THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

INTERVIEW:

HARRIET HARMAN, MP
LABOUR DEPUTY LEADER

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Headlines:
- She says Labour is not talking to the Liberal Democrats behind the scenes about a partnership after the election
- She says Tory NHS funding pledge is ‘illusory’
- She claims the Conservatives' negative campaigning is undermining the economy and “it just turns people off”.

ANDREW MARR:
Well the SNP surge in Scotland poses a huge challenge to Labour and I’m joined now by Labour’s Deputy Leader Harriet Harman. Welcome to you. Now you’ve said as a party that you won’t do any kind of deal with the SNP, but you must be very concerned with what’s going on up there?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well obviously our team in Scotland are fighting hard for every vote, but Ed Miliband could not have been clearer – that if he’s prime minister, there will be no SNP ministers in his government; and Jim Murphy and Kezia Dugdale and our team in Scotland have made that absolutely the case. And of course the reality is that Scotland needs to be liberated from the austerity that is being imposed by a Tory led
government and a Tory prime minister, and that is going to be the big choice that faces people not only in Wales and in England, but also in Scotland.

ANDREW MARR:
According to this morning’s analysis by John Curtis, it’s perfectly possible that Labour and the Liberal Democrats together could have enough votes to govern after this election. Does the same apply to the Liberal Democrats or would you be prepared to talk to them? Are you talking to them already?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Absolutely not. What we’re doing at the moment is …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Why not?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well because we’ve spent the last 5 years opposing the bedroom tax whilst the Lib Dems have gone through the division lobbies with the Tories imposing it on people who can’t afford it. They’ve actually been voting with the Tories for a top down reorganisation of the NHS which has squandered £2 billion of NHS resources. We want to win our seats in Redcar, in Bermondsey, in Hornsey and Wood Green.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Sure, sure, of course.

HARRIET HARMAN:
We’re actually fighting against them.

ANDREW MARR:
Of course.

HARRIET HARMAN:
The idea that we should be talking to them behind the scenes. They’ve put themselves on the wrong side and we’re on the side of a recovery that will …
ANDREW MARR:
(over) Well except that you agree about Europe; your proposals for NHS reform, well actually they’re going to spend more money than you are on that. There’s lots of areas, looking ahead, they agree, a lot of their more right wing people may no longer be in parliament. Are you really saying you’re ruling out any kind of agreement with the Liberal Democrats now?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well if we form the government, it’s open to members of parliament from other parties to support our programme when we’re in government. That is open to them. But we are fighting seats in Scotland, Wales and England for an overall majority, for a … for a …

ANDREW MARR:
But you wouldn’t have a Vince Cable or a Tim Farron inside government?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well we’ve … At this stage, with 26 days or something left before the General Election where not a single vote has been cast, you’ll forgive me if I make it absolutely clear, beyond peradventure, we are not talking to the Lib Dems, we are not doing any deals with the Lib Dems. We have made it absolutely clear that there will be no SNP ministers in any future Labour government. You know we think we’ve got a programme which can actually set this country on a much more optimistic path with more job security, with better living standards, and rescuing the National Health Service, and that’s what we’re doing all around the country.

ANDREW MARR:
You talk about rescuing the National Health Service, but as of today David Cameron and George Osborne are offering much more money for the NHS than you are.

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well they aren’t, are they, really? I mean let’s look at …

ANDREW MARR:
Well they’re saying £8 billion. You’re saying two and a half.

HARRIET HARMAN:
No, no, let’s look at the reality of this. They have put themselves on a trajectory of extreme spending cuts, so there would be more spending cuts next year than there have been this year, there would be more spending cuts over the next 2 years than the last 5, and that is all laid out with the Office of Budget Responsibility. So they set themselves on that path.

ANDREW MARR:
But they’re not lying when they say there’s going to be another £8 billion, are they?

HARRIET HARMAN:
No, no, but the next thing is … So firstly that’s the spending profile they set forward – extreme cuts. In addition to that, they have promised £10 billion of tax cuts on top of that. So the idea that they can actually put extra money into the NHS, the reality is the spending programme they’ve put forward is a threat to cut the NHS, which was one of the major reasons for people to vote Labour.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Are you suggesting … Sorry are you suggesting that this is a big lie when they say there’s an extra £8 billion coming to the NHS?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well I’d say it’s absolutely illusory. And people will judge them on their record and know that actually, having squandered £2 billion in top down reorganisation that people are finding it harder …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) So do you think it’s dishonest?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well I think it’s illusory. And you know the reality is I don’t think people will believe it anyway. I mean I was in Stockton yesterday and people know that they find it harder to see their GP since the Tories came into government; they know they wait
longer in accident and emergency and that waiting lists are starting to grow and the NHS staff are under extreme pressure. So I think that it’s rather a sort of desperate …

ANDREW MARR:
Okay, let’s …

HARRIET HARMAN:
... you know lurch, but I don’t think it’ll cut any ice.

ANDREW MARR:
… let’s turn to Labour’s big announcement of the day, which is £7.6 billion from tax evasion and avoidance. Now we know the figure. We don’t know the details of how you’re going to get there exactly, but I gather there’s ten proposals going to be announced in due course. Does one of them involve the change that Ed … the Miliband family used with reversion of duty?

HARRIET HARMAN:
They did not do any … Ed Miliband did not do any tax avoidance. He paid full capital gains tax …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Sure, but the family …

HARRIET HARMAN:
… when he sold the property he inherited. But if you want me to say what our tax avoidance …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) The family changed … used a deed of reversion, which does have the effect of cutting tax.

HARRIET HARMAN:
Ed …

ANDREW MARR:
Is that going to be part of the things that you cut out?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Ed Miliband did not benefit from any tax evasion. And when he sold his share of the property that he inherited, he paid full capital gains tax on it because at that point it wasn’t his main home. But let me take you through some of the proposals that we’ve put forward because I think that really people think …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Not too long a list, but give us the really important ones.

HARRIET HARMAN:
Okay. Well ending non-dom status – long overdue since it’s been going on for 200 years; making sure that hedge funds pay stamp duty when they sell shares, same as everybody else does; making sure – and again this is long overdue – our overseas territories are transparent in the ownership of companies, so that people can’t shelter their assets in UK overseas territories; making sure that private … rewriting the rules on private equity, so that actually they can’t shift to capital gains tax when really at 28 per cent they should be paying 45 per cent.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Alright, okay, that’s …

HARRIET HARMAN:
But you see I think at the moment people are fed up with the idea that somehow the richer you are, that you can find your way out of the system. And I think people will be incredulous too that at this point in time the Tories are offering an inheritance tax cut.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) But there are lots of people that … Well I was going to say there are lots of people who are not regard… you may regard as rich but most people would not regard as rich, who will be very glad of the inheritance tax change, who just want to hand a bit more down to their family. And you’re against that. Why?
HARRIET HARMAN:
Well, look, the public finances after us having to back up the banks after the global financial crisis have been under pressure, and that’s been made worse by the way the economy has been run by the Tories. Now at the moment you don’t pay inheritance tax till your first … till your home is worth more than £650,000. We don’t think it’s a priority to give tax relief on inheritance tax. We think, for example, if your home is worth more than £2 million, you should start paying a mansion tax. They would want to give people with homes of more than £2 million inheritance tax relief. I mean it is the polar opposite. And you know people face a big choice. It’s becoming clearer and clearer as we get to the election how actually the Tories …

ANDREW MARR:
Okay.

HARRIET HARMAN:
… are helping a few people, and we want everybody to be better off.

ANDREW MARR:
As we watch this campaign unfold, we see the two Eds together again and again and again talking about tax, talking about the NHS. We don’t see you with them so much. Do you think you’re being treated properly as the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party or are you being slightly shoved off to the pink battle bus and so forth and the women’s campaign down there, and do you intend to be Deputy Prime Minister if Labour wins?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well I’m Shadow Deputy Prime Minister and I hope that we’ll get into government. But actually I don’t think it’s immaterial us being on our pink bus campaign. You know there were 9 million women at the last election who didn’t vote. And this is a watershed election for women, so I think it’s really important to be out there saying to women really almost whoever you vote for, use your vote.

ANDREW MARR:
Harriet Harman, thanks very much indeed for joining us.

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