ANDREW MARR:
Now there’s a bit of a row going on over allegations the BBC colluded in the resignation of one of Jeremy Corbyn’s team last week. No comment, but let me be absolutely clear there have been no furtive conversations with my next guest, Charlie Falconer, who is for the time being at least the Shadow Justice Secretary. The time being we’ll see for how much longer in the course of this interview. Pat McFadden was fired for disagreeing with Jeremy Corbyn about the causes of terrorism. Was that the right thing to happen?

LORD FALCONER:
Well I mean Pat McFadden said, there’s no excuse, you can’t justify what terrorists have done because of any allegation about what the West’s policy is, and I obviously agree with that proposition. So I regret that Pat has gone, but I think …

ANDREW MARR:
(interjecting) So that was a wrong decision in your view?

LORD FALCONER:
Well the decision as to who is in and who is out of the shadow front bench team is
entirely a matter for the leader. My own view about Pat McFadden is that he was an absolutely excellent European minister. I’ve known Pat over a very long time and he’s absolutely exceptional public servant.

ANDREW MARR:
So you don’t think he should be fired? If he’s an exceptional public servant and an exceptional politician and leader and so forth, he shouldn’t have been fired?

LORD FALCONER:
I certainly wouldn’t have fired him.

ANDREW MARR:
Right. Moving on directly from that, however, we clearly … we’re at a period where quite a lot of people on the centre right or the moderate side of the party - the Blairite side, however we describe it - are beginning to peel away from Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership. Are you going to be one of them?

LORD FALCONER:
No I’m not. From where we stand at the moment, the country needs an effective opposition. The floods, the junior doctors about to go on strike for the first time in 40 years, what’s going on with Britain’s support for the justice system in Saudi Arabia, these are issues that we should be focusing on and they’re just examples. We as a party in the wake of the reshuffle, which is an amazing distraction from all of these issues, need to be coming together and doing the work to provide an alternative to this government, which is a very bad government.

ANDREW MARR:
To be an effective opposition traditionally you need to be quite a broad church. Are you a broad church still?

LORD FALCONER:
We certainly are a broad church and you can see that we are a broad church from the … from the make-up of the shadow cabinet, which remains a broad church even after the reshuffle. But the broad church to be effective has got to be a broad church that is
not at war with itself. It has to be a broad church looking outwards and holding the government to account.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So doesn’t that mean, given that you have a leader with strong views and so forth, that the NEC, the shadow cabinet, the parliamentary party needs to support Jeremy Corbyn and his views, so the people who take a different view basically need to belt up for a while?

**LORD FALCONER:**
There needs to be a period of calm, there needs to be a period in which policy is debated internally. In some respects the views that the leader has will definitely prevail; in other respects there needs to be our sleeves rolled up and proper policies put to the nation. And that means we need to do what political parties do, which is work together to ra… to come to an agreement on policy both in relation to foreign affairs and defence …

**ANDREW MARR:**
Yes.

**LORD FALCONER:**
… and in relation to domestic policy and put it to the nation, and that means work politically.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So if the NEC is going to take charge of policy like Trident, and that could happen very quickly, is that something you’d be worried about?

**LORD FALCONER:**
Well I don’t think the NEC are going to take charge.

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Well there’s heavy briefing that they are going to take over the policy …
LORD FALCONER:

(over) Well I don’t know where the briefing is coming from, but the way that policy’s made in the Labour Party is ultimately by conference. I mean for example in relation to Trident, there are very, very, very many people who are employed in industries that support the Trident defence system. The unions should have a role in determining what our policy in relation to that is and I’m not aware of any detailed proposals that we change the method by which we make policy.

ANDREW MARR:

You’re pro-Trident.

LORD FALCONER:

I am.

ANDREW MARR:

Has anybody suggested that you should belt up about that?

LORD FALCONER:

No, no, no.

ANDREW MARR:

You’re not being put back in your …

LORD FALCONER:

(over) I’m not being muzzled, I’m not being put back in my box. And one of the reasons why Jeremy won the election within the Labour Party is that people wanted a more open debate about these things and that is what we’re going to have.

ANDREW MARR:

There are a lot of your friends, I think including the former Mr Tony himself, who’s slightly puzzled about why Charlie Falconer is still in Jeremy Corbyn’s shadow cabinet. If the policy changed on Trident, would you leave?

LORD FALCONER:
Well I mean let’s see what happens in relation to that, but I’m clear that I support Trident remaining. Why is Charlie Falconer in the shadow cabinet? Because I believe my role as a long-term supporter of the Labour Party is to do my best to ensure there is effective opposition against the government.

ANDREW MARR:
And you don’t think, as some would say, ah but you’re legitimising a leader who can’t win an election? That’s what the right of the party say.

LORD FALCONER:
Well what I’m doing is doing my best to make Labour effective. And the broader the church that we are, the more we reach out to the public, and reaching out to the public is what we’ve got to be doing.

ANDREW MARR:
And if you all stop resigning and attacking each other, can Jeremy Corbyn become prime minister?

LORD FALCONER:
Well I mean he became leader of the Labour Party. I think he can become prime minister. I think as long as there is an offer to the country that connects with the country … And there are big, big iss… This is the year of decision on so many issues like, for example, the European Union. The Conservative Party is completely divided on the European Union and I think in a place that is different from where the country are. We have huge opportunities as a party. We can only take them if we are not divided.

ANDREW MARR:
Charlie Falconer, staying resolutely where you are, thank you very much indeed for joining us this morning.

LORD FALCONER:
Thank you.
INTERVIEW ENDS