to have to stop caring for him, she couldn't handle him."

Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May immediately condemned Trump's remarks, but this consternation derives from the fact that they pulled the rug from under

her government's attempts to cover up the fact that virtually all terror attacks in Britain and Europe have been carried out by individuals, often radicalised Islamists, who were known to and monitored by the state.

It is a matter of record that many of them had been employed by the major powers in their neo-colonial wars in Africa and the Middle East.

Following the May 22 Manchester Arena suicide bombing attack, in which 22 people died, US intelligence sources divulged the identity of the bomber, Salman Abedi. They claimed that he did not act alone, but was part of a wider network that had been allowed to operate by the British intelligence services for years. Similarly, the June 3 attack on London Bridge and Borough Market, which killed eight people and injured 48, was carried out by three individuals known to the intelligence services and police.

Trump's outburst was aimed at putting pressure on the May government not to vacillate in its plans to step up police and intelligence operations and roll out long-prepared repressive legislation to be used against domestic opposition to its agenda of austerity, militarism and war.

May and her government are at one with Trump on curtailing the Internet. This week she is co-hosting a summit with French President Emmanuel Macron in New York "to talk about what more we can be doing to ensure that we deal with the terrorist propaganda, with the extremist propaganda, with the hatred that is put out across the Internet."

UK Security Minister Ben Wallace warned Internet companies they had to speed up the removal of terrorist material declaring, "We are constantly trying to build that pressure, explaining to them that we think that they can do more and where we need to, we get tougher on them."

Wallace added, "It is a 21st century phenomena. We have to deal with it. On the Internet people can learn how to make bombs, they can learn how to use weapons."

Wallace's comments followed lurid headlines in the UK media Saturday demanding a crackdown on Internet "extremism," with the right-wing *Daily Mail* declaring that May "is to confront bosses of the web giants with blood on their hands." The article stated that the instructions on how to make the type of bomb detonated in London last Friday was readily available on the Internet via a 10-minute Google search.

Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg, who is being touted as a leadership contender against May, said Google should be held criminally liable for Friday's attack.

Rees-Mogg declared, "Google has amazing software that makes it possible to search for anything ... it is shameful that it will not use its technology to root out sites that help evil-doers."

"I would like to see the company made criminally liable for the result of any terrorist act that it can be shown to have abetted. It must do more to help prevent terror."

Simon Kempton, head of counterterrorism for the Police Federation of England and Wales, said, "The responsibility is on the Internet providers, the hosts, to take down this material if it is clearly a threat to public safety."

In the name of opposing "extremism," a drastic curtailing of democratic rights and civil liberties is being readied, with the constant presence of armed soldiers and police on the streets becoming the new normal.

To this end, Colonel Richard Kemp, ex-commander of UK troops in Afghanistan, demanded in the *Sunday Express*, "STOP unregulated movement from EU countries to the UK, even before Brexit ... VET all those entering the UK from countries where violence is rife, including refugees from countries like Syria ... DEPORT all non-British citizens involved in extremism or radicalisation ... SET UP special courts to hear evidence based on secret intelligence that cannot be revealed in public ... SEGREGATE and if necessary isolate terrorist convicts and others who try to radicalise their fellow prisoners ... TAG those involved in extremism that cannot be deported or imprisoned so their movements can be more effectively monitored ... BAN burkas and other clothing that conceals identity in public places."

Friday's attack has been used by the Tory government to pile even more resources into facilitating state repression. On Sunday Home Secretary Amber Rudd announced that an additional £24 million was going towards "counterterrorism" operations nationwide.

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