

Extremism and hate will feature in Saturday's demonstra...

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This is from the front page of The Times today:

Braverman brands Met biased over Gaza march

Police accused of being soft on left-wing protests

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Suella Braverman accused the Metropolitan Police of "playing favourites" with protesters as she clashed with Britain's most senior officer over his decision to let Saturday's pro-Palestinian march go ahead.

In an article in today's Times, the home secretary also risked increasing tensions further by claiming that the weekly pro-Palestinian protests were being used by Islamic extremists as an attempt to dominate the streets of London. She compared these "hate marches" to sectarian rallies held in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

Braverman claimed that senior officers are biased in their policing of protests and employ a "double standard", taking a softer approach with left-wing groups such as Black Lives Matter than with right-wing protests such as anti-lockdown demonstrations.

Her intervention came after Sir Mark Rowley, the Met commissioner, said that the threshold of serious disorder needed to ban an Armistice Day protest had not been met.

Met sources emphasised that the commissioner was focused on applying the law and overseeing operational activity ahead of a weekend of massive national significance.

Braverman said there must not be soft-touch policing of this weekend's protest in implicit criticism of the Met's

management of the rallies over the past month. The public, she said, "expect to see an assertive and proactive approach to any displays of hate, breaches of conditions and general disorder".

Her comments come despite Rishi Sunak toning down his rhetoric after summoning Rowley to a meeting in Downing Street to explain his decision. The prime minister had said the Met chief would be held accountable if protests led to disruption of Remembrance commemorations. However, after the meeting Sunak said that Rowley had provided "reassurances that the police are taking every step necessary" to prevent such disruption.

Sunak said: "It's welcome that the police have confirmed that the march will be away from the Cenotaph and they will ensure that the timings do not conflict with any Remembrance events. There remains the risk of those who seek to divide society using this weekend as a platform to do so."

The organisers of Saturday's protest rejected a request by the Met this week to cancel their fifth consecutive rally, stressing that it will start nearly two hours after the two minutes' silence to remember the war dead and altering the route to ensure it avoids the Cenotaph on Whitehall.

Rowley, who had to cancel a speech for the meeting, has not ruled out requesting a ban if intelligence changes about the nature of the protests. On **Continued on page 2**

The story has been widely reported: Twitter produced the above clip.

There are some things we have to assume about this. The first is that Sunak approved the article: anything written by a minister has to go through Downing Street for approval prior to publication. We should read this as a reflection of Tory policy in that case.

Second, this means that the government is now questioning the operational independence of the police - something that it is not meant to do.

Third, the implication is obvious. The Tories - and we cannot say that this is an action by Braverman alone - want the police to act in accordance with Tory party prejudice and not the law.

So, we have to conclude, fourthly, that the Tories have given up any pretence of using the instruments of state in accordance with the rule of law and do instead wish to use them solely in their own interests. I keep talking about fascism: this is a clear sign of how close we now are to it.

Braverman is clearly out of control.

Sunak clearly thinks himself powerless to do anything about it.

Meanwhile, extremism and hate will feature in Saturday's demonstration - because the Home Secretary has sent them an invitation.

I hope it is peaceful. I know full well that there will be those on the sidelines who intend otherwise.