

ANDREW MARR SHOW, 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE, 2019, SAJID JAVID, MP

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SAJID JAVID, MP

Home Secretary

AM: Most observers of the Tory Leadership contest put Boris Johnson and Michael Gove a bit ahead of the rest. But the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, is breathing down their necks. He's got a very different story to tell and he's with me this morning. Sajid Javid, why do you want to be Prime Minister?

SJ: Well, good morning. I'm very concerned about the challenges we face as a country. I think there's at least three very significant challenges. I think I'm uniquely placed to deal with them. We need to deliver Brexit, we need to unify our country and we need to keep Jeremy Corbyn out of Downing Street. And in doing that I think I've got a credible and honest plan that will deliver Brexit. I think because of my own background and my experience and my vision for the future I think we can bring the country together.

AM: Just to explain this, in absolutely crystal clear terms what your Brexit proposal is.

SJ: Well my plan is first of all is to recognise that we're not going to have another General Election before Brexit is delivered. I don't think that will be right in any way whatsoever.

AM: You may not be able to stop it as Tory leader.

AJ: Well I may not be able to stop it –

AM: If you lose a vote in the House of Commons it happens.

SJ: I may not be able to stop it. We're in a parliamentary democracy but I want to recognise the next Leader, the next Prime Minister will be dealing with this parliament and this Speaker and we have to recognise the division and the challenges that exist in that parliament. So what I will do is focus on the one Brexit deal that has already got through parliament and that was the Withdrawal Agreement with a change to the backstop. It's the only thing that's got through parliament at the moment.

AM: So you would renegotiate the backstop?

SJ: I would try to renegotiate the backstop. And what I would do in doing that is that I would focus on Ireland. I think Ireland is at the absolute key to this. It is you could sort of say it's the tail that wags the dog on this and we need to make sure that we can do more to build that good will with Ireland to give them more confidence. I've thought long and hard about this. In my department at the moment I've got Border Force, we've done work for months on what alternative arrangements that border could look like. And if I may, and what's missing is that good will and what I would do is I would make a grand gesture, a grand offer to Ireland that we would cover all their costs. The upfront costs, the running costs of a new digitised border. I think it can be done in a couple of years but we would cover their costs.

AM: I do want to come onto that in a minute but before we do let's talk about the first part of the plan which is to renegotiate the Withdrawal Agreement and the backstop. Let me read you what the Luxembourg Prime Minister said about that this week. And I'm going to read you it slowly because it's important:

"No," he said. "Renegotiate? No. No, no, no, no. No. No. No renegotiation, no." That's ten 'no's so far. "We had the negotiation. We've finished the negotiation." And this is more or less exactly what many of the other leaders say as well, including Marc Rutte who is a friend of Britain, including the Taoiseach in Ireland, including Michel Barnier and many more. You will not get that renegotiation.

SJ: Well look, I understand that and I understand where the Europeans are coming from but what I also understand is that they too want to see a orderly Brexit for us, they want to see a deal with the UK. But I'll tell you what.

AM: How many more times does he have to say no before you can hear him?

SJ: Your own reporter from Europe, Cathy Adler, she reported I think just last week that she's detecting amongst European

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leaders a bit of regret thinking that perhaps they pushed Theresa May too hard. She's detecting a change in mood. Now this is your own reporter saying this.

AM: Well I'm just reading out loud what they have been saying in public. All the way through we're told they didn't really mean it, they don't really mean this, they'll break apart, they won't stick together and we've been wrong about this. We may still be wrong about this. They may very well be unprepared to renegotiate it in a serious way. Let me, however, come onto your Irish border proposals. Now you say that the Border Force thinks that this can be done. Have you spoken to anyone in the Border Force you can quote? Can you give us any detail, could you explain to us why they think this could be done?

SJ: I've commissioned work from Border Force. Remember Border Force, they do just that. They run borders, we advise other countries around the world, they're very good at it and –

AM: Will you publish it?

AJ: If I'm allowed to publish it I will. If I'm Prime Minister I will publish a lot more because I want to see more transparency in this debate. But what I am sure of is that a modern digitised border which is a completely open border with no infrastructure on the border because I believe passionately in that, is necessary for our union and to protect our union that I think it is right that we make a gesture to Ireland to do something differently. And also, if I may say, I think it is right that we pay for it because it's economically – I think it makes sense because it will unlock a Brexit deal and morally I think it's right because we're committed to peace on the island of Ireland.

AM: Lots of people would like to happen for very good reasons. Most people say it's not ready yet and it may become available one day but we're a long way away. Simon Coveney, the Tanaiste, the Deputy Prime Minister in Ireland says: "This is like saying to Ireland we are going to replace the backstop with an additional –

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with an aspirational hope and a commitment that somehow we will solve this but we don't know how." Is that reasonable? Your agreement is an agreement to have an agreement but you don't know what it's actually going to be.

SJ: Well I don't think it's just an aspirational hope because as I've said, I've done work on this. Border Force has done on work on this. You can have a digitised border that is very different to the backstop. It can be done. It can be done in two years. And you know what Border Force says? They say the main thing that's missing is good will on both sides. That ability to want to cooperate and want to get this done, so something needs to break that deadlock and I've got a plan for that.

AM: All I'm pointing at you is that the Irish government says it's unworkable. Let me come onto the centrepiece of your strategy however because I thought there was one slightly strange thing in the way that you laid it out in the newspapers beforehand. You said first of all that you're going to prepare and plan for no deal and you've accepted that the talks might not happen, so we might end up with no deal at the end of October. But you've also said, and let me read it back: "that it's simply not credible to promise you can deliver a no deal if parliament is set against it, as parliament is. Anyone who promised this would risk drawing us into a pre-Brexit General Election this year. Driving us into a pre-Brexit General Election this year. A disaster;" you say, "first and foremost for our country and public trust in democracy but also for our party." So it sounds to me like you're saying elect me and my plan B is disaster.

AJ: No, I'm not saying that at all. I mean you've read it out perfectly correctly and let me explain. No responsible leader of this country can not prepare for no deal. You have to prepare for no deal. I am not saying I'm going to prepare for no deal because that's my plan, that's what I want to deliver. I'm clear. I want a deal. I passionately want a deal. But it is only responsible to prepare for the possible outcome of a no deal. At a minimum, for

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example France has already said, it said a while back there's been reports that they not even agree to an extension. A future extension would require all countries to agree. Now I don't want to see an extension. I want to see us leave on October 31<sup>st</sup>. But there is a real possibility that a no deal could happen and it's absolutely responsible to prepare for that. And also what I want is to make sure we use the time we've got to prepare even more.

AM: You've raised yourself the question of an extension. Can I ask you directly are there any circumstances in which Sajid Javid as Prime Minister would ask for an extension beyond the end of October?

SJ: I would not want an extension.

AM: no, want is one thing, would you – are there any circumstances in which you might ask for it?

AJ: Look, I'm clear that my plan would be to leave on October 31<sup>st</sup>. I want to leave with a deal

AM: I'm listening.

AJ: But if I have to choose between no deal and no Brexit, I would pick no deal. But what I want and what I am absolutely focused on is leaving with a deal.

AM: Okay, I'm listening to very very carefully to your words, you're an experienced politician. I ask you again. Are there any circumstances in which you would leave - you would extend beyond the end of October?

SJ: I cannot envisage a circumstance where I would want to have an extension.

AM: There are lots of ... and this is one.

SJ: No but you quoted from my article and let me just – because at the end of that same article I think you're referring to, what I've said is the obvious, that we are a parliamentary democracy. We are not selecting at this point, we're not selecting a dictator for this country we're electing a prime minister who will run a minority party in a minority government. And what that means

AM: So you might not be able to .. a General Election.

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SJ: - is that we are subject to parliament, the sovereignty of parliament, so what I cannot predict and what no one can predict is what parliament may itself do. And now it's got this power to have its own sort of initiated legislation I can't predict that.

AM: But in our parliamentary system the Prime Minister does have one absolute clear extraordinary power in this process which is only the Prime Minister can go to Brussels and say, please can we have an extension, which is why it's so important to ask people like you whether you would ask for that under any circumstances. It's not what parliament does, it's what the Prime Minister does.

SJ: Well I – that's not something I would do –

AM: You would not ask for an extension?

SJ: - it's not something I would do but let me just say again. We are a parliamentary democracy, what we've seen in the last few months is parliament has taken on some extraordinary powers to initiate its own legislation –

AM: So if parliament asked for it you might have to do it.

SJ; - you could have – if it's statute, if it's the law, I would not break the law if I was Prime Minister, of course I would observe the law. This is about leading a parliamentary democracy and remember the whole point of Brexit is also to honour that referendum which is also about democracy as is our parliament and its sovereignty.

AM: You are Home Secretary. Can you promise us now that if we leave without a deal Britain will as safe afterwards as we are now?

SJ: What I can promise is that we will continue to be one of the safest countries in the world. What I will not -

AM: That's not a yes.

SJ: it's – well we will continue to be a very, very safe country. That said I have always recognised the value of European contribution when it comes to security.

AM: So the answer is a bit less safe. A bit less safe.

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SJ I would like us to have that cooperation, but let me tell you, we talked about planning for no deal. Again I don't want no deal but we need to plan. What I've already done as Home Secretary and lots of people said this won't be possible, is I've tried to work on bilateral no deal security agreements with our European partners. And just a couple of weeks ago I announced that I've reached such an agreement with Germany, one of our biggest security partners who have said publicly, if there is a no deal they will enter into a no deal security arrangement with us. So there's a lot we can do to still protect our security cooperation even in a no deal situation.

AM: Okay, the other thing that you've said as a candidate is that you want 20,000 more police on our streets.

SJ: That's right.

AM: And you've said in very clear terms why you want this. You've said that it's because no police means less crime, and you've described that as a no brainer. More police, sorry. More police means less crime. No brainer. Now, the reason I'm asking you about this is that you have said exactly the opposite about a year ago on this programme. And I asked you about why aren't you having more police and you said: I'm not pretending for a second that it's like – you said, it's not like that. The fall in crime – the rise in crime is not connected to the fall in police numbers. Now you've changed your position completely.

SJ: Well, I think what I've realised is, being Home Secretary now for a year I've been able to look a lot more at the evidence, speak to a lot more police officers. And it's clear to me –

AM: Do you admit you were wrong then?

SJ: No, it's – this is what I'd say. I think first of all it depends which type of crime you're talking about. So let me give you an example. We've seen a significant rise in the last few years in what I would call the more complex crimes. Things like cybercrime, reporting of historic sexual offences, modern slavery.

You know, these are all very, very serious crimes but they are very complex. So what I've realised is that you do need many more police resources for this. Now, I knew this for a while, but obviously, you know, if I'm not the prime minister I can't make these decisions on what should be the overall spending priorities for a government.

AM: Are you saying that you wanted more police in the past as Home Secretary but were stopped by the Treasury or the prime minister from doing it?

SJ: Well, I'm saying – I'm partly saying this. I wanted more police. And I have got more police. So this year we're seeing three and a half thousand more police officers or police staff this year because of the record police settlement I got. But what I'm saying – I want to be very clear – we need to go much further. We need to put an extra billion pounds a year into policing, which will mean 20,000 extra officers, and I think that is necessary to continue the fight against crime, but also to build more public confidence.

AM: You've talked about complex crimes. Quite simple crimes: murder, knife crime and robbery have also gone up quite substantially on your watch. You said on this programme last April: 'for anyone to suggest that serious violent crime is caused by police numbers, it is not backed up by the facts. The evidence does not suggest that those are the facts. The facts are that we had much higher numbers of police ten years ago and much higher levels of violent crime.' In other words, you were saying something that you now say is not true.

SJ: Well, no. That was a response, that question is a response, and those people who say it's all about police numbers, it's all about police resources. And what I've said when it comes to serious violence, which I'm hugely concerned about the rise that we've seen, we need action on all fronts. I've accepted, I've accepted all along and I've said it many times, including in parliament, that we do need more resources, and we've provided

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some of those resources. We need more police powers, such as stop and search, and I changed the rules. We have the Offensive Weapons Act. We need action on multiple fronts, including early intervention. But what you're asked me about today is more police numbers.

AM: As Home Secretary, and you are Home Secretary now, if you'd had your own way we would have more police on the beat now?

SJ: Yes. Even more.

AM: So you were stopped having more police on the beat?

SJ: Well, it's a collective decision. So I cannot set the overall priorities of the government. If I were prime minister, of course I'd have a much bigger say what the overall priorities should be. And what I've said and what I said in that article is our priority must be crime and law and order.

AM: We don't have enough police on the streets of Britain because of Theresa May and Philip Hammond?

SJ: I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is that I want to see, if I'm – if was leader and prime minister, I would want to see more police on the streets and I think it's justified.

AM: Okay. A few quickfire questions. We've been talking a lot about Huawei this morning. Huawei, yes or no? Instinct.

SJ: I would not want any company, whichever country it's from, that has a high degree of control by a foreign government to have access to our very sensitive telecommunications network.

AM: That sounds like no. What about the tens of thousands immigration target the party has been hooked on for so long, would you keep that?

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SJ: No. I don't think there should be any arbitrary immigration targets. I think we should always be aiming for low sustainable net migration, but it should be based on the country's needs.

AM: Top rate of tax under a Sajid Javid government?

SJ: Well, when it comes to tax my priority will always be to cut the basic rate of tax. But if cutting the top rate means you can raise more revenue, like with what happened last time it was cut, billions extra revenue, and that means more nurses, more teachers, more police, I would cut it if it brings in more revenue and gives us better public services.

AM: Down to where, do you think?

SJ: I don't know. I'd be led by the evidence.

AM: Alright, HS2 yes or no?

SJ: Yes.

AM: Keep HS2. Okay, finally, Donald Trump has said in his very interesting interview this morning that lots of Conservatives have been asking for his support. Were you one of them?

SJ: (Laugh) No.

AM: You haven't phoned up and asked?

SJ: I don't think I'm one of them.

AM: That's very interesting because obviously if you become prime minister, as Disraeli was the first Jewish prime minister so you would be the first prime minister from a Pakistani background, a Muslim background. You're going to be seeing the President very shortly, I'm sure. Are you going to raise with him the Muslim travel ban?

SJ: What I would raise with the President and his team is, first of all, I'd welcome him to the UK. I think it's great that the President of the United States is coming here. And I'd thank him for all the

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cooperation, especially in security, that I see day in, day out which saves lives in Britain.

AM: So the words Muslim travel ban don't appear in that opening thought?

SJ: I'd be thanking him for all that the United States does to help Britain.

AM: Sajid Javid, thanks very much indeed for talking to us.

(ends)