

ANDREW MARR SHOW

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SAJID JAVID

AM: Sajid Javid, why are violent crimes rising in this country so dramatically?

SJ: I'm very, very concerned about the rise in violent crime, especially knife crime. It's absolutely senseless, it's destroying so many lives, and we've got to be doing everything we can to fight it. You've asked me why it's rising. I wish there was one really simple, single answer, because then we'd know exactly what to focus on, but there are a number of issues around the world, not just here at home, that's leading to a rise of serious violence. But the most prominent issue seems to be the changes in global drug markets. The price of class A drugs has collapsed. Gangs are looking for ways to protect their revenue, and sadly they're doing that by trying to expand their markets, which is inevitably leading to fights. So we need to understand that better, but we need to be taking action, as we have been doing, and we need to be stepping that up.

AM: Well, there's not much you can do about the global drug markets, but what you could do is put more money back into policing. Can you remind people just how many frontline police we have lost since 2010?

SJ: Look, we are putting more resources back into policing, and since 2010 there has been a fall in the number of police –

AM: 21,000, I think, fewer police officers in England and Wales.

SJ: And I recognise that and I also recognise we need to put more resources into policing, and that is why I announced just a few weeks ago the biggest cash increase in police funding in England and Wales – almost a billion pounds since 2010 – which is going to lead to thousands more officers and more resources. But we need to do more than that. Increasing resources isn't going to be enough.

AM: You've cut policing by 19 per cent since 2010, and even the billion pounds that you've announced is relatively small-scale, with an extra 400 police officers last year. Very small-scale compared to the big picture. I'm just saying, sort of common sense, sitting back, is the answer – every Tory Home Secretary at the Tory Party conference would say this – isn't the answer more frontline policing?

SJ: I think part of the answer is more frontline policing. That's why I've increased the resources. But the police themselves will tell that it's about much more than that. So what is also required is better use of existing powers, like stop and search. For a few years police stopped using – a lot less of that particular power.

AM: Was that a mistake, do you think?

SJ: I think, when you talk to police they want to start using that power more. I have given them the confidence to do that. I was out just last week with a violent crime task force in London, and they said that in the last six months of last year their use of stop and search has increased by more than a third, and it's making a real difference in detecting these weapons and taking them off people and carrying through prosecutions. But there's also new powers that are required, by the way, which are in the new Offensive Weapons Bill which I've brought to Parliament.

AM: One of your predecessors – I'm trying to struggle to remember her name – changed the rules on stop and search. She's made it harder for police to engage in that. And that is when knife crime started to go up. Do you think Theresa May – I've remembered her name now – do you think Theresa May made a serious mistake then?

SJ: Well, actually she didn't change the rules. The police took a different attitude in the last few years. They need to be given more confidence to use powers, use existing powers. I've done that, and I think when it comes to stop and search it doesn't

matter whether you're black or white, you're Asian, it doesn't matter what your racial background is or anything like that, all that matters is do police have a reasonable purpose to stop you and to search you, and they should have the confidence to use these powers.

AM: This is a very big change in language at least from the previous Home Secretary –

SJ: It's making a difference on the frontline. But also, as I say, we need new powers, the Offensive Weapons Bill, and also just last week my introduction of the new prevention orders. The knife crime prevention orders, which are targeted at people, especially young people, trying to stop them from getting into a life of crime in the first place.

AM: At the moment they're not working. Knife crime is going up. You know, lots and lots of shops seem to be selling these zombie knives and other appalling weapons and nothing seems to be really changing on the street.

SJ: Well, to be fair, we've just introduced these changes, they're coming through parliament now, so they need to be given time to work. The other thing, if I may mention, Andrew, as well, is it's not just about law enforcement, it is also about early intervention. You know, what is really important is trying to find more ways to stop young people from turning to a life of crime in the first place. And if they have, for example, working ex-gang members to help them exit gangs.

AM: I absolutely agree with you that early intervention is core to this. I think everyone who's looked at this agrees that, which is why when you look at central government funding for youth offending teams and you see that in 2010 it was 145 million and it was 72 million last year, your government has halved the money for people on the frontline who could be stopping this happening. Why?

SJ: Well, Andrew, you've just taken one number there from one part of government. But what this requires is a whole of government approach, and I think it's really not just about the Home Office, it's about the Department of Education, Health and others doing their bit. Which they are -

AM: And local government, these are Local Government Association figures.

SJ: -absolutely, about local government too, everyone working together. So that's why-

AM: So why halve their funding? I mean, these are the people on the frontline, taking kids off the streets, retraining them, working with families, doing all this stuff that avoids the crime on the streets, and yet as a government you've been taking their money away.

SJ: What is far more important is, you could double the funding tomorrow but if it's not joined-up government it's not going to make a difference-

AM: Try it!

SJ: That's why I've talked about the public health approach. I'm going to be consulting soon on something called the public health approach, which will be a statutory requirement for all government departments and agencies to treat serious violence like we would treat an infectious disease and to make sure that they all work together. And by the way, can I correct something that one of your guests said earlier – they pointed to a story saying that I cut funding on the early intervention youth fund. I've done no such thing. I've done no such thing. It's absolutely incorrect. I've allocated 22 million. 18 million's been spent, there's another four million to go. The only thing I have done is add another 200 million by my new youth endowment fund. So I've actually added ten times more.

AM: Do you respect the will of parliament?

SJ: Absolutely.

AM: So does that mean that no deal is now off the table?

Parliament voted against a no deal Brexit. Has it gone?

SJ: Of course it's hugely important to listen to parliament. But when parliament passes motions they're not binding, it's not legislation, by definition, so parliament can express its will but in terms of action the government may or may not take – what matters is legislation, and right here and now the legislation is very clear - parliament, by definition put it in place – is that we are a planning to leave on March 29<sup>th</sup>. And of course I want that to be with a deal.

AM: And Theresa May, to try and get that deal, is going back to Brussels next week and she's got her usual team. Ollie Robbins, her negotiator, but she's also got the Attorney General, Sir Geoffrey Cox, David Lidington and others with her. What's the significance of that?

SJ: Well, what the PM's doing, following a vote from last week which was an acceptance of the deal subject to a change, alternative arrangements for the backstop. So I think that's a really good step forward. It is first to try and find an alternative arrangement. And Steve Barclay, the Brexit Secretary will be leading on that. The Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, will be leading on another very important strand of work, which is to see if it's not an alternative arrangement can there be a hard time limit to any backstop, or a proper exit mechanism, and he's the right person to look at that.

AM: So to be absolutely clear, we're looking for either our own exit mechanism or a hard timescale to that. And Geoffrey Cox's job is to achieve that.

SJ: That's right. He's working on that. Obviously the PM will continue to lead all negotiations, but Geoffrey is leading that work. He's absolutely the right person, because I think if there is

a change everyone will want to know that the AG - through maybe a revised opinion or something - and that's exactly what he thinks and he's leading that work and it's important that we take this approach and look at all change mechanisms. But I'll tell you one thing, in terms of an alternative arrangement, it can be done. In my own department I've got Border Force. And I asked Border Force months ago to advise me, to look at what alternative arrangements are possible, and they've shown me quite clearly you can have no hard border on the island of Ireland and you can use existing technology. It's perfectly possible. The only thing that's missing is a bit of goodwill on the EU side.

AM: Well, there's a certain amount of goodwill missing on both sides perhaps at the moment. If this doesn't work and we head to no deal despite what parliament has said, I want to ask you what you think the security implications are to that, because I want to read to you three experts. Sir John Sawers, the former head of MI6 says: 'any form of Brexit makes our security more difficult to manage. The harder the Brexit the greater the damage.' Lord Ricketts, who was national security advisor for the government until recently said: 'no deal would be a really serious and immediate problem for British national security.' And finally Neil Basu, the current head of counter-terrorism policing at the Met says: 'no deal would be a very serious flaw in our security arrangement. It will inevitably make the UK and Europe less safe than it is today.' Are they wrong about that?

SJ: Well, let me say a couple of things there. First of all, I'm planning for a deal, but it makes absolute sense –

AM: First of all, do you agree with them or not?

SJ: Well, I'll answer your question. It makes sense that we plan for all contingencies, which of course includes no deal planning. So we've been doing months and months of work on that. It is true, it is absolutely true, that if we have a no deal situation there will be certain capabilities that we rely on for security with the EU, such as databases –

AM: Like intelligence and databases.

SJ: Databases, arrest warrant, others that will change. Of course that will change. And keeping that in mind we have been working on meeting it, and I'm not pretending for a second, through Interpol or through the Council of Europe on extradition, you can have a like for like capability. So there will be a change in capability.

AM: We would be less safe. They're right?

SJ: I would say this, I'd put it this way: there will be a change in capability but it's worth putting it all into perspective. Most of these capabilities were only relevant for us from 2015 onwards, and I'm absolutely certain as Home Secretary, this is my most important job, is to do everything I can to keep this country safe. I'm absolutely confident that we will continue to be one of the safest countries in the world, even in a no deal scenario.

AM: We're all looking at what happen next, of course, in this very complicated situation. One of the ideas that's much talked about in today's papers again, is a general election. What's your view of that as a way out?

SJ: Well, first of all I read that story earlier and I know that the Conservative Party Headquarters is only planning on one set of elections this year, which are the local government elections. I think the last thing this country needs is a General Election. I think the people will never forgive us for it. I think what they want is this parliament to deliver Brexit in an orderly way – that's what they're looking for.

AM: Of course if you try and have an election before we have left the EU, there's a problem as a party as to what the manifesto would say 'cause you're very deeply divided. But if you have an election after we'd left the EU, it's been suggested in June this year, do you think that is a plausible way through?

SJ: No, I think the last thing we want is a General Election. The people will never forgive us for it. They want politicians just to get on with the job, they've been given a very clear mandate, now it's our job just to get on with it.

AM: You heard perhaps Barry Gardiner a little while ago talking about what Labour would want from the Prime Minister in return for support and it may be that she absolutely needs some Labour votes to get this deal through in the House of Commons eventually. And he kept talking about a customs union going forward. Do you think there is any chance at all this government will accept a customs union?

SJ: Well I must say I think Labour has not been clear at all about what they want. I mean they keep changing their mind. For them sadly this has all been a bit of a political game but let's focus on what you've just said which is a customs union, because you're right, as in Jeremy Corbyn keeps talking about that, without actually defining what he actually means by that. But let's assume he means staying in the EU customs union –

AM: What they want is a customs union.

SJ: Well no one knows, including himself what that really means. It's just a little sound bite that he likes to continue using. But let's entertain that for now. There's no doubt there would be some Labour members in parliament that would want that, but they are split –

AM: You can probably get a Commons majority for that proposition.

SJ: I don't think you would actually, so I will say two things. In principle I'm totally against a customs union because it would not, in my view, deliver on Brexit because we need to be able to have our own independent trade policy. That's number one.

Practically I actually don't think it would get a majority because whilst you might gain some Labour votes - and remember Labour themselves are split. The other half of Labour say they want a second referendum whilst I'm also completely against. But you

would also lose votes on the Conservative side – I don't actually think you would get a majority. So I just think it's a complete non-starter and if Jeremy Corbyn is serious he should start having serious talks with the Prime Minister in the national interest.

AM: So people at home who are trying to puzzle about what the actual outcome is likely to be – we've done through lots of options. No to a General Election, no to another referendum, no to a customs union deal. Now if the Prime Minister gets a big breakthrough in Brussels then sure the game's back on again, but if she doesn't – and again the messages are very negative at the moment – we are heading towards no deal and that seems at the moment to be the likeliest outcome. Now given what you see in the newspapers about the number of companies moving out of this country in preparation for a no deal – we've talked about Nissan, Jaguar Land Rover, Barclay's Bank moving I think 1 £133 billion of assets to Dublin ahead of no deal, this is an economic problem of a really really big scale for this government – is it not? Are you really looking at no deal and thinking that is a possible outcome?

SJ: Look, I'm not planning –

AM: It's a terrible outcome isn't it for you?

SJ: No one wants to see no deal. I want to see a deal, and whilst it's true absolutely that the EU right now are saying no to alternative arrangements, publicly that's what they say, it's also worth keeping in mind just a couple of weeks ago Michel Barnier himself said if there is a no deal situation that the EU will help create alternative arrangements for the border, and if they can do it in a no deal scenario then why can't they do it in a deal scenario? So there's your answer and that's why I think the most likely outcome is still a deal.

AM: We still have a huge amount of legislation to put through and lots and lots of problems ahead of a potential no deal

situation. Do you not think the time is right now to finally accept we can't do this by the end of March and to extend Article 50 at least for a few weeks?

SJ: No I don't. We are – parliament is committed, we are committed as a government to leaving on March 29<sup>th</sup>. That's all that we're working for.

AM: I'm trying to think about what you were saying earlier on about the security implications. You said there will be a changing capability as a result of a no deal Brexit. Did you mean that things would get worse? It would be a negative capability?

SJ: No, I mean there will be a change because we will be using –

AM: A better or worse change?

SJ: We'll be losing access for example – I'll give you an example. We'll be losing access potentially in a no deal scenario to the missing persons list that is published by the EU on a real time database, but there is an Interpol database. We don't use that Interpol database at the moment, so we'll be able to use that instead. I'm not pretending they're the same. They're not like for like, they are very different databases and we have to –

AM: In very simple terms if we leave without a deal will things get worse for security and for the security services?

SJ: We will still be a very safe country.

AM: I'm still not clear whether it gets –

SJ: There will be a change in capability and we have to

AM: You know things will be tougher.

SJ: The capabilities that I would want to keep, absolutely would want to keep those capabilities but they require cooperation with the EU and I have to plan on the basis that in a no deal scenario the EU will no longer allow us to access to these capabilities.

AM: And therefore that makes us less safe?

SJ: I think there will be mitigants, they're not perfect and I'd rather not be –

AM: Mitigants means that we're getting less safe.

SJ: I'd rather we were not in that situation but I am – you know if your question to me, ultimately it's about security and public confidence and security. As I said most of these capabilities began in 2015. We were a safe country then and we'd be a very safe country in a no deal scenario as well. It's not what I want, is a no deal. I want a deal but even in a no deal scenario we will continue to be one of the safest countries in the world.

Ends