ANDREW MARR:
.. but with the polls still deadlocked, questions about what might happen in a hung Parliament won't go away, and I'm joined now by the Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper. Welcome.

YVETTE COOPER:
Good morning, Andrew.

ANDREW MARR:
Good morning. Let's start by talking about the numbers, because the numbers are crucial to this. To win an overall majority, given what's happened in Scotland, Labour would have to win more than a hundred seats in England and Wales, you'd have to win seats like Rugby and Cambridge and Basildon, and to a lot of people that seems simply impossible.

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, we are working really hard all across the country, England, Scotland, Wales, and fighting for every vote, and we've got huge numbers of people in all of our key seats, we've
got a fantastic ground operation, people, activists, party members, knocking on doors...

**ANDREW MARR:**

*over* All of that I understand...

**YVETTE COOPER:**

... getting a very warm reception as well.

**ANDREW MARR:**

I understand all of that, but nonetheless you would have to win seats like Basildon, seats that you only took when Tony Blair was in his absolute pomp, at his most extremely popular, you're not really suggesting you can take Basildon, seats like that this time round, are you?

**YVETTE COOPER:**

Well, we are fighting for every vote and we...

**ANDREW MARR:**

*over* Of course you are.

**YVETTE COOPER:**

... we're also campaigning very hard in Scotland as well, and you know, we do still, you know, the strong message to people in Scotland that if they want a Labour government they need to vote Labour in order to get that and not put that at risk.

**ANDREW MARR:**

*over* We're looking for the air pockets, one of your colleagues in Scotland apparently said yesterday about your campaign there, we're searching for air pockets, which doesn't sound terribly optimistic.

**YVETTE COOPER:**

We'll, we've got, we've got four days to go and look, we are getting a very warm response, I
think we are touching distance of having a Labour government with a completely different vision for Britain, I mean, it's about our values as well as the policies that we're setting out.

ANDREW MARR:
Do you really, do you really think you could win a hundred plus seats in England and Wales, seriously?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well...

ANDREW MARR:
Looking me in the eye, can you tell me you can win a hundred plus seats in England and Wales?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, people will decide, the public will decide on Thursday, it's, we, I think, we are not...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Look, you can't say yet because we both know it's almost impossible

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, we are not far away from the public making that decision and so the things we are campaigning on, whether it is getting rid of the bedroom tax, increasing the minimum wage, 20,000 more nurses, and also saying that the country should be run a different way, instead of it being all about those at the top, the most powerful, with this idea that that will just trickle down to somebody else...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I understand that, OK.
YVETTE COOPER:
... instead a country where everyone can feel part of it and we can make sure that working people get on, that's what we're campaigning for, I think that is a good deal for Britain.

ANDREW MARR:
Ed Miliband has made it absolutely clear that he won't have any kind of deal with the SNP, so this leaves you, as a government, if you are a minority government, with two possibilities: either you can simply not talk to them at all, and then as Home Secretary, if that's what you were, you'd be taking legislation to the House of Commons, month after month, with no idea as to whether you would get it through, so it would be a real white-knuckle ride, very, very alarming for many voters, very, very unsettling for the markets. Or you could have some kind of arrangement through the back channels, with talking to whips, knowing in advance what the SNP were going to do kind of so which would it be?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, you've heard Ed talking, talking about this very strongly, very clear that we cannot do coalitions, deals or pacts with the SNP, there is a reason for that...

ANDREW MARR:
over) But could you have conversations with them?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, I think if this is...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) About, about, you know, back channels, so, so that you knew what was going to happen, because otherwise you won't know what's going to happen, if you take legislation to the House of Commons as a member of a minority Labour government, you will have no idea what's going to happen to that.
YVETTE COOPER:
It will be up to other parties how they vote on a Labour programme, that's for them to decide.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) That's a slightly different point...

YVETTE COOPER:
No, it is, but, well...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) What I'm asking you is...

YVETTE COOPER:
... that's an important one, because, it is an important one because it's for them to decide, we're not going to have deals and pacts about what is in a Labour programme, about what the content would be of a Labour Queen's speech, with the SNP, I don't think that’s the right thing to do and there was a reason for that, because in the end they want to still divide Britain, they have a just a different ethos, a different purpose of being, they believe that Scotland and England should be separate. We don’t, we think we are stronger if we stand together than if we leave people to sink or swim alone, and so in the end that is a principled reason...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) OK, for not doing, I understand that...

YVETTE COOPER:
... why we simply cannot do those deals with the SNP.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) ... but I'm asking a slightly different thing. Let's take a concrete example. You have some piece of legislation relating to anti-terrorism or whatever, OK, and you’ve talked to
your civil servants and you want to put this through. Do you simply go to the House of Commons and lay it on the table, not knowing whether the SNP are going to vote with you or not?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
Well, I think this is an issue for all opposition parties.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Of course.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
All opposition parties will have to decide how they vote on important legislation...

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* But you need to know their decisions.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
... so whether that's talking about, whether that's talking about Trident, whether that's what the Conservatives will do on Trident and so on, that is about opposition parties have to take those decisions, but in the end, though...

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* But, but in government you need to know what they're going to decide.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
... but it, but in the end, the most important thing is what happens about the policy, what are the policies that you put forward, what is the programme that you put forward? And Ed's been very clear, this is not something that you can just do those sorts of deals with the SNP for, because we want to be the, to govern the whole country in the interests of the whole country, I think, you know, if you're worried about people on the minimum wage, you should be as worried about people in Leeds as in Lanarkshire who are on the minimum wage and
need that to be increased.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
(over) I'm really sorry about this, but to come back, would you have conversations with the SNP ahead of votes in the House of Commons, yes or no?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
Well, I think, you know, but you're still trying to, you know, pre-empt an election that hasn’t happened...

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) I'm trying to get an answer.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
... and also to try and, you know, sort of, play games with the things that Ed has been very clear about, because what, look, what's the...

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) But, I mean, it's not games, it's how the government would act, would act in...

**ANDREW MARR:**
... it is, because, because what, what the Tories have been trying to claim is that somehow people in England should be fearful of Scotland, what the SNP have been trying to do is to divide Scotland from England, what we are trying to do is say we as the Labour Party what to govern for the whole country to pull that together, to not play those games about dividing but to say that the only way to do that is to put forward a Labour programme. Other parties can then decide...

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) I'm not going to break through on this, am I?
YVETTE COOPER:
They're going to, they can then decide...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I'm not going to get an answer, I can tell.

YVETTE COOPER:
It's for them to decide how they vote, we'll put forward what we believe in.

YVETTE COOPER:
It is suggested this morning that if David Cameron gets the largest number of seats he might stay in Number Ten and then take his Queen's speech to the House of Commons. How would Labour react in those circumstances?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, we have always, I don’t, clear position of voting against the Conservatives' Queen's speech and I think it, you know, it's clear that David Cameron will be desperately trying to cling on to Number Ten, we've seen him already talking about that this is about his career rather than about the country...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) And you ...

YVETTE COOPER:
I think that's the wrong approach.

ANDREW MARR:
And if the SNP were walking through the same lobby as you, you would just walk alongside them and not, make no eye contact whatever?
YVETTE COOPER:
No, again, it's for them to decide what they do, we would oppo-, well, we've heard what's in the Conservatives' Queen's speech, we, they want the steepest cuts, in the next few years, deeper cuts to our public services than we've had in the last five years, that would be wrong for Britain and we would oppose it, but it is a, you know, a warning to people in Scotland who've been told they can vote SNP and have a Labour government...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Let's talk about that...

YVETTE COOPER:
... the more SNPs, vote, MPs there are, the more desperately David Cameron will be trying to cling on.

ANDREW MARR:
Let's talk about cuts. Ed Miliband was absolutely explicit when he was sitting in that chair a few weeks ago, he said that there would be cuts in your budget, and the Home Office department would see, as an unprotected department, would see cuts under a Labour government. So now let's not talk about police commissioners and merging police forces, because we know the money for that would go to frontline policing, so that's not really a cut. Beyond that, what cuts will you make?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, first of all we would not have the depth of cuts that Teresa May and the Tories would have because they've set out for deeper cuts for the next few years...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) OK but what cuts would you make?

YVETTE COOPER:
... than in the last five years, I think that would be the wrong approach. So what we've done is
we have identified £800 million of savings, that includes, as you said, abolishing police and crime commissioners experiments...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) But that goes round in circles, you're spending that money again for front line policing.

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, what you're doing is you're identifying £800 million of savings, that allows you to then cope with a reduction in the Home Office budget but which would not be as deep as Teresa May would do, and also protect the frontline services...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) So that's as far as it goes.

YVETTE COOPER:
... So you’ve got that £800 million and that from making forces work together, getting rid of the subsidy to gun licences, practice things that Teresa May has always refused to do, allows us to save 10,000 police officers from cuts.

ANDREW MARR:
By when would you expect the deficit to be cleared under a Labour government?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well, as you know, we've said repeatedly that the deficit...

ANDREW MARR:
(over) You won't say.

YVETTE COOPER:
... that the deficit, that the deficit...
ANDREW MARR:

*(over)* That's why I'm asking you.

YVETTE COOPER:

Well, we would balance the books, we would cut the deficit year on year, and balance the books by the end of the Parliament...

ANDREW MARR:

*(over)* But you won't give a date?

YVETTE COOPER:

Well, it would be as soon in the Parliament as we can, but that will depend on...

ANDREW MARR:

*(over)* First ... the Parliament?

YVETTE COOPER:

... that will depend on growth, as soon as we possibly can, but it will depend on economic growth, we've said, as you said, you know, there will be some departments that will face some cuts but not on the scale that the Tories would...

ANDREW MARR:

*(over)* OK, reflect very briefly...

YVETTE COOPER:

... and also a fairer deal on taxes as well, so we don’t have millionaires getting tax cuts while millions of people are left behind.

ANDREW MARR:

Reflect very briefly on how it feels to have your husband now the kind of main figure being used by the Conservatives as the image of what went wrong in the past - big spending, big
borrowing, and no apologies.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
Well, look, we, I think, Ed has been at the forefront of saying the deficit's got to come down but we've also got to get the, our economy growing, the Tories' approach has failed, they're borrowing £200 billion more than they said they would, we've got an alternative approach because we think that the country's only going to be stronger if everyone's part of it, this is particularly an issue for women, who are likely to be hit hardest by their child benefit cuts, their child tax credit cuts, that's what they did in the last Parliament, I think for women particularly it's really important to get a Labour government to protect that for the future.

**YVETTE COOPER:**
*(over)* Yvette Cooper, for now thank you very much indeed for joining us.

[END]