

Funding the Future

Today is one where we must commit to the freedoms that ..

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We face another Sunday morning of shock and dismay mixed with empathy for those who have lost life, been injured and had their lives thrown into turmoil by terrorists: my concern and good wishes goes to them all.

Saying that, this group is bigger than those and their loved ones directly impacted by last night. What is clear now is that terrorists with no concern for their own lives are determined to attack those enjoying their's. We saw it in Manchester; last night was another attack on people at play.

It's odd that play is a word we little use, except for children's activities. But the truth is that once basic needs are met (and I am all too well aware how hard that is for many) play is what we really want to do. How we do that, what toys we use, who we do it with; all those things are what define so much of who and what we are.

Not all those at London Bridge last night were at play, but many were. This was Saturday night London. It's not part of my life now, but once upon a time it was. And this attack was on that right to play. It challenges our right to associate. Our right to have a drink if we wish. The right of women to partake. It challenges all our freedoms to choose that have been fundamental to the creation of the liberal state.

This attack, like that at Manchester, was then an attack on us all. It requires a response that reflects that. Little can stop a person once they have launched such an attack: at that point life is likely to be lost whatever happens. But prevention is possible.

This country can afford 10,000 more police officers.

And the intelligence that they can bring.

As well as the sense of security that they might supply.

It can afford these officers without cuts elsewhere. There is underemployment in this country. The capacity to increase our security exists. And every police officer employed pays taxes, and then spends what they earn to people who pay tax, and so on and on.

In that case because there is underemployment the real cost of engaging those officers is minimal. Bizarrely, Dian Abbott may have been right on that point, although it is clear she did not know why.

And we must afford those officers. Because what is at threat is our freedom. The physical threat to each of us is, realistically, tiny. But the threat to our right to enjoy life is real, and this morning many will be feeling that.

The right response across the political spectrum is to commit to more policing. But it is also to commit to building a society in which our freedoms can be enjoyed. That is a society where people can go out. Where people can choose to associate how they wish. To have a drink in peace if they want. To love as they will.

Now is not the time for Trump's response that restricts everyone's freedom and penalises those who have never been at fault.

Now is the time to uphold life by committing to the freedoms that underpin it.

And the cost is price worth paying.