THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

INTERVIEW:

WILLIAM HAGUE, MP

FOREIGN SECRETARY

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ANDREW MARR:
And now I’m joined by the very sophisticated and soigne Foreign Secretary William Hague. (Hague laughs) Good morning to you. Let’s start with …

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
… the May/Gove issue. In terms of self-inflicted wounds, the Theresa May/Michael Gove row is something of a belter, isn’t it?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well there’s been a disciplinary matter within the Government, which the Prime Minister has dealt with in a very firm, clear way. There will be discipline in the Government. But the main thing, as you said at the beginning of the programme, is the issue itself – is tackling extremism in schools. And be in no doubt that the Government will be very robust, very clear about anything that puts children in our schools at risk of extremism, at risk to their safety or to their learning.
ANDREW MARR:
Yes. The Home Secretary’s Special Adviser has been sacked because the Home Secretary’s website revealed a secret cabinet paper publicly. Now if she was sacked for doing that, surely the Home Secretary must have known; and if she did know surely she should at least apologise?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well this has been looked into by the Cabinet Secretary, as you know, and in response to that investigation Michael Gove has written his letters of apology, the Home Secretary’s Special Advisor has indeed resigned. That is clearly the appropriate response to this investigation. And remember that what we’re talking about here are ministers doing a fantastic job for this country. There’s been a disciplinary matter that’s had to be dealt with, but this is the Home Secretary presiding over a sustained reduction in crime …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) They’re ministers taking lumps out of each other. I’m just saying if Theresa May knew that her department was leaking private information, surely she should apologise? If Michael Gove has to apologise, surely the Home Secretary should as well?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well what’s happened, and what the Prime Minister decided on, is the product of the Cabinet Secretary’s investigation. And after that, the Prime Minister was very clear that Michael Gove should apologise and that the necessary consequences would follow for the Home Secretary’s Special Adviser. That’s based on an actual investigation of the facts, so that’s the right thing to do.

ANDREW MARR:
Right.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
That is a good Prime Minister making sure there is team discipline in the Government, as David Cameron always does …
ANDREW MARR:
Knocking heads together.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
… and he is equally determined to make sure that this challenge is dealt with. The Education Secretary will make a statement tomorrow about the results of the Ofsted investigations and Department for Education investigations, and we will deal with this very rigorously indeed.

ANDREW MARR:
Meanwhile, I mean if this happened in a school everybody would be put onto the naughty stair and so on. Final thought on it: omnishambles?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
No, absolutely not. The issue has to be dealt with - and is already being dealt with in many ways – but seen in the context of a Home Secretary bringing down crime, as I was saying, of an Education Secretary who in my view is bringing about the most important changes and improvements to British education in decades. I don’t think that what’s happened over the last few days on this is going to damage the overall record and achievements of the Government at all, and it’s clear that team discipline will be maintained.

ANDREW MARR:
The Prime Minister is meeting Angela Merkel and others tomorrow to talk about the Juncker question. Can you stop Jean-Claude Juncker becoming President of the European Commission? If it comes to that, can you veto it, can you stop it happening?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well this is … On the technical question of a veto …

ANDREW MARR:
Yes.
WILLIAM HAGUE:
… this is now decided by majority voting …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) So no, you can’t?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
… and the European Union taking into account the wishes of the European Parliament. But it’s very important in our view that a range of candidates are looked at. Of course this is only one of the, as you know, top jobs being decided now in the European Union. There are four or five such jobs and it’s very important there’s a political balance, there’s a geographic balance. It’s important there are women in there in the top jobs of the European Union.

ANDREW MARR:
But after the severity of this row and the words that have been used on both sides, it would be a disaster for Britain presumably if Mr Juncker did get the job?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
The important thing – and we haven’t decided on the personalities of this yet – but the important thing is that the European Union is focused on reform, is focused on change. It’s not going to deliver what the people of any European country need if it carries on with just business as usual. And the point that the Prime Minister’s been making, that I’ve been making, is that the people that are chosen to lead the commission, the council and so on have to be chosen with that in mind, but there are further consultations going on all the time …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) And up to now, the Prime Minister has said that Juncker is not that kind of person. But if he wins the battle, you will just kiss and make up? You’ll do a deal with him, you’ll get on with life?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well we will with other governments sort out who are going to fulfil these positions
and, most importantly, that the next European Commission is one that delivers flexibility, democratic accountability, freer trade with the rest of the world. This is what Europe really needs. And that’s what matters rather than the personalities of the individuals. That is what we are focusing on …

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* Well except that the …

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

… that it includes having individuals who will push that agenda.

**ANDREW MARR:**

I was going to say, I mean the connection with the individuals is they’re the people who will drive …

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

Of course.

**ANDREW MARR:**

… or not drive that agenda.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

Yes that’s right.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Do you have a candidate in your mind that you would like to see get that job?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

Well there are talented candidates around Europe.

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* Who’s your favourite?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
And of course what I’m not going to do is to set up a candidate, to embarrass a
candidate today who will then be attacked by the media or other countries. So we will
keep our counsel and keep in close touch with other countries. The Prime Minister will
have further discussions about this over the next few days with other heads of
government. The important thing for us is the trajectory of the European Union …

ANDREW MARR:
Yes.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
… and our ability to deliver reform, renegotiations, powers coming back …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) If you get the wrong people, you will not be able to negotiate the things that you
need ahead of the referendum that you’ve promised.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well this is an additional reason why we need the right people. So this is why we’re
attaching great importance to this, but I feel it’s important to explain that background.
It’s what we want Europe to achieve and Britain to be able to achieve rather than the
personalities of the individuals.

ANDREW MARR:
Now President Putin has come over for these commemorations and we’ve seen him
with the Kiev leader and so forth. Do you think that he is having second thoughts, that
he’s starting to rein back the dogs a little bit in Ukraine?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
I think the test of that will be over the coming days. Will Russia stop allowing arms to
go over the border or people to go over the border into Ukraine who then join violent
separatist groups? We look to Russia to take action on it. The Prime Minister made that
very clear to President Putin a few days ago.

ANDREW MARR:
Do you see any change in tone from President Putin?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

Well it is a good sign. There is some change in tone in that President Putin had a normal conversation, a meeting with President Poroshenko, the new President of Ukraine, and it’s very important that Russia and Ukraine discuss things together. We will keep up this balance of pressure on Russia, including the possibility of more wide ranging sanctions and of diplomacy with Russia. The diplomatic doors are fully open.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Okay. Very quickly, the key summit this week. We were talking about the use of rape as a weapon of war and so forth. Angelina Jolie is going to be there. Just tell us very quickly about that.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

Well it will be co-chaired by Angelina Jolie and by me. It is a summit like no other in the history of the world. One of the ways in which it’s like no other is that people can come. Your viewers can come to the ExCel Centre from Tuesday to Thursday.

**ANDREW MARR:**

(over) Well there you go, you’re all welcome.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

They don’t have to register in advance. There are a hundred and fifty fringe meetings. People who want to join us in ending sexual violence in conflict can come. And this is the most important event yet in a two year campaign that Angelina Jolie and I have been waging. You’ll hear more about it through the week.

**ANDREW MARR:**

We certainly will. Thank you very much indeed for joining us.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

Thank you.

**INTERVIEW ENDS**