

ANDREW MARR SHOW

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AMBER RUDD

AM: Can we start with immigration and the big issues? Do you accept that in the end it's a balance between access to markets and restricting immigration as the British public seem to want, so you have to balance those two things?

AR: Well, I'd put it slightly differently. What I do think that the British public voted for was to make sure that we reduce immigration from the European Union, that's a given. We have to find a way of doing that. And I wouldn't necessarily say what it means to do with the single market, but what I would say if we have to work out how we can do that while promoting and protecting the economy.

AM: What they voted for was to take back control, which implies that you as Home Secretary, in a few years' time, post-Brexit, if you wanted to could have absolutely nobody migrating from the EU to this country. You could have a complete slammed door if you wanted to.

AR: You're absolutely right. Once we leave the European Union we will have complete control over who comes into the UK from the EU and who doesn't - with one or two provisos, of course. First of all, it's going to be reciprocal, we're going to have to work out what's in the UK's interest as well, going to the European Union, and what works for our economy, and making sure that we get the right balance looking across the whole spectrum is what's going to be the guiding principle.

AM: And you are completely committed to the tens of thousands target of immigration?

AR: I'm completely committed to making sure that we reduce it, and yes, tens of thousands. Although it will take some time.

AM: Well, I'd like to ask really about how you're going to do that. If we put the EU side to one side, 330,000 immigrated into this country last year, roughly speaking, of which more than half, 190,000 were from non-EU countries where you do have control. If you're going to get to the tens of thousands you're going to have to radically cut that number. So can I ask you first of all about family reunions, is that going to stop?

AR: Well, I can't tell you which portion of which area of immigration we're actually going to drive down more than the other. What I can tell you is –

AM: But why not, given you have control over this now?

AR: Indeed. But because we're going to be entering into a negotiation with the European Union.

AM: I'm not asking about the EU side, I'm asking about the non-EU side. 40,000 visas were given last year for family reunions. If you're going to get down to tens of thousands overall you have to stop that don't you?

AR: No. We don't have to stop it. Don't forget, the tens of thousands is a net amount, so there are people who leave and there are people who come here. So when you look at the overall number of how many can come here you have to net off the people also that left. So the net figure of tens of thousands is what we're looking at. What we want to promote –

AM: So the gross figure might be over 100,000 for instance?

AR: Indeed it might, yes. Yes, you would expect it to be if you're netting it off.

AM: Right, okay. So that's visas for family reunions. A much, much bigger number are the 100 and something thousand visas for students coming into this country. A lot of worry in India and other countries that this is going to be closed off. What assurance

can you give people about the future of student visas from non-EU countries?

AR: Fair enough. Well, what we've looked at is how we can make sure that the students who come here are coming here for real courses. We've already closed eight to nine hundred bogus colleges, and we are raising the level at which you have to start earning once you leave the university so that you make a real benefit to the UK if you're going to stay here. So we're looking at a number of options. But students do make an important contribution. There's going to be no blanket banning of students coming to the UK, but we are looking at bringing down the numbers overall.

AM: Net or gross, if you're not going to do something dramatic about family reunions and you're not going to do something really dramatic about student visas, it's still very, very hard to see how you hit your target. Can we then move to the EU side of the argument, and again it's 180,000 people coming in. Philip Hammond, the Chancellor, has said that sort of top bankers and so forth might be excluded from any ban on people coming in. I'm interested how many other groups might also be excluded. For instance, what about senior academics? People running research institutes, scientists working up and down the UK at the moment, will they be banned from coming in or will they be a special case?

AR: Andrew, it's too early for me to start giving answers to those specific questions. I know you want me to give a running commentary on the negotiations now, but I'm not in a position to do that. What we're going to look at is how we get the best for the economy, driving the numbers down but protecting the people who really add value to the economy. I can't give specific areas at the moment.

AM: Okay. But if you can't really dramatically reduce non-EU then you have to move very, very hard on EU migration, as the Brexit vote suggested that people want. And that means things like, for

instance, the future of the 50,000 people working inside the NHS who were born inside the EU, the rest of the EU, and we depend upon as nurses and doctors and specialists of all kinds in our NHS. Are you saying that those people will not in future come from the EU?

AR: No, the Prime Minister has already said that she wants to make sure that we can protect the people from the European Union who are here, such as the 57,000 who work in the NHS. And in the future we will be guided by making sure that we support the people who come to the UK who really add value to the economy. But I can't tell you how that can be implemented, but I can tell you that's the guiding principle.

AM: So we're getting into the detail a bit here, but one last area which seems to be a very, very important one, this government's committed to building many, many houses, big infrastructure projects. Now, the people in charge of the construction industry say that simply can't happen if they don't get the expertise that's missing in this country at the moment from the rest of the EU. We'll have to kind of cancel projects.

AR: I don't see us doing that, in terms of cancelling projects. Building in the UK is incredibly important, housing and major infrastructure. And one of the principles is going to be working with Greg Clark in the Industrial Strategy Department to make sure that we tailor our requirements for bringing people from the European Union, who can add value. And I think this is the point that people want us to do when they voted on June 23rd, is to make sure that people who come to UK really add value to the economy.

AM: Okay, so there are lots and lots of areas of the economy which depend on migration at the moment. And we've talked about construction and the NHS, universities, the City, but also lots of restaurants, coffee shops and so forth. You're going to have, as Home Secretary, to negotiate some way of getting the

right amount of migration to allow those to continue without offending people who don't want migration at all. And you have said we're not going to have an Australian-based points system. But surely, inevitably you're going to have to have some system of work permits? You're going to have to be able to say, okay, the construction industry needs X number of electricians, we'll let in X number of electricians. And that's how it's going to have to work if you can negotiate that.

AR: Well, it's right about the points system. We've ruled it out because it simply doesn't work. There was a non-EU points system in the past, it was ineffective because basically people could gain the system too effectively. Whether we look at a work permit system or another system is something that my department is looking at closely at the moment.

AM: Alright. What could another system possibly be? It has to be work permits doesn't it?

AR: I think that work permits certainly has value, but as I say, we're not ruling anything out at the moment.

AM: Alright. Can I ask about another story which is related to this, which is that the European Commission is currently working on a European version of the Esta system the Americans use for extra visas, where you pay in a bit of money and go online and apply before you can go there. And it suggested that after we leave the EU this will apply to all non-EU countries, us, Libya, Turkey, Japan and so forth and that therefore British citizens who want to travel to the EU for any purpose, holiday, to visit their relatives, to work, whatever, are going to have to apply for visas, and apply online and pay money. What's your reaction to that?

AR: My reaction to that is that's it's a reminder that this is a two-way negotiation. The EU and the Commissioners may be considering issues, alternatives, they will be considering their negotiation with us, just as we are considering it with them. But

I'm going to make sure that what we do get is in the best interest of the UK.

AM: Would you be offended, would you try to stop that happening? A lot of people would be quite surprised if they suddenly had to start to pay money and apply online to go across to France?

AR: I think they would be surprised. I don't think it's particularly desirable, but we don't rule it out because we have to be allowed a free hand to get the best negotiation.

AM: Alright, this morning Boris Johnson has lent his name to a new organisation to push for, effectively it seems, a hard Brexit. Now, it's interesting that he at least feels there needs to be some kind of ginger group represented inside the Cabinet. What's your reaction to him?

AR: Well, I find actually that the Cabinet's working pretty united. I mean, obviously there was a robust debate –

AM: There certainly was.

AR: - during the referendum, of which I had my moments in it as well. But actually when we sit around the Cabinet everybody's focused on delivering what the Prime Minister has asked us to do.

AM: Speaking of your robust moments, let's remind everybody of your most robust moment, one of the most vivid ones in the campaign.

(filmed insert)

AR: As for Boris, well, he's the life and soul of the party but he's not the man you want driving you home at the end of the evening. This is a very serious choice we have to make.

(end of insert)

AM: Absolutely and now this man who is presumably drunkenly in charge of a car is our Foreign Secretary? Has he been veering all over the shop since he took over that job?

AR: Well, Boris is not the driver. Theresa May is the driver.

AM: Ah, very good, okay.

AR: The rest of us are in the car.

AM: So he's heckling from the back seat?

AR: No, well actually no. She's very clear that we're all focused in the same direction and we're all going to deliver on what she's asked us to do.

AM: He's driving the Foreign Office. The serious question is given what you said during the campaign and what he said, how difficult is it for you actually to join hands and work together inside government?

AM: Well, just speaking very frankly, it doesn't feel difficult at all because we all take the view that the British public have delivered this verdict, we are living in a democracy and it's for us in government to try and deliver on that as best as we can.

AM: But he's hard Brexit and you're soft Brexit.

AR: I think that's pretty confusing. The fact is we're all delivering
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AM: or oversimplifying.

AR: It is oversimplifying. The fact is we're all delivering on what the Prime Minister's asked us to deliver as a result of the referendum.

AM: Do you regret some of things you said during the campaign? We were talking earlier on, Mark Thompson was talking about the language used during the campaign and you suggested there was going to be a half a billion pound increase in energy bills if we left the EU. Is that on the cards or was that frankly scaremongering?

AR: Well, I don't think it's very helpful to go back over the –

AM: It is for us.

AR: It is for you – the things that people said on either side and what I think is much more helpful is for people like myself, perhaps who believed that at the time to try and work and mitigate those damages by finding opportunities.

AM: So be clear you no longer think that we're going to be facing a half a billion pound increase in our energy bills?

AJ: I think it always depends on the steps that you take after a certain result. Now we've taken certain steps. We now have a Brexit department, we have a trade department. Mark Carney took action on monetary policy – none of these things were proposed at the time. We are a government who's going to make sure that we take the right steps not only to make this work but to make a real success of it.

AM: Let me turn to another issue right at the front of your agenda at the moment which is the child abuse inquiry. You said when the most recent chair, Judge Lowell Goddard, left the job, that she'd done it first for personal reasons, she was feeling lonely.

Actually she produced an eight page, quote cogent, quite angry and quite detailed account of an inquiry that is running out of control. It's too wide, it's badly organised, badly managed and it really - a new face, a new head of the Home Office, a new government in effect should have the courage just to pull the plug on this.

AR: Well I don't agree with that interpretation at all. I did read her letter. It did actually refer at the end to the fact that she found it lonely. I mean she was from New Zealand, some of her family were still there, so it was picking up on a word that she'd used.

AM: But this is four chairs of this inquiry in two years.

AR: I know. It's a difficult job, but it's an important job and I've appointed now Alexis Jay who I think will do a really good job of taking it forward. But Andrew, I just want to say that it's not all about what we were doing in the past and building on some of the things that the former Home Secretary put in place, what I'm doing as well is making sure that children are protected going forward, so this week I'm meeting with Sadiq Khan and we're looking at an announcement for two pilots for a child house in which children who've been sexually abused will be looked after, agencies will come and work together –

AM: So is this one child house or in one place or?

AR: Well, we're piloting two in London which will look after 200 children a year we believe, and it's about making sure that we learn the lessons from the child abuse scandals of the past and we actually act now.

AM: Because the danger – that's a practical suggestion, actually helping people. The danger of these inquiries is they are too

ambitious, they're all set up in the emotion of the moment and you have a very, very wide ranging inquiry, all aspects of child abuse, everywhere in Britain, schools, institutions, the BBC, everything else and actually it's just too big and it should at least be narrowed and focused. Otherwise it's going to disappoint everybody, including victims of child abuse.

AR: Well I don't agree with that. I spoke to the victims who have a panel and I spoke to the panel of experts and above all I spoke to Alexis Jay who's now taking on the Chair. This is a huge inquiry, but it is incredibly important. If we remember when the scandals first started to hit the country was shocked and so it's right that we have something of this scale.

AM: All right, you are now a very senior Cabinet Minister, so I can ask you about something slightly outside your department which is the seven day NHS row going on at the moment. You may have heard Chris Hopson suggest that it's no longer possible to deliver a seven day operation given the strain the NHS is under. Do you think he's right about that?

AR: I don't think he's right. We set it out clearly that it was something we were going to deliver in our manifesto. The health secretary and the government consulted with Simon Stevens and asked him about what scale of money was necessary, we've delivered on that money. We know it's a challenge.

AM: So what do you think he's saying? What do you think has gone wrong in the NHS?

AR: Well I'm not sure that anything has gone wrong on the scale of which he has tried to put forward and you know, he will have to set out his case and I'm sure we'll hear more from him on that. But the fact is we have to engage with the leadership on the NHS and actually I'm very proud of the NHS. They're delivering four

thousand more operations a day since 2010 and most people, anecdotally, tell me that their experience is good.

AM: Grammar Schools. An enthusiast?

AR: Absolutely an enthusiast but not going back to the fifties. Having a variety that we're having now where parents have a choice of schools. Arts schools, music schools and yes selective.

AM: So no sheep and goats as such?

AR: Absolutely not. Final question. I said that you were the fastest rising politician to a top job since the Second World War. So I have to ask you, any sense of vertigo?

AR: None at all, but just a tremendous sense of honour and responsibility.

AM: And this is one those jobs where people – it was meant to be a disastrous department until Theresa May showed that it didn't need to be. Are you going to put her shoes on as it were and travel in her wake? Is your ambition sated?

AR: I hope that I'm going to be able to build on what she's done and also focus on things on my own which is particularly working with the vulnerable. That's going to be my particular area I hope of ambition and support.

ENDS