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OFFICIAL REPORT

Ninth Delegated Legislation Committee

DRAFT COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015 (RISK OF BEING DRAWN INTO TERRORISM) (GUIDANCE) REGULATIONS 2015

Thursday 10 September 2015

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: GERAINT DAVIES

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| † Ansell, Caroline (<i>Eastbourne</i>) (Con) | † Hanson, Mr David (<i>Delyn</i>) (Lab) |
| † Arkless, Richard (<i>Dumfries and Galloway</i>) (SNP) | † Hayes, Mr John (<i>Minister for Security</i>) |
| Austin, Ian (<i>Dudley North</i>) (Lab) | † Hoare, Simon (<i>North Dorset</i>) (Con) |
| † Chalk, Alex (<i>Cheltenham</i>) (Con) | † Jayawardena, Mr Ranil (<i>North East Hampshire</i>) (Con) |
| † Coffey, Ann (<i>Stockport</i>) (Lab) | † Robinson, Gavin (<i>Belfast East</i>) (DUP) |
| Danczuk, Simon (<i>Rochdale</i>) (Lab) | † Tami, Mark (<i>Alyn and Deeside</i>) (Lab) |
| † Davies, Mims (<i>Eastleigh</i>) (Con) | † White, Chris (<i>Warwick and Leamington</i>) (Con) |
| † Elphicke, Charlie (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>) | |
| † Fernandes, Suella (<i>Fareham</i>) (Con) | Daniel Whitford, <i>Committee Clerk</i> |
| † Glindon, Mary (<i>North Tyneside</i>) (Lab) | |
| † Graham, Richard (<i>Gloucester</i>) (Con) | † attended the Committee |

Ninth Delegated Legislation Committee

Thursday 10 September 2015

[GERAINT DAVIES *in the Chair*]

Draft Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Risk of Being Drawn into Terrorism) (Guidance) Regulations 2015

3 pm

The Minister for Security (Mr John Hayes): I beg to move,

That the Committee has considered the draft Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Risk of Being Drawn into Terrorism) (Guidance) Regulations 2015.

It is a delight to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Davies, which I know will be characterised by the generosity borne of your distinguished service to this House. It is a delight, too, to introduce this important provision at an important time for our country.

This House is often at its best when we put aside partisan differences and act in the national interest, which is, after all, what motivates everyone who comes here to do what is right and good. We all seek to improve our country, and when we put aside our differences we earn the respect of the whole of our nation. There could scarcely be a subject of more pressing significance that obliges us to do just that than the one we are considering today.

Make no mistake, the threat that this country faces is imminent and profound. The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, which provides the official analysis of the scale of the threat, suggests it is severe, which means an attack is very likely. That is the technical description. To that end, it is important that the Government take their responsibility seriously by equipping those who keep us safe with the necessary powers and resources to do their job. All Governments have recognised that, and I believe that all Members of this House recognise it, too. This short debate gives us the chance to speak with a single voice in response to that threat, in the way the public expect us to do.

I can confirm that the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments has considered and cleared this instrument. I put on the record my appreciation of the Committee, which showed great forbearance in considering this instrument outside its normal timescale due to the recess.

Let me turn to the purpose and importance of this legislation. I have talked about the scale of the threat we face and described it as severe—that is not my description, but, as I said, the analysis borne of JTAC's close consideration—but the emergence of ISIL has exacerbated all that. Many of the horrors we have endured preceded ISIL. We recently spoke about 7/7 when its anniversary was raised on the Floor of the House; we all remember those dreadful events. None the less, ISIL and the vulnerable young people who have travelled to Syria and Iraq present a heightened threat to our national security. The ideology promoted by ISIL and the extremists who champion its cause represents a clear and present danger to our security and our values.

The Prime Minister spoke recently about those subjects to teachers and students at Birmingham's Ninestiles school. He described it as the struggle of our generation, which I think is not an overstatement, but a fair summary of where we stand and where we are. We must confront and defeat those who espouse a poisonous, subversive and extreme doctrine. We must work together to promote our shared values, time-honoured principles and traditions, embodied in institutions—not least Parliament—that are, by their very nature, inclusive and essential to building a strong, cohesive society. In short, we must build a society in which the things that unite us are greater than anything that divides us, and in which our common and shared sense of belonging inspires and protects us from the kind of poison I have briefly described. The Prime Minister said:

“Whether you are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian or Sikh...we can all feel part of this country—and we must now all come together and stand up for our values with confidence and pride.”

The intelligence agencies tell us that the threat is now worse than at any time since 9/11. It is serious and growing. The threat has changed, and so must our response. It is important to emphasise that. It would be easy to assume that the threat is static, but of course it is not; it is highly dynamic. It is easy to make that assumption because the barbarism that characterises those people is archaic. Their methods, however, are far from archaic; they are up-to-date and high-tech. The means by which they prosecute their wicked cause are ever-changing, and our response, reflecting that dynamism, must at least match it and ideally go beyond it in dealing with the threat. As part of our response, we must work together to continue to combat the underlying ideology that feeds, supports and sanctions terrorism. We must prevent people from being drawn on to that path.

With your indulgence, Mr Davies, I will digress for a moment. This morning, I visited Leeds prison with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, whose charity, Mosaic, is doing so much to promote social cohesion, to work with Muslim communities in particular—I was speaking to some Muslim prisoners in that place—and to show those communities and individuals that they can be proud to be British because Britain can be proud of them when they do the right thing.

The Prime Minister speaks of a generational challenge, which we must face together, united and with a single voice. When this House speaks with a single voice, our enemies shudder. When we are divided, they must cackle. In that context, this instrument could scarcely be more important.

The Prevent duty is a fundamental part of our response and has been over successive Governments. It places a statutory responsibility on specified authorities to have due regard when exercising their functions to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The duty is built on the work of the existing Prevent strategy and its programme to protect people from the poisonous and pernicious influence of extremist ideas that are used to legitimise terrorism. It seeks to ensure that bodies across the country play their part and work in partnership.

I was speaking to two colleagues from the Labour party yesterday about their communities and the role that MPs can play. I said that perhaps we have underestimated the role of MPs. When we go off script, our officials always get worried. The shadow Minister knows

that because he was a distinguished Home Office Minister—I remember, when he served in that role and I was a mere shadow Minister, how kind and responsible he was. I say to my officials and the whole Committee through you, Mr Davies, that perhaps we should have engaged MPs more in that work. Each MP can play their part, just as local authorities can, in building those bridges and creating that shared sense of belonging. We all know our patches better than most people. We know the sensitivities and the differences, and we know how to respond to those differences in a way that is appropriate to each locality. I want MPs to be more involved, as I said to those colleagues yesterday.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 was debated in the House earlier this year. The primary legislation was enacted on 12 February. Consideration of the legislation led to a widespread recognition that the threat from terrorism was as I have described it, and there was broad support for the measures contained within it. It might help the Committee in its consideration of the instrument if I briefly outline what the Government seek to achieve by it and why it is now necessary.

In March, guidance was approved by this House for all specified authorities captured by the duty, which included guidance for higher and further education institutions, but not on the specific issue of extremist speakers and events, which is one of the areas of greatest concern. Professor Mohammed Abdel-Haq of the University of Bolton said that we have a duty of care to protect students from the threat of that kind of polemic, which leads first to extremism, then to violent extremism and can lead to terrorism. I am not being speculative; we know that it has happened and that there have been problems.

As shadow Minister for Further Education early in the life of a previous Government, I was involved in the Prevent review. I worked with academics and the National Union of Students under the chairmanship of Mohammed Abdel-Haq to sharpen our response to exactly the subjects we are debating today. We must now go further to reflect the dynamism of the threat we face.

My predecessor informed the House earlier this year that the duty would not be commenced for further and higher education institutions until the remaining guidance was published, which would be for the next Government—this Government—to introduce in this Session. The purpose of the regulations contained in this statutory instrument is to do just that. The guidance under consideration today sets out the detail of what the duty will mean in practice for further and higher education institutions. It explains the steps that should be taken to ensure compliance. It includes the original guidance for those sectors from the document previously published in March, with the addition of a section on speakers and events. I assure the Committee that the original guidance remains unchanged from that which was previously approved by Parliament. It is important for members of the Committee to receive that assurance.

Accordingly, the regulations will also bring into effect revisions to the earlier guidance, so as to remove the text that has been superseded by this guidance. That comes as a result of discussions we have had with HE and FE institutions. We have listened to their concerns, and we have tried to build something that can work. We know that there is always a profound tension between academic freedom and the freedom of speech and—my goodness, this is at the very heart of the idea of the

university. One thinks of one of my heroes, Cardinal Newman, but we do not have time to speak of him at any great length. There is tension between all that and the need to protect Professor Abdel-Haq's duty of care.

As members of the Committee who have a background in education know, people involved in those sectors have always taken their pastoral duty seriously. Schools, colleges and universities have always understood that pastoral care is part of what they need to offer the people who are in their charge. I have worked with my Department, and we have been in discussion with those sectors to ensure that this can be delivered and that it is possible. Of course, it is much more than possible; it is absolutely essential.

Let me say a word about the necessity of this instrument. The regulations we are debating today are crucial to ensuring that the duty can be implemented effectively. They will mean that higher and further education institutions play their part in tackling this important issue. Partnership working is a key theme for all specified authorities throughout the statutory guidance, and the duty needs to be in force for all authorities for those partnerships to work successfully. Furthermore, universities and colleges were made subject to the duty in recognition of the very real risk of radicalisation. I could provide hon. Members with examples of problems in the past at inordinate length, but I will not as I suspect they will know many of them.

We know that radicalisation on campus can be facilitated through events held by extremist speakers, and that radicalised students can act as a focal point for further radicalisation through personal contact with fellow students and, in particular, social media activity—my goodness, we could have a long debate just on that, but again time does not permit. It is therefore imperative that universities and colleges start to implement the duty as soon as practicable.

Sectors and institutions are not alone in their vital work of countering extremist narratives and protecting this country's young people from their damaging influence. Since 2011, the existing Prevent strategy has been delivered across the country by a network of dedicated and hard-working individuals who work with our front-line sectors to provide training and support on these vital issues. I know Committee members will say that it is great to have that sort of determination. Indeed, some Committee members will say, "John, you personify that determination." But they will equally ask whether the universities are equipped to do this, whether the colleges are trained and whether the staff will know how to identify the problem and counter it. It is absolutely right that we put training in place to develop those skills. I acknowledge and recognise that, and I have missioned my Department to work with Prevent co-ordinators to do just that.

Much has already been done. We have held a series of events across the country, and a large number of people from the education and health sectors and local government have been involved. Seventy Prevent co-ordinators have worked tirelessly over recent years with our front-line staff to help to identify extremist influences and to prevent vulnerable individuals from being drawn into violent extremism and, ultimately, terrorism. There is a continuum that starts with extremism and ends with terrorism. It would be quite wrong to assume that those things are unrelated. Of course, it is not an inevitable, direct correlation, but there is a correlation.

[Mr John Hayes]

Before we debate these regulations, I would like to remind and reassure the Committee about the steps that the previous Government and this Government have taken to ensure the guidance is accurate and workable for institutions. Before I do so, in the spirit of unity and the desire to illustrate that I believe that this is not a partisan matter, I want to acknowledge that the last Government but one recognised it. Let us not forget that Prevent is the brainchild not of a coalition Government or a Conservative Government, but a Labour Government. When I speak of unity and the desire to be non-partisan, I do so on the basis of evidence, not simply of hope. However, the concerns that were previously raised in both Houses about the duty and its implementation, particularly when there are existing requirements on those bodies in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom, need to be addressed briefly before we debate the instrument.

Let me be clear once again that the issue of how universities and colleges integrate the duty with a need to secure freedom of speech and to have regard to the importance of academic freedom is important. Indeed, on account of that issue, the previous Government amended legislation to ensure that institutions pay particular regard to the importance of academic freedom and freedom of speech when complying with the duty. As I said, we have worked with the sector to try to build a deliverable, practical solution.

Nevertheless, we need to understand that order is the mother of freedom. The chaos that prevails when disorder reigns is incompatible with the duty of care that we have for those who attend such institutions. We have worked across Government and with the sector to ensure compliance with the duty. This week, I am delighted to be able to announce for the first time in the House—although the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will have made Members aware of this—that the Higher Education Funding Council for England has been appointed the appropriate body to carry out the monitoring function for the Prevent duty for the relevant higher education bodies in England. The Government believe that the revisions to the guidance and the amendments to the Act address the concerns that have been raised by Parliament and the sectors about the duty. We must now get on with the job of ensuring our colleges and universities are as safe as possible. We should be mindful of the fact that, as the Home Secretary said, the relationship between freedom and security is not a zero-sum game, where one can grow only at the expense of the other. Free speech can thrive only in a safe environment. We have to be real and reasonable about the threat and our response. I believe that the Government have been both real and reasonable, so I commend the instrument to the Committee with confidence.

3.19 pm

Mr David Hanson (Delyn) (Lab): I welcome you to the Chair of the Committee, Mr Davies. It is a pleasure to see you joining Mr Speaker's Panel of Chairs. I am sure you will have a long and fruitful career on the panel, and I hope today provides a useful starting point for your chairmanship. I also thank the Minister for how he has approached the issue today. He has reached out the hand of friendship, and I gladly offer it him

back. We support the regulations in principle and we will not vote against them. He is right to say that terrorism and the growth of terrorist potential are some of the greatest challenges that we face in the United Kingdom as a whole.

I had the privilege of serving in the Home Office as the Minister with responsibility for policing and counter-terrorism during the previous Labour Government, a post the Minister now holds. I was also involved with the Ministry of Justice, looking at extremism in prisons. He is right to say that people can be drawn into terrorist activity through communities, universities or prisons. We need to have a strong strategy to ensure that we prevent that from happening in the first place. Prevention is part of a number of tools that the Government and communities have to ensure that we support resilience in our society as a whole.

The Minister is right to point to the pressures from ISIS, the changing nature of social media and the challenges we face generally. The way that he phrased the debate on terrorism was around the threat from ISIS and the radicalisation of people involved in a warped view of the Muslim religion, but having been a Northern Ireland Minister for two years—I can see that the hon. Member for Belfast East is here—I am conscious that there is more than one form of terrorism, more than one form of extremism and more than one form of people being indoctrinated.

I represent a lovely constituency in north Wales where in February a lone wolf neo-Nazi attacked an individual in a supermarket in my town as an act of terrorist revenge for the death of Lee Rigby. He was radicalised in his bedroom by material pushed through by neo-Nazis that gave him a warped view of society. Terrorist activity can happen even in sleepy parts of Wales, so the Minister's point is well made: prisons, particularly vulnerable communities, higher education institutions and universities are vulnerable to extremist ideology. The Government have a duty, as do we as a Parliament, to give support to tackle that issue. If I have one point, it is that we should widen the debate to talk about all terrorism and not focus just on one type, but he has our support on this matter.

The regulations show the occasional strength of parliamentary democracy. When the counter-terrorism legislation went through Parliament in February, there was concern in the House of Commons and the House of Lords about certain aspects of how the Prevent strategy was being developed. As a result of pressure from Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords, the Minister and his predecessor have brought forward proposals that go some way to mitigating those concerns.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Diana Johnson) would normally be here today, but she is on constituency business, so I am representing the Home Office shadow team. Who knows what I will be doing next week? I will put this on the record, just in case, but I calculated yesterday that on Saturday I will have done 17 years and 46 days on the Labour Front Bench. I may get to 17 years and 47 days on Sunday, but we will have to see what happens. That is a small aside.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): With your permission, Mr Davies, may I say on behalf of many of my colleagues that we hope that that long period will be extended still further?

Mr Hanson: We are slightly digressing, Mr Davies, and I would not wish you to pull me up in your first moments in the Chair. Whatever happens, my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull North would have been here, and she wanted me to recognise that there have been some changes. For example—I know that the hon. Member for Dumfries and Galloway will recognise this—we are particularly pleased that there is now an agreement to include Scottish bodies in the Act. There have been discussions with the Scottish Government—they could have started earlier, but at least they have now reached a conclusion—so that Scotland is involved in the United Kingdom response to issues of Prevent. I am pleased to see that the Government have clarified in particular how universities should balance their duty to protect freedom of speech with their duties under the Prevent agenda; there is an element of agreement on those issues.

I must say that this was not originally going to be part of the business before Parliament, but amendments pushed mean that Parliament now has a say on the guidance and it will, I hope, with our support and the Government's, confirm the guidance today, as will another place in due course. Overall, the guidance seems far better. The original guidance was, in my view, too prescriptive, with too much focus on procedure rather than on the cultures in which extremism can flourish. We are pleased with the new focus. I am particularly pleased to see, for example, that the section on nurseries has been amended. Although small children could be extremists, I doubt that they would be. Again, there are issues about how young people's vulnerability to extremism is tackled.

Having said that, I want to give the Minister an opportunity to reflect on some of the points put to me and to other Committee members. This very day, I received in my inbox a parliamentary briefing from Universities UK. Helpfully, the Minister has received the same briefing, as undoubtedly all of us have. Whatever changes have been made—the regulations are not amendable, so the Opposition have no amendments—it would be useful for the Minister to reassure Universities UK on one point. In its briefing, it says that

“we remain concerned about the guidance's provision for external speakers who hold views which could be classed as ‘extremist’. While there is no longer a blanket ban, universities are required not to allow any event to proceed where ‘the views being expressed or likely to be expressed constitute extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups’ unless the university authorities are ‘entirely convinced’ that these risks can be ‘fully mitigated’”.

I put to the Minister the first three words of that quote: “we remain concerned”. If Universities UK says in a briefing to all Members “we remain concerned”, it is my duty to ask the Minister to give some reassurance during his response to the debate to reduce that level of concern. Again, universities undoubtedly have the potential to have speakers who can involve people in being radicalised, whatever political persuasion or warped ideology might be present. The key question is how to protect freedoms of speech so that we do not discriminate against people who have views that we do not like, but also how to deal with those who have views that potentially radicalise individuals who hear them.

The key remaining concern, judging from this submission, is how universities can monitor that, how they will be accountable for it and, in particular, whether it involves

a de facto ban when there is any doubt about risk. It is important that the Minister clarifies, if he can, what his definition would be and how he would respond to that. If he cannot, can he agree to meet Universities UK again to give it the assurances that it wants? Universities UK is asking us in the briefing to clarify with Ministers the intention of the guidance, and particularly whether it will involve a de facto ban if the university has any doubts about the speakers involved.

As ever, it requires a bureaucracy to monitor who is coming, what they will say, the quality of their contribution and whether it is potentially radicalising. It is important for the Minister to reflect on that briefing; I know that he has had it. I know the difficulties that he will face, but if he has the opportunity today it is important for him to reflect and to give a response.

I have some more questions. I would welcome an assurance from the Minister that he will keep the guidance under review. Will he look at issues to do with the involvement of health bodies, training and co-ordination in future, and in due course the experience of the statutory instrument in practice, and then report back to Parliament as and when he can? He mentioned Ofsted looking at some issues, which I welcome, because it is important. It is also important for the Minister to agree to the publication, perhaps 12 months from now, of how things have worked in practice and to report on the outcome in respect of the concerns, including those expressed by Universities UK.

The concerns are not those of Universities UK alone. Today I and, I am sure, other Members received a parliamentary briefing from the University and College Union, representing university and college lecturers, who express their concern not about the principle of preventing, but about whether and how that will be managed. Given such concerns, the Minister's assurances would be helpful, in particular on how we review things—will he review in 12 months, will he produce the review and will any documents by Ofsted be published?

If there are to be amendments to the document, I would welcome the Minister's assurances that they, too, will be debated and approved by Parliament. In particular, will he comment further on the revised definition of “extremism”? When we held the privileged position of being Ministers, we used a definition, and the current Government and the previous Government have one, but there is still work to be done. I would welcome an assessment, with a timescale, of the definition of “extremism”. That is important not for us, but for those people who have to use the document practically. I have been around for far too long not to know that we can pass many things in this House with worthy discussions and debates, but that, passed down the line, they mean nothing to the people who have to implement them, although ultimately those people are accountable for the challenges when things go wrong. It is important that we have a strong and clear definition.

Nurseries, the Youth Justice Board, every university, every college, every further education establishment, every prison and, potentially, every police force and, down the line, health authorities and other boards will have to look at this document, interpret it and work with Prevent co-ordinators locally on it. They will have to be accountable for it. My challenge to the Minister is this: who trains? What assessment is there of the cost implications of the work? Who monitors? Who will

[Mr Hanson]

assess when things are going well or badly? If the clarity of purpose is not there in the first place, when things go wrong—as they automatically always do—how do we hold people accountable?

I give the Minister the hand of friendship on the document. It is better than it was, but concerns remain—relevant because they were brought to our attention by the people who will have to implement the document—so it is important for him to be clear about how he will assuage those concerns, how he will monitor use of the document and how he will ensure that it serves its purpose. Will he come back to the House to report on the document's usage and to ensure that Parliament agrees any changes, if it is to be improved or changed?

I wish the Minister well and I hope that the Committee will support Government Members in giving the statutory instrument a fair wind today.

3.34 pm

Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP): Thank you, Mr Davies, for the opportunity to participate in this debate. I am incredibly encouraged by the nature and tone of the response by the right hon. Member for Delyn. He has summed up perfectly some of the concerns.

Given that this debate relates to counter-terrorism and security, I am slightly concerned that Universities UK, UCU and million+ seemed to be aware of my membership of this Committee before I was. Intelligence gathering is still performing its functions well. Their concerns are important to note, and I too look forward to hearing the Minister reflect on how best to assuage the concerns of people in this country who wish no ill, but through academic research, discussion and deliberation wish to get a greater understanding of the position of individuals who perhaps previously have been engaged in violent conflicts throughout the world, or in terrorism offences, or who may still pursue those to this day.

It is important that there is a level of guidance. I suspect that few individuals who are intent on terror or on destroying the fabric of this society will be concerned by this statutory instrument. They will not be concerned, but will continue with their nefarious activities. However, those in academia are, and they have the potential to fall foul, and that is important to consider.

Queen's University Belfast organised an event earlier this year: a Charlie Hebdo research symposium. It cancelled the event because it felt that the attention it would draw to the university would bring the prospect of retaliation from those promoting Islam. The cacophony of concern about the destruction of freedom of speech that that would entail meant that the university restored the event, but it shows the concern.

Northern Ireland is taken as a comparative conflict situation. In the course of understanding conflicts throughout the world, I have met people involved in terrorism from the Basque region, from Sri Lanka and from other conflict zones. According to the Universities UK briefing, paragraph 19 of the guidance indicates that, if extremists are prepared to extol their terrorist activities and do not show remorse, but could encourage others to exploit the situation for terrorist ends, that would be a breach. I have yet to meet an individual who has been involved previously in terrorist activities who

is remorseful to an extent that would not allow people to be encouraged by their actions or to popularise their actions, and that too is a concern.

The biggest concern that the Minister might address today is that many individuals will fall foul of these regulations. In Belfast, there is a pastor—Pastor James McConnell—who is being prosecuted in court for his commentary on his Christian interpretation of Islam. Whether I agree with it or not, he is being prosecuted for a sermon he gave within the confines of his church. He is not a terrorist. He is not seeking to promote hate, but has fallen foul of legislation previously introduced that banned online communications likely to incite because his sermon was placed online. An unintended consequence of legitimate legislation can arise from legitimate concerns within this country, but we have to keep at the forefront whom we are attempting to target through statutory instruments such as this and make sure that they fall foul of the legislation.

3.39 pm

Mr Hayes: I have no wish to delay the Committee unduly, so I will deal with the points that have been made as briefly as possible. I am grateful to the shadow Minister, the right hon. Member for Delyn, for his comments on the improvements we have made since this matter was previously discussed. I am also grateful for the Committee's support for what we are trying to achieve.

On the Universities UK briefing that the Committee received today, this measure is not a de facto ban on speakers with non-violent extremist views from speaking on campus. The guidance says that the university should consider whether the risk of those speakers drawing people into terrorism can be mitigated without cancellation of the meeting. I have confidence that our universities will handle this well and will seek to mitigate fully any risk, meaning that speaker meetings will proceed. It is right that we assess the risk and the emphasis in the guidance is on that assessment. Once a university has assessed the risk it will be able to take measures; if it feels it has to cancel a meeting, it will, but there is no de facto ban as a result of these provisions.

The second point that Universities UK made was that paragraph 19 of the guidance needed to be changed. In fact, it is consistent with the Prevent duty and Prevent strategy. I will look at that closely again, as one always should in such circumstances, but I say with confidence that it is consistent with the strategy published in 2011.

The shadow Minister asked a series of other questions. First, he asked whether, were this guidance to be revised, it would return to this House. If there is any significant revision we will of course, in the spirit that we have enjoyed today, bring it back to the House. He asked specifically about implementation. He is absolutely right that the rules will necessitate the kind of training I described. We are already engaged in work right across the sector to equip people to do the job, but I do not want to make light of it. It is not a simple or straightforward matter. We have to equip people with skills that, by necessity, require high levels of sensitivity and the ability to draw on Ministers' expertise. We will do that through Prevent co-ordinators, and free training is available to institutions through the Department for Business,

Innovation and Skills. We will make sure that training events are nationwide, accessible and well publicised, so as to achieve our aims.

The right hon. Gentleman asked for a definition of extremism. He will know that the Government said in the Queen's Speech that we will bring forward a Bill that by its nature will mean we will have to define the terms of trade, as it were. He can therefore be sure that that will happen. It is important because, as he suggested, without that definition it is hard for people to do the rest of what we are asking them to do today.

The right hon. Gentleman also asked whether we would monitor and review this work. If I may say so through you, Mr Davies, I do not think we have done enough on that. We need close evaluation. All this work tends to make a difference, but we need to be clear about how much difference and to point out best practice to ensure that it is exported to other local authorities and universities, and other parts of the country. We can, for example, model and develop the most effective practice, and he is right to raise that matter.

I also think that we have had insufficient oversight of Prevent, and I want to see what we can do on that. It is a question of evaluation and oversight, and we are looking at both carefully. They are part of the new broom that I represent—I say that without any criticism of my predecessors at the Home Office.

The hon. Member for Belfast East rightly emphasised, as did the shadow Minister, that the regulations do not apply simply to one part of the population or one part of the country, but must have broad application and take account of the fact that this kind of violence and the threat of terrorism are not limited to a particular community, religion or ethnic group but have to be looked

at in the round. The shadow Minister made that clear with the example he gave from his own constituency. He can be sure that we will look at the matter in that holistic way, and the measures will have that kind of broad applicability. That will also guarantee consistency and fairness. These things have to pass a test of reasonableness, after all.

Unless the shadow Minister feels I have ignored any vital matter, I will draw my remarks to a crescendo—not merely a conclusion, as a conclusion alone would be insufficient for a Committee as cerebral as this one. Hegel—we do not hear enough of Hegel in this House—said that what is real is reasonable and what is reasonable is real. The reality of the threat that we face must of itself allow us to define reasonableness in a way that matches that threat. Were the threat very different, and much less significant, we would not be bringing in these measures. The measures have to reflect the reality of the threat that we face and I believe they do.

Finally, I draw on the words of Edmund Burke, who said that when bad men combine, good men must associate—[*Interruption.*] Good women, as well, I hasten to add. Good men and women will associate in this place and in the institutions for which we have legal responsibility and which are affected by this duty, and the good will prevail.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Committee has considered the draft Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Risk of Being Drawn into Terrorism) (Guidance) Regulations 2015.

3.46 pm

Committee rose.

