ANDREW MARR:
Now then, Labour had a near miss when they came within 617 votes of losing a rock solid safe seat last week in Heywood and Middleton. After that shock, is there a wobble in the ranks? I’m joined now by Labour’s Deputy Leader Harriet Harman who is in Ipswich. Good morning to you. Is there a wobble in the ranks? There should be.

HARRIET HARMAN:
Good morning. No there is not a wobble in the ranks and nor should there be. Obviously we’re very pleased that we’ve got a new Labour MP and it was evident that there was a collapse in confidence in the Tories and the Lib-Dems, but that doesn’t make us complacent because the result was very close. But I think what is absolutely evident is that the anger and concern that there is amongst people when they’re being told that recovery has arrived and yet they’re not getting better off and feeling disconnected from politics, that is being picked up on by UKIP. But actually UKIP, although they’re tapping into that sense of despair, they don’t provide the answers, so it provides a very big responsibility on us as the Labour Party - when people see the economy not delivering for them, they’re worried about the health service – it is our responsibility to listen to those concerns and work together to make sure that we get rid of this government and can address those concerns.
ANDREW MARR:  
Okay. We read this morning in the Observer that Labour is changing course on immigration. Is that true?

HARRIET HARMAN:  
Well I think we’re setting out very clear concer… we’re setting out very clear policies for dealing with the the downside of immigration. Of course there’s upsides to immigration …

ANDREW MARR:  
(over) Tell us a little bit about those policies then.

HARRIET HARMAN:  
(over) … and over the years immigration has helped this country. But, but the concerns that there are need to be addressed and I think that we can do that in a number of ways. Not just because we’re listening to those concerns, but we share those concerns. We don’t want to see people’s wages kept down because people are coming in and working at a very low level and, therefore, people’s pay and standard of living is repressed …

ANDREW MARR:  
(over) So tell us about new policies.

HARRIET HARMAN:  
… and that means higher minimum wage and it means tougher enforcement. Well it’s basically about a new approach which is saying we do want to talk about immigration, we do have these policies, and that these will actually solve the problem …

ANDREW MARR:  
(over) Well forgive …

HARRIET HARMAN:  
(over) … because actually just setting out a number, which the Tories did …
**ANDREW MARR:**
Forgive me, but you’ve talked about talking, you’ve talked about listening. We’ve been told there are new policies. Can you tell me what the new policies actually are?

**HARRIET HARMAN:**
Well what Ed Miliband has said and what Yvette has said in their articles in the paper this morning – and what I’m saying to you today – is that actually we need to address and we’ve got policies to address the problems that come with immigration and we share the concerns that people have. And that is …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) Yeah but what are the policies?

**HARRIET HARMAN:**
(over) … stopping a situation where you can … Well I’m just trying to set them forth.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Okay.

**HARRIET HARMAN:**
So that basically if people have committed serious criminal offences in other countries, they shouldn’t be allowed into this country. If they commit criminal offences here – even if they’re a EU citizen – they should be deported back to their country of origin. That on benefits, that actually if people want to claim contributory benefits they should have been here long enough to have paid into the system before they get out. That if your children are abroad, you can’t claim child benefit when you’re working here. And that if a new country joins the European Union, there should be transitional protections which cut into the free movement of labour. And, as I’ve said before …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) Thanks for that, yeah.
HARRIET HARMAN:
… we don’t want to see people being undercut in terms of their wages. So I think that we need to be much clearer about this. Yes clear about the benefits of being in Europe, but also tackling the problems that come with the free movement of labour.

ANDREW MARR:
Now you know Ed Miliband very well. He’s a resilient guy, but there is a kind of wall of criticism in the papers today, including from Labour Party people as well, and the opinion polling for his leadership is terrible. Is there any chance whatever of the Labour Party changing its leadership before the election?

HARRIET HARMAN:
No, absolutely not. And we always knew and Ed Miliband knew, the whole party knew that it was a very tough challenge after we were defeated in 2010 to be in contention, to be in government and to have a Labour prime minister in 2015. But we have made progress. I mean we’re not at all complacent you know despite the fact that we got a new Labour MP after those two by-elections and the Tories are in meltdown, we’re not at all complacent. We know there’s a big challenge. But it’s a challenge that is going to be met by Ed Miliband and the leadership of the party, but also by the fact that our party is very broad based and has deep roots that we have across the PLP, the Parliamentary Labour Party, Labour members of parliament, people with great experience and deep roots in communities all around the country, our local councilors and our members. So it’s actually the fact that we are a one nation Labour Party rooted in all these communities, sharing the concerns, that means we can draw on that to face the challenge that there is for us to get rid of this government which is causing so much damage to people’s lives.

ANDREW MARR:
But one Labour MP said that there was still at least the perception that there was a kind of café latte sipping, liberal, North London intelligentsia feel about the Labour Party that was out of touch with traditional Labour voters across the country. You must accept that at least, if a slight caricature, has a strong element of truth about it?
HARRIET HARMAN:
But you know that is not the reality. That is not the Labour Party. There are people like myself from professional middle class backgrounds representing a seat in London, but there are people from the North East, Labour MPs from the North East, from the North West, from the West Midlands, from Wales and Scotland. Actually we have people in the Labour Party from all walks of life, from all different backgrounds, and from different parts of the country. And it’s working together as that broad based team that listens and understands all parts of the country, that is how we’re going to make the way forward under Ed Miliband’s leadership and we are not going to have a wobble or a leadership change.

ANDREW MARR:
Harriet Harman, thank you very much indeed for that.

INTERVIEW ENDS