

ANDREW MARR SHOW

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EMILY THORNBERRY

Andrew Marr: Can I ask first of all about the John Worboys case? Are you hoping that this goes to judicial review and the release is reversed? You're a lawyer after all.

Emily Thornberry; Yeah. The path that they're taking, I don't quite follow, and I haven't had a chance to look at it properly. But I think this: I think that the public are completely bewildered that Worboys is being released as early as he is. He is a serious criminal and a threat to women and I don't think that his victims, nor, frankly, the majority of women, are going to be convinced that he doesn't continue to be a threat to us.

Andrew Marr: Do you think it's surprising that there's all these allegations of many, many more rapes and attempted rapes that have not been prosecuted and that they're being left to one side at the moment?

Emily Thornberry: I think there's two things about that: I think the Crown Prosecution Service can't proceed unless they think that they have a realistic chance of a conviction. But I think that we still have to continue on a journey whereby we prosecute rapes as well as we possibly can do. And I think that we are coming from a very dark place. I think that they have not been prosecuted properly for really quite a long time. There are improvements, but the question is have they improved enough? And has Worboys actually benefited from some of those prosecutions not being done as well as they should be and some of those women not being taken seriously early enough?

Andrew Marr: And given the decision has now been taken to release him, I suppose going back to judicial review is about the only thing the government can do.

Emily Thornberry: Well, that's what I'm saying. I haven't really thought through the legal ramifications of this. I'm sorry.

Andrew Marr: Okay. I quoted your rather spectacular comment about Donald Trump. You've also said that he's a dangerous man in the past. Are you delighted therefore that he is not coming to this country in February?

Emily Thornberry: Listen, I don't want him to come to the country. I don't think that he should have been given an invitation in the way that he was. I think that it was wrong for Theresa May to so prematurely give him a state visit. I think that it embarrasses the Queen, I think that it's humiliating for her and I think it's wrong to have brought her into this in this way. The visit in February was supposed to be to open the embassy, and then the question is, you know, what kind of visit did he think he was going to get? Did he think he was going to go to the visit in a gold coach? Did he think that he was going to get –

Andrew Marr: Loved up.

Emily Thornberry: Yeah, all that stuff. Well, you know, Londoners are not terribly impressed with him, and you know, surprise, surprise. And neither, frankly, are the British.

Andrew Marr: I think the formal position is still that he is invited to come to this country at some point this year. Is your position now that he should not come at all?

Emily Thornberry: It's very difficult once an invitation for a state visit has been made to withdraw it. As I say, only the Queen can

withdraw it and I don't want to put her into that embarrassing position. I think though, that the government can give advice to Washington, and can say that we have to have security considerations, there will be major demonstrations. He did at one stage say that he didn't want to come to Britain until the British had learned to love him, and I was quite relaxed about that.

Andrew Marr: Yes, indeed. I mean, you've all had a great deal of fun at Donald Trump's expense perhaps on the Labour Party side. But isn't there a serious problem here, which is that once we leave the EU – if we leave the EU – then everything depends upon getting big trade deals with other parts of the world, above all, top of the queue, Donald Trump's America. If we have completely hacked him off, if he really hates us, it's going to be much, much harder for a future government, which might well be a Labour government, to do the deal that needs to be done.

Emily Thornberry: Well, let's take this in stages. The first thing is that he said that he wanted to do a trade deal with Britain and that he thought that he could do it within weeks. That shows that he doesn't have a real grasp of what a trade agreement actually is. These things take years. Secondly, it won't be for him to be making the trade deal. There are many people in the United States – we're not in some medieval court, where he –

Andrew Marr: You can't outvote the President.

Emily Thornberry: Well, I think that, you know, American democracy has many checks and balances, and I think that there are a number of people who are very important to speak to. And we never know from day to day what Donald Trump even thinks. Thirdly, we have been trading perfectly successfully with the United States for a very long time, they are our biggest trading partner outside the EU without a trading deal anyway.

Andrew Marr: I suppose all I'm saying is that he might be there for quite a long time. He might win another election. He may be there for a long time to come, 'an asteroid of awfulness', good though it is, may not be enough to cut it really.

Emily Thornberry: He is an asteroid of awfulness that has fallen on this world. I think that he is a danger and I think that he is a racist.

Andrew Marr: You've been very, very clear about that. Can I ask you about another regime, Iran? Why do you find it so difficult, as a party, to decide between the protesters on the one hand and the regime on the other who, in your words, has the white hats?

Emily Thornberry: Okay. The situation is this: obviously we would condemn any arrest of peaceful demonstrators. There are peaceful demonstrators who are now in prison in Iran, and that's wrong. People should be allowed to express their views in a peaceful way and it is completely wrong, it's a breach of human rights for this to be happening. The difficulty is that the picture in Iran is a complex one. You have Rouhani who is – I hate to use the word liberal in the context of Iran – but is certainly somebody who's responsible for the economy, who's responsible for the Iranian nuclear deal, where they're stopping building nuclear weapons. Is trying to move the country –

Andrew Marr: So he's somebody we have to keep there to talk to?

Emily Thornberry: So he is someone that we have been talking to and been talking to successfully until Trump arrived, and he's been trying to undermine the Iranian nuclear deal. And then on the other hand those responsible for the courts and security seem to be from a completely different tradition politically. And there is a tension in Iran about whether there's demonstrations, some in favour of one side, some in favour of another, and it is a complex

picture. And what Rouhani has said and he's right to say this: people should have the right to demonstrate peacefully.

Andrew Marr: I get that, I get all of that. But when you see women waving their hijabs saying that we have been oppressed all this time, and you hear the leader of the Labour Party celebrating the Iranian revolution, celebrating 35 years of the Iranian revolution, it seems to a lot of people that the Labour Party is not really living up to its liberal international instincts.

Emily Thornberry: Well, we want Iran to move forward. We think that one path that is available is for the – actually the Iranian nuclear deal has a really important part to play in that - in terms of bolstering up the democratic, more liberal instincts of those on one side of the political perspective in Iran. And for the Iranian nuclear deal to be successful and for the Iranian economy to get back on its feet on the back of that was very important. And it may be that as time goes on the theocracy which is around the supreme leader might dwindle if the economy did well. So it's quite a game of chess.

Andrew Marr: Let's move on to something that isn't a game of chess. Do you believe in party democracy?

Emily Thornberry: Of course I believe in party democracy.

Andrew Marr: And you know, your party polled your own members when it came to bombing in Syria, for instance. That was a good thing. So why will you not listen to your own party members when it comes to things like staying inside the customs union and a second referendum. Huge majorities for both of those.

Emily Thornberry: So we have a responsibility to, when we are developing policy, to have deep respect for our membership, and

also for the country as a whole. I have a responsibility to be a representative of those in South Finsbury who want to remain in the European Union, when the country wants us to leave. It is a difficult balancing act. And so what we have said is we have said that we must respect the results of the referendum, which means that we have to leave. But we have to look after the economy, which in my view means that we don't go very far.

Andrew Marr: But as was said by David Davis famously, what is a democracy if it isn't able to change its mind? If when we see the final deal on offer people are not happy about it, according to the opinion polls, could there then be a second referendum to reverse the decision?

Emily Thornberry: Which deal are we talking about? Are we talking about –

Andrew Marr: We're talking about the final deal, which we should see the basic shape of by the end of this year.

Emily Thornberry: Well, by the end of this year we'll have the divorce and then we need to negotiate what our ongoing relationship with Europe will be, and that really is the important bit. So we'll have the interim period where the status quo –

Andrew Marr: I'm just saying we'll know roughly speaking where we're going by the end of the year. At that point would it be a reasonable democratic thing to ask the people to think again. Nigel Farage is talking about it, after all.

Emily Thornberry: First of all we need to have a meaningful vote in parliament, and that is what we've finally wrung out of this government with the Withdrawal Bill. They're going to have another go next week, I imagine, to try to go back on that, but we need to have a meaningful vote. So those who represent this

country in parliament must have a vote on the divorce. And if it's the wrong thing, then the government should go back and renegotiate. As for a second referendum, the question first of all is – first of all the question is are you talking about the divorce or are you talking about the final relationship? Because the final relationship will be agreed in many years' time.

Andrew Marr: In either case.

Emily Thornberry: Okay, in either case. If 90 per cent of the population was now saying we will stay in the European Union and we must not –

Andrew Marr: 55 per cent?

Emily Thornberry: - then that would be a challenge that would be there for all of us who are democrats. But at the moment, and as things currently stand, we proceed in good faith. We do as we are instructed and we are leaving the European Union, but we have to keep this government honest and we have to make sure that when we do leave we are making decisions that actually look after our country first and foremost, which means looking after the jobs of our kids.

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