Transcript of Brian Paddick interview

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INTERVIEW:

BRIAN PADDICK

LIB DEM, LONDON MAYORAL CANDIDATE

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ANDREW MARR:

Now we've heard from Boris, we've heard from Ken. But the Lib Dems are in the London mayoral fray, also returning with another veteran campaigner - the former senior policeman, Brian Paddick - who also gave evidence at the Leveson Inquiry on phone hacking recently. Brian Paddick, welcome.

BRIAN PADDICK:

Thank you.

ANDREW MARR:

So you're coming into this race at a very interesting time for London as a former policeman because obviously policing issues are going to be hugely important, and we're hearing all sorts of slightly scary sounding stuff about new riot control techniques and so on. How do you approach it as a mayoral candidate, first of all?

BRIAN PADDICK:

The important thing is that the Mayor of London is now the Police and Crime Commissioner for London, so the Mayor decides what the priorities are for the police, what the budget is for the police, and the Mayor alone holds the police to account. So this is a very important election, and with thirty years of policing experience myself, I would argue that nobody's better qualified to hold that position.

ANDREW MARR:
You went along to the Leveson Inquiry and talked about phone hacking. Your own phone was hacked. How do you as a former senior policeman regard the relationship between the Met and editors, journalists, proprietors, the sort of...the press establishment?

BRIAN PADDICK:

Well the evidence that we heard - for example a senior officer being told it was payback time for the champagne - quite clearly indicates that at the top of the Met, it was too close, too cosy between newspaper editors and senior police officers.

ANDREW MARR:

Do you think it was corrupt?

BRIAN PADDICK:

Well we are told as constables in our initial training not to accept free kebabs from the local Greek restaurant because you never know when you might have to breathalyse the individual concerned. And senior police officers should realise that it could come to pass - and it did - that they have to take criminal action against the newspaper editors who they are wining and dining with.

ANDREW MARR:

So do you think a completely different culture - maybe it's there already, of course, it may already be there in the Met - but do you think a different culture has to spread across senior policing when it comes to contact with journalism?

BRIAN PADDICK:

You know the difficulty is whatever happens at the top is the example that those at the bottom follow. And, therefore, it has to be a change of culture at the top of the organisation and I think the new commissioner, Bernard Hogan-Howe, is sending out the right messages as far as that's concerned. Those sorts of meetings should be formal meetings that are minuted. The minutes should be published and it should be over nothing stronger than a cup of tea.
ANDREW MARR:

Yuh. Looking ahead to what's coming up in London - we've got the Olympics of course as well as the Diamond Jubilee - an enormously difficult job for the police in terms of the security threat to an event as big as this. What would be your sort of advice as a politician looking from the outside now?

BRIAN PADDICK:

Well we saw the riots last August where large parts of London went up in flames. We have increasing crime at the moment, so crime is the number one issue, let alone with the Olympics coming along and all those security issues. Chris Allison is the officer in overall charge. He is a very good officer, he's been there throughout. He's untarnished by all this other stuff, so we couldn't be in better hands as far as that's concerned. But we have to make sure that the police are held to account and, unfortunately, the previous two mayors have shown that they've been absolutely terrible at holding the police to account for their performance.

ANDREW MARR:

Now you're not just a candidate. You're the Lib Dem candidate in this race. So I must ask you stories this morning in the papers saying a lot of Liberal Democrats are very unhappy and worried about stories that the 50p top rate of tax is going to be cut in the Budget. Would you be worried about that?

BRIAN PADDICK:

What we want is we want tax cuts for low and medium income earners, for ordinary working people. Now I don't care how we get the tax out of the super rich. I don't care whether it's a tycoon tax, a mansion tax or a 50p tax, but what we need to do is we need to make sure that the high earners are paying at least as much tax as ordinary working families. It would be a tragedy if this budget actually gave tax cuts to the rich, leaving ordinary people who are struggling to make ends meet in a worse position.
ANDREW MARR:

So the 50p, which was sacrosanct at one point, isn't any longer, so long as Liberal Democrats feel that out of the Budget the rich are paying more, not less?

BRIAN PADDICK:

Liberal Democrats are not intellectually wedded to a 50p rate of tax. What we do believe though is that those with the broadest shoulders should bear the greatest burden, and at the moment it's the poor and medium sized income earners who need the support - people who are struggling, having to make decisions between heating and eating. You know that can't be right that we give tax cuts to the rich when those people are struggling.

ANDREW MARR:

Very interesting. Brian Paddick, thank you very much for joining us this morning.

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