ANDREW MARR:
Now then, the arguments over Scottish independence have been raging for years, but it’s now less than a hundred days before the crucial referendum on Scotland’s future on September the 18th. Last week we heard from the First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond. Putting the unionist case today, I’m joined by Lord John Reid, the former Labour cabinet minister. Welcome to you. It’s been said that the Yes campaign has a lot more kind of enthusiasm and optimism about it and that the No side has been a bit down, a bit pessimistic generally speaking. Are you being brought in to generate enthusiasm and optimism?

LORD REID:
No, there’s plenty of people to do that. I actually think that the campaign from our side has been trying to rationally examine the arguments and the Yes campaign has been putting forward some fantasies and wishful thinking, and that of course generates a lot of excitement. But when you examine their position over the two big issues - one is what are the advantages of being a member of the United Kingdom – financial stability, economic strength, the social justice measures we’ve had – and on the other hand the risks of separation over the currency, over Europe, over the funding of pensions and so on - when the eye and the mind is focused on those arguments, I
think you’ll find that we will sensibly take a No vote on the 18th September.

**ANDREW MARR:**
You feel confident about that – that you’re going to win this?

**LORD REID:**
I’m not complacent in the least. Look there has always been … since 1707 there has always been a minority in Scotland who have objected to the union, but when you look at what we’ve achieved over that period in terms of our economic development, in terms of being (as Alex Salmond ironically keeps telling us) one of the wealthiest nations in the world, are we supposed to blame England for that? I mean that’s a reason for staying in the union and that’s why a majority have always been for membership of the UK.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Having been up there a bit, I get the strong impression that one of the big driving forces on the Yes side is a feeling that Scotland wants to be a kind of slightly left of centre social democratic country with maybe slightly higher taxes, protect the welfare state, protect the NHS, and that they can’t get that reliably anymore from England which has drifted a bit to the right. As a Labour man, what do you say to that?

**LORD REID:**
Well there is a great feeling in Scotland towards the need for social justice and fairness; and you don’t have to look in a crystal ball, you can read the book. The welfare state, the National Health Service, the national insurance, the minimum wage – all of these things have been delivered by British Labour or Liberal governments. They have never been delivered by nationalism and they have been delivered by us working together. So the NHS founded and driven by a Welshman, the welfare state founded and driven by Beveridge, an Englishman, votes for women founded and driven by an Englishwoman. And of course the Scots have contributed – from the philosophy of David Hume to the political economy of Adam Smith, right through to the last Labour government where so many Scots were introduced after a hundred years to the minimum wage. So the irony of Alex Salmond making this a big issue, I welcome that because it’s through our work together in the United Kingdom that we
delivered all those social justice measures.

ANDREW MARR:
Another big issue is about trust, Lord Reid, which is all the unionist parties, particularly the Labour Party, have said if there’s a No vote, there will be further devolutionary measures to the Scottish Parliament, above all tax raising powers. And the Yes campaign say you can’t trust these unionist parties. They’re saying this in panic, in the middle of a campaign. They’ll put the No vote in their back pocket and saunter off again if that happens. The only way that you can trust more power to the Scottish Parliament is to vote Yes.

LORD REID:
Okay well let’s look at the facts and, as I said, the history books. The fact is that it was a Labour government that delivered in 1997 home rule for Scotland through the devolution of power, and of course to Wales and to Northern Ireland as well. For most of that campaign, in which I was involved for decades, the SNP were opposed to devolution. The Calman Commission of 2012, which set out a platform for further powers and economic powers, when that was mooted in the Scottish Parliament the SNP opposed it. So they’re now extolling the virtues of everything that they have in fact opposed in the past.

ANDREW MARR:
Is there anything that the unionist parties can do to further convince people however in Scotland that they really mean it and will deliver further devolution if there’s a No vote?

LORD REID:
I think you have to put forward the positive case, which is the financial stability we’ve gained from way back at the Darien Scheme until the Royal Bank of Scotland only a few years ago. Thirty-five billion pounds of toxic debt, greater than the GDP of Scotland itself. We would never have survived that unless we’d been part of the United Kingdom. The economic strength it’s given us, the position that we are as a wealthy nation, the social justice measures, and above all working together because we have our own political identity in Scotland but we are part of a wider and stronger
unit. And then ask people to balance that against the risks. We don’t know what currency we’re going to get, we don’t know whether we’ll be members of the European Union, we don’t know how we’re going to fund pensions in a separate Scotland. When you weigh those together …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Right, you’ve thrown yourself … Sorry to interrupt you, but we’re running out of time. You’ve thrown yourself into your other great love which is football and Celtic, so I have to ask you a football question. Surely the better England do, the angrier the Scots are going to be and that, therefore, I mean you could almost think there’s a good plotline for the Government? If England are knocked out early on from the World Cup, that will calm things down in Scotland and win the referendum for the No side?

LORD REID:
I have never believed that you’re a better Scotsman the more you dislike England. I was very pleased to see Alex Salmond saying he was supporting England as one of the home countries. I watched the game last night. So this is not a battle between England and Scotland. This is a discussion and debate among Scots people about the future of Scotland and the wealth of the people of Scotland. And my own view, absolutely convinced, is that is better preserved inside the UK where we can be a rich, diverse nation with our own identity but part of a much bigger and stronger state.

ANDREW MARR:
John Reid, thank you very much indeed for joining us this morning.

LORD REID:
Thank you, Andrew.

INTERVIEW ENDS