

ANDREW MARR SHOW

PRITI PATEL

HOME SECRETARY

AM: Priti Patel, the Home Secretary, joins me. Anne Sacoolas, the American woman who was involved in the accident which led to that terrible death, has no longer got diplomatic immunity according to the Foreign Office. Are you now going to try to extradite her back to the UK?

PP: Well, Andrew, good morning. And I think it's important to recognise that this is an incredibly tragic case and the Foreign Secretary has been working with his American counterparts and been in touch with the US administration on this, and the fact of the matter is right now it very much seems that the lady in question wants to start cooperating with the discussions and obviously the investigations, and I think we should support that.

AM: As Home Secretary, do you think she should be extradited here to face the music?

PP: Well, I think, look, there are discussions taking place right now and we need to ensure that justice is done, but obviously that cooperation with this investigation takes place. That is absolutely right. I mean, we owe that to the families, and obviously this is a terribly tragic case. The family need to have the assurance, obviously, that the investigation will be thorough and will take place and that cooperation will also take place, and obviously that's what we are committed to working to achieve.

AM: You seem to be suggesting, Home Secretary, that these investigations could take place in America without Anne Sacoolas coming to the UK. Is that the case?

PP: No. I've been very clear, as has the government and the Foreign Secretary, that we want her to cooperate, and I think it is right that actually at this stage now, because things have moved on in the last few hours, the last 24 hours, that the family are

supported - obviously this is a tragic case - but that the cooperation takes place. So it is right that justice is served, that the investigation takes place and the lady Anne Sacoolas actually does cooperate with the investigation. That is the right thing to do.

AM: Well, let's turn then to Brexit. Are MPs going to be voting on Saturday for a deal?

PP: Well, we've got an interesting week ahead. Obviously this is the week in the run-up to the European Council, where there are a range of negotiations that are taking place even as we speak right now. And the reality is obviously the government's number one priority is to secure a deal and obviously then bring forward the legislation in parliament through votes and a legislative framework to a potential withdrawal agreement bill so that we can get Brexit done. And that is of course the government's priority.

AM: I don't know if you could hear Rebecca Long Bailey from the Labour Party talking a moment ago, but it was quite clear that Labour are thinking about attaching the need for a referendum and a referendum quite soon to this deal. So they pass the deal through, but then there's a people's vote attached to that. What would the government's attitude be? Would you give, as it were, the opposition another referendum to get that deal through?

PP: Well, I think, let's be clear, Andrew, there is a lot of speculation that's taking place right now. The Labour Party, along with the rest of the country, the media, don't even know the details of this deal. There are negotiations that are taking place, and I think it's important to recognise as well this negotiation has moved on quite substantially over the last few weeks. Three months ago we were told that the withdrawal agreement would not be reopened and progress has been made by the prime minister, and so this is a negotiation. As for the Labour Party's position that they would vote against a deal when they haven't even seen the deal take place, well, they are clearly playing

politics. That's not in the national interest. The British public want to ensure that we get Brexit done. They want to move on to all the big people's priorities, all the other domestic issues. And actually it's pretty anti – well, it's undemocratic for the Labour Party even to now start saying that they want a second referendum when many of them, in fact all of us, were voted to parliament to get Brexit done and to effectively make sure that we can deliver on the referendum mandate.

AM: I guess a lot of people would say a referendum is inherently democratic, therefore it can't be undemocratic.

PP: Andrew, things have moved on.

AM: But let me ask you about another aspect of this. Things have moved on and you say we don't know the details of the deal, and that is absolutely right. But what we do know is the broad shape of the deal because it's been discussed in Dublin and Brussels, and indeed in London. Can I ask you, as a leading Brexit figure, would you be happy with Northern Ireland being treated differently, being closer to the EU customs system than the rest of Britain moving forward?

PP: Well, I've been clear, in fact that was rejected through the House of Commons, through the withdrawal agreement, three times. And the fact of the matter is we should not have that difference at all. But the reality is right now, Andrew, I come back to where we are in the negotiations. There is no point speculating on, you know, what could be acceptable, what isn't acceptable, which is exactly the position of the Labour Party, although they seem to be prejudging a deal that could come back to parliament next week. We have to wait and see and ensure that we absolutely get the right deal for our country and vote that through, get Brexit done. But there are a couple of other points here as well. I come back to the – I come back to point –

AM: I'm just trying to find out what Priti Patel's red lines are.

PP: I come back to the point that the withdrawal agreement was voted against three times in parliament. The backstop, of course,

is undemocratic. And secondly as well, the EU said that they would not (talking together) Progress has been made on that. And now of course the negotiations now based upon –

AM: I'm trying to look forward not back.

PP: - discussing alternative arrangements.

AM: Okay. Trying to look forward, not back. I'm trying to find out where Priti Patel's red lines are. Nigel Dodds has said about this deal, which sounds quite like Theresa May's new customs arrangement or new customs partnership, she called it: 'it cannot work because Northern Ireland has to remain fully part of the UK customs union.' Presumably you agree with that.

PP: Well, I've been clear previously, as has the government, but look, there's no point commenting on what people are saying in their individual views and positions right now. There is a negotiation that's taking place, Andrew, and of course as a member of the Cabinet, we'll be briefed on those negotiations, not just later today but we'll see what happens over the next week as well. The withdrawal agreement was rejected in parliament three times on the basis of the backstop and on the basis that Northern Ireland obviously would be treated differently. That is a situation that is unacceptable, and quite frankly we have to make progress now in this negotiation over the next week and be prepared for whatever outcome. And I think it's worth reminding yourself and others –

AM: Northern Ireland must be treated the same as the rest of the UK?

PP: Well Northern Ireland, we have to ensure will leave the customs union along with the rest of the United Kingdom, that is effectively, you know, the position that we have made clear, the prime minister has made that clear, as has the whole of government.

AM: You're reading out very carefully the prime minister's words there, I noticed. Can I ask you about the dangers of no deal.

There's been a lot of talk in the papers today about briefings, about the resumption of terrorist violence in Northern Ireland if there is no deal. Have you, as Home Secretary, had any such briefings yourself?

PP: Well, as Home Secretary, and along with the entire government, we have been stepping up our planning and preparedness, obviously, for no deal. That is the right thing to do and the responsible thing to do. Specifically to your question, of course we are absolutely well aware of security implications, and you will also know from our previous discussions on your show, when it comes to security tools and security cooperation there are many measures that are being put in place right now in preparedness for no deal. And quite frankly those include a range of security tools that we've been working on. But I think specifically to Northern Ireland and obviously to many of the issues that you've just referred to. We're very conscious and we're working with all organisations, agencies, to ensure that we remain safe and that is the priority of the country – of the government, to keep our country safe and our people and community safe.

AM: If you're putting in place new security arrangements that can only mean that you fear the resumption of terrorist violence in the case of no deal.

PP: No, that's not the case at all. Our security arrangements will be based on – and this comes back to the preparedness for no deal – they'll be based upon the type of tools, the type of shared intelligence forums and the data sharing platforms that we currently have, but again looking at alternative arrangements in which we can share that intelligence and information and data. That is something that has been taking place. We've been working on that over the last three months. I've mentioned this previously. Because the job of the government is to keep our people, communities and our country safe. And of course that's my focus and that's the focus of the government.

AM: Let me ask about going forward again. We're going to negotiate some kind of free trade arrangement with the EU afterwards. That is something that presumably requires Britain to have a different regulatory and tax regime from the EU, otherwise there's no point. Can you just tell us what your vision is for regulation and tax as we leave the EU?

PP: Well, I think it's important, and this is all subject to future arrangements and future negotiations as well, so you know, this isn't just about giving visions. We have been clear that we want a best-in-class free trade agreement. And of course that gives us the opportunity, Britain post-Brexit, to work with the rest of the world, to engage with the rest of the world when it comes to trade and economic opportunities in a way in which we simply have not been able to do so thus far. That is obviously the aim and objective, the aspiration of the government, and the negotiations this week will hopefully pave the way forward once we secure a deal to have that economic relationship with the rest of world. And of course that means looking to agree a future trading arrangement, not just with the European Union, but obviously new trading opportunities and agreements with the rest of the world, countries outside of the European Union.

AM: The government's own modelling suggests that this FTA would result in a lower growth of 6.7 per cent. Is that something that you're prepared to accept as a price worth paying?

PP: Well, I don't accept that, and you know, I don't know which data you're quoting –

AM: It's your own documents.

PP: - and there's been a range – well, Andrew, there's been a range of information that has been put out in the media over recent weeks and months, much of which, I should say, is out of date. And as someone that sits – someone who sits on the Cabinet committee every single day, where we're looking at the preparations for Britain post-Brexit, preparing for a no deal as

well, you know, we have every confidence in our economy, in our businesses, but also in terms of future prospects post-Brexit.

AM: Okay, let's hear from those businesses directly then, because a whole bunch of them – and I'll read them out – the Society for Motor Manufacturers and Traders, the people that make and sell cars; the Chemical Industries Association; the Food and Drink Federation; the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, and the Aerospace Trade Industry body, a lot of people who are actually at the forefront of trying to make this country earn its place in the world, sent a letter to the government, which I will now read out part of to you. And they've said that this proposal: 'is a serious risk to manufacturing competitiveness and will result in huge new costs and disruption to UK firms.' I can't see why you're laughing. 'It's got the potential to risk consumer and food safety and confidence, access to overseas markets for UK exporters and vital future investment in innovation in this country.' That is a really serious challenge to this plan, is it not?

PP: Well, this is why the government has been working assiduously – with business as well I should say – across a range of sectors when it comes to planning for our exit from the European Union. That is vital, that's very important, and many of those organisations, Andrew, that you yourself have listed have been part of those discussions and, you know, they've been working with the government as well. So, you know, I do take issue with the way in which you phrased that, because as a government we have a duty to work with those sectors, with those organisations, and we're doing that. But I think I should emphasise something else. In terms of the planning and preparedness to leave with a deal, obviously we're working assiduously to get that right now through negotiations. But as part of our no deal planning and preparedness, of preparations through Cabinet committees and obviously to other government departments, those key departments including the Treasury and including the Department of Business have been working with

those industries and with those sectors, not just to give them assurances but to work alongside them through any challenges that they may be foreseeing to ensure that actually we can deliver the right economic outcomes when Britain leaves the European Union.

AM: Alright, okay. And as Home Secretary you've already said that post-Brexit England would be pursuing different regulations and different tax regimes to the EU. If Scotland was independent and inside the EU would there need to be a hard border between England and Scotland?

PP: Well, look, I'm not going to comment or even speculate about what will happen with regards to Scotland. The government right now is focused just solely on the next week ahead in terms of negotiating a deal with the European Union. That is obviously our number one priority. And I think actually, you know, I've heard the stories already in the press from where you as well, about a second referendum. I think quite frankly the British public want to, when it comes to referendums, respect the results of the referendums that took place previously, whether it's in Scotland and whether it's on the Brexit referendum and our exit of the European Union. And that of course is what our focus is on right now, which is delivering the referendum mandate with our exit from the EU and getting on with the job. Tomorrow you will see a Queen's Speech being announced, 22 new Bills, working on the people's priorities. These are the type of issues that absolutely matter to the British public. And it's important, I think, for both parliament and in fact for the British public, to see their parliament now delivering on their priorities and getting the job of Brexit done.

AM: Alright, Priti Patel, Home Secretary, thanks very much indeed for listening to us.

(ends)

