

Suella Braverman says Douglas Murray holds 'perfectly decent' views

From the [London Economic](#) and [The Spectator](#)

A commentator accused of Islamophobia holds “mainstream, insightful and perfectly decent political views,” Suella Braverman has said.

The home secretary said it was wrong for Douglas Murray to have been named in a Home Office paper alongside individuals “associated with far-right-sympathetic audiences”.

On Thursday, Suella Braverman delivered an update on the anti-terror programme Prevent, following a review into its effectiveness by Sir William Shawcross in February. Among Shawcross’s findings was his criticism about Prevent’s work on supposed ‘right-wing extremism’.

An analysis done by Prevent’s ‘Research Information and Communications Unit’ (RICU) in 2019 investigated social media users described as ‘actively patriotic and proud’ – gasp! – with warning signs including those who absorbed information or opinions from ‘pro-Brexit and centre-right commentators’. These included Jacob Rees-Mogg, Melanie Phillips and *The Spectator*’s own Rod Liddle and Douglas Murray,

Home Secretary (told) the House of Commons the following:

I accepted the review’s recommendation for thresholds to be reset to ensure proportionality across all extremist ideologies. RICU, the Research, Information and Communications Unit, which provides analytical and analysis products on behalf of the Home Office, was identified by Sir William as a concern.

In the past, it has failed to draw clear distinctions between mainstream Conservative commentary and the extreme right. People such as my right hon. Friend the Member for North East Somerset (Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg) and Douglas Murray express mainstream, insightful and perfectly decent political views. People may disagree with them, but in no way are they extremists, and Prevent must not risk any perception of disparaging them as such again.

From now on, all RICU products which report on extremist trends, and in future themes, will clearly state the purpose of such reporting and be proportionate.

Murray, the associate director of the Neo-conservative think tank, the Henry Jackson Society, sparked outrage following a 2006 speech in the Dutch parliament in which he said the “conditions for Muslims in Europe must be made harder across the board.”

He called for the banning of “all immigration into Europe from Muslim countries,” and suggested that European Muslims who “take part in, plot, assist or condone violence against the West must be forcibly deported to their place of origin.”

In 2014, the author identified Islamic ideology as the root of violence for a piece in *The Spectator*, claiming “extremists do not make their claims based on some mild misreading, but on a plausible reading of the texts and traditions which have existed within the religion since its founding.” It follows claims that London has “become a foreign country” because “white Britons” were a minority in 23 of 33 London boroughs.

Braverman also rejected the inclusion of Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg, a fierce support of Brexit.

She said: “People like my Right Honourable Friend the Member for North East Somerset and Douglas Murray express mainstream, insightful and perfectly decent political views. People may

disagree with them, but in no way are they extremists,” said Braverman. “Prevent must not risk any perception of disparaging them as such again.”

The home secretary’s comments were condemned by Sayeeda Warsi, a Conservative member of the House of Lords. The former party chairman wrote on social media: “Our country is tragically being ripped apart by arsonists masquerading as patriots – divisive politicians that sow the seeds of discontent and promote culture wars setting our country alight.” *Sorry Sayeeda – you and your fellow travellers have been rumbled.*