ANDREW MARR SHOW
4TH DECEMBER 2016
BORIS JOHNSON & KEIR STARMER

AM: Boris Johnson is still here and so is Keir Starmer. Can I ask you both about another thing that’s been discussed this week, the customs union. Am I right in saying that if we are not – if we’re inside the customs union we can’t do free trade deals around the rest of the world?
BJ: Well, that is – there are two aspects to the customs union. First of all, there is the sort of giant zone in which we would want UK goods and services to move freely, and then there’s the external tariff wall. And what you’re saying is accurate in the sense that in order to – the common commercial policy of the EU, which is in a way the foundation of the EU – so you are correct, Andrew, in saying that what we – you can’t do free trade deals unless you come out of the common commercial policy and the common tariff area. But that is a different thing from the – somehow remaining within, as it were, the zone where there is currently free movement of good and services.
KS: So what’s your position? Because this is another example where, I think you’ve said –
BJ: What’s your position, what’s your position?
KS: No, no, no.
BJ: You want to frustrate the will of the people.
KS: Listen to what I’m saying. You have said that we’re coming out of the customs union. David Davis has used a different phrase, which is to say, oh, there may be a non-binary choice.
BJ: If I may say so, with great respect, I think David Davis is talking a great deal of sense. So indeed is the Prime Minister. Unlike the Labour Party.
KS: Classic example –
BJ: Unlike the Labour Party, all you want to do is frustrate –
KS: In 180 days your government starts these negotiations, so now is the time for clarity, not just attacking the Labour Party,
Boris Johnson & Keir Starmer

Clarity. Customs union, in or out? You say one thing, David Davis says another, and then we get the classic – we’ve had it this morning, which is when you realise there’s this difference you say, ‘well, no decision’s yet been made.’ We’ve seen this played over and over in the last two or three months. We have got very little time left. We need to know the answer to these basic questions. Those negotiating need to know. The truth – the truth –

BJ: There isn’t a negotiation at the moment...

KS: You have not made your mind up.

BJ: We haven’t yet triggered Article 50. When we trigger Article 50 all those questions will be made very clear. And I think, you know, (talking together) those questions will be addressed earlier. He’s, Keir Starme, here’s what the Prime Minister has said: take back control of our borders, taking back control of our money –

KS: We all know that.

BJ: Yeah, but it’s very important. You’re a lawyer, you’re able to interpret.

AM: He’s a lawyer, can I ask (talking together)

BJ: And doing – and doing free trade deals. Now, within that is a wealth of information about how we can best move forward. What you want to do –

AM: Let me ask you both –

BJ: With respect, what you want to do –

KS: You always go around the question, never answer the question.

BJ: I’ve just answered the question, in full, with a four-point answer. What – what –

AM: Can I just ask - let me ask –

BJ: A very good four point –

KS: Half sentences.

AM: Let’s have a go at asking a question.

BJ: Let’s ask Keir Starmer, let’s ask Keir a question.

AM: About the court case coming up next week, very, very important. This is going to – do you think, in principle, the House
of Commons ought to have a proper ability to debate the
government’s position on Brexit before, as it were, it’s too late?
BJ: Well, there’s no history in any EU negotiation or any EU treaty
talks of the House of Commons doing anything to fetter the
discretion of the government or to have a vote on these – let me
finish the point – not at all, have a vote on the – I remember
vividly, and so do you, reporting Maastricht talks.
AM: I reported it very accurately.
BJ: You did, and I remember it. I remember, I remember both of
our coverage. But the – so this – if parliament had a vote Kier –
and I think you voted in favour –
KS: On whether there should be a referendum. (talking together)
We did say that and we now learn that –
BJ: Parliament voted six to one in favour of putting this question
to the people. The people decided what the answer should be.
And if I may say so, just a very, very important point –
KS: Is your position -
BJ: Can I make a very important point? You – what you want to
do (talking together) what you want to do –
KS: MPs will not know the position until March 2019. Is that the
position? Unless it’s – you say no running commentary, there is a
running commentary, it’s coming out through the – leaks are an
indication of a divided government –
AM: I was going to ask Boris Johnson about disobliging jokes by
the Prime Minister but he’ll be delighted to know we’ve run out of
time. (talking together)
BJ: I would like to ask Keir Starmer why he is seeking to frustrate
the will of the people.
KS: We’re not.
BJ: You are. You’ve told Labour meetings that you want a second
referendum. (talking together)
AM: Gentlemen, that is all we’ve got time for today.
(ends)