ANDREW MARR:
Now the newest member of the cabinet, the Culture Secretary Sajid Javid, stands out. The first of the 2010 intake and the first British Asian MP to make it to the top table. The son of a Pakistani bus driver, state educated, a hugely successful career in banking before he entered Parliament, and he’s an avowed Thatcherite. So how will all of this shape his approach to the job which is one of the most wide-ranging in government covering everything from football to theatre, press regulation, to the BBC? Sajid Javid joins me now for his first appearance on television. Thank you very … At this length, I should say – you’ve been on television quite a lot.

SAJID JAVID:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Good morning. Can I start by asking you just in the wake of the Tony Blair interview whether you also agree that what’s going on in Iraq is a catastrophe?

SAJID JAVID:
I think it’s a huge worry. Obviously I utterly condemn the action that is going on there
by the terrorists and their supporters. And it’s a huge worry for the world, not just for that region. It’s up to the Iraqi government, the elected Iraqi government to decide how to respond. I think what’s actually particularly sad is just a few weeks ago millions of Iraqis went to the polls, elected a new government, and that’s a great show of democracy, and now you have this going on in this volatile country.

**ANDREW MARR:**
And do you think Tony Blair’s intervention helps or hinders all of this?

**SAJID JAVID:**
That’s up to Tony Blair. I think when it comes to the Middle East, he’s got a lot to say, and the important thing now is really to focus on what’s going on on the ground at the moment. We will help with humanitarian aid - I know that my colleague Justine Greening in the DFID department is looking at ways that we can provide that kind of support – but it’s a very important region and what happens there has an impact over the globe.

**ANDREW MARR:**
But there won’t be British jets flying over Baghdad any time soon?

**SAJID JAVID:**
And we’ve got absolutely no plans for any kind of military intervention.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Turning to your new role, it’s been said you’re not exactly a culture vulture in the old days and you’ve now been bombarded with endless kind of theatre and music and all the rest of it. What’s the thing that’s stood out most to you since you’ve taken over the job?

**SAJID JAVID:**
Oh I think it’s a small department, but it actually affects millions and millions of lives you know whether that’s sport, as we saw you know just last night, whether it’s our theatres and music and dance and all parts of our cultural sector, and that’s what I think makes it hugely important. What I’ve been focused on since I’ve joined the
department is first of all to recognise just how important our creative industries taken as a whole are in terms of the contribution they make to the economy. We have the biggest creative sector in Europe, there are millions of people employed. But also what’s even … you know just as important let’s say as the economic contribution is the huge social and intrinsic value of our cultural sector.

ANDREW MARR:
That’s an eloquent defence of the department. What I was really asking is what gets the Javid juices jumping when you go and see or hear something? What do you really enjoy culturally?

SAJID JAVID:
Well I’ve always enjoyed going to the theatre – both with my children to go and see what they want to see and the last thing was War Horse, for example, with my young daughter. The things I like are not probably the most obvious thing. I went to see, for example, a production called Khandan, which was in Birmingham, which was about a British Asian family and so reminded me a bit of my own roots. I like music too. So there’s a wide variety of things. But I think the job also of the Culture Secretary is not to determine what’s good and what’s not so good because there’s a huge variety of tastes here in Britain. And that’s one of the best things about our cultural sector – it’s so vibrant. I think my job is just to make sure it remains vibrant and that we have something for everyone. And that is actually something I’ve been focused on as well in my speech that I made recently which I titled Culture for All.

ANDREW MARR:
Right. And are you going to be dragged out to see England play football?

SAJID JAVID:
I won’t use the word ‘drag’.

ANDREW MARR:
No, just wondering.
SAJID JAVID:
I will be going to the third match …

ANDREW MARR:
You’ll be going to the third match?

SAJID JAVID:
Yeah with Costa Rica and I’m looking forward to that. Obviously I’ll be supporting the team, but while I’m out there I’ll also be banging the drum for British business.

ANDREW MARR:
So those sort of Thatcherite admirers and colleagues of yours who rather hoped we’ve got a Culture Secretary at last who would say this department doesn’t need to exist, let’s get rid of it, they’re going to be badly disappointed?

SAJID JAVID:
Well I think it’s a very important department for the reasons I’ve said and it touches so much of our lives and, for example, the equalities work I do as well as Minister of Equalities and what the Government has already achieved in that area.

ANDREW MARR:
Now the biggest thing on your plate probably longer term is the BBC itself. Do you think the BBC Trust is fit for purpose?

SAJID JAVID:
I think the BBC Trust plays a very important role. One job I wasn’t expecting as soon as I took the role was the resignation of Lord Patten, and so what I’m really focused on at the moment is finding a replacement for Lord Patten, finding a new chairman; and whoever that is, I want them clearly to be the best person for the job. But that’s going to take up quite a bit of my time over the coming weeks.

ANDREW MARR:
Quite a while. And by and large, do you think that the trust should stay as an organisation?
SAJID JAVID:
Well these are decisions I think … That’s a very important decision and that should be looked at when we have the Charter Review. As you may know, some of your listeners may know, there’s a charter that sort of sets out exactly how the BBC works. It’s a ten year charter. What I have decided though is that I won’t start that Charter Review process until after the election because I think it’s right to start it when we have a new chairman in place.

ANDREW MARR:
I’m just trying to plumb your own instincts about the BBC because clearly it’s a hugely controversial issue. Lots of the newspapers would like to see the BBC shrivel or even disappear. Other people say that it’s no longer time for the licence fee to carry on; that the technological changes mean the licence fee can’t carry on being collected in the same way. Even the Labour Party’s talking about that. So what about the licence fee itself?

SAJID JAVID:
Well I think … so that’s a very important issue. One thing that we already did when we came into government is, despite the charter, we worked with the BBC to freeze the licence fee at £145.50. I still think that’s a large amount for many families up and down the country. Incidentally …

ANDREW MARR:
Do you think it’s too high?

SAJID JAVID:
No, I think it’s a large amount and I think this needs to be looked at when you have the Charter Review process. But you also touched on another important point. Since the last Charter Review technology has changed. You know think of the number of people that consume programmes through things like you know platforms – Netflix or iTunes or even the BBC’s own iPlayer.

ANDREW MARR:
Absolutely.
SAJID JAVID:
And so that’s been a big technological change and I think when we have that review, it needs to take all this into account.

ANDREW MARR:
Have you seen an alternative way of funding the BBC which is plausible and could work?

SAJID JAVID:
Frankly I haven’t looked at that yet because we haven’t started the Charter Review process. But I think that all these issues should be looked at. I don’t think anything should be ruled out and nothing should be ruled in.

ANDREW MARR:
What position do you take on the big argument that carries on today between as it were London and the metropolitan theatres and galleries who say that London, the Opera House and the big institutions take a disproportionate share of the national kitty for the arts and that London is basically strangling the arts in many other parts of the country?

SAJID JAVID:
Well first of all I’d say I’m very proud of our cultural and arts sector and London is a bit of a powerhouse both not just for our own country but globally it’s a huge exporter of culture as well. But I actually do understand that argument and when I recently made a speech on just this issue – not just talking about the regions and having a sort of fairer distribution between the regions, but also getting more people from all backgrounds participating in our arts and cultural scene – this is one of the things I want to look at. What I have found looking at the numbers already, it is improving, so a lot of the money that the Government provides for grants goes through the Arts Council for England and historically it was about 70 per cent … sorry around 60 per cent of that money went to the regions and now it’s about 70 per cent. So there’s an improvement, but I want to see what more can be done.

ANDREW MARR:
Looking right across the broad sweep of your department, where are the big gaps? Where are things that are not going as well as they ought to be which need more support and more attention, do you think?

**SAJID JAVID:**
Well I could say a couple of things. So one thing, certainly I’d say Broadband. You know so my department is responsible for the roll out of Broadband and Broadband coverage throughout the UK, and that is something I think we’ve made huge progress in in the last few years in terms of super fast Broadband, we have better coverage than almost any other European country, but I think we can do more. You know my own constituency of Bromsgrove in North Worcestershire, sort of semi-rural, there are still many people for example in a constituency like that that don’t get perfect Broadband coverage and improvements can be made. So that’s a focus.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Okay. Could we turn to one of the other big stories in the papers today which is about extremism in schools and what David Cameron has said about we must make people more British. Do you think there is a real problem not just of terrorism but of a strain of conservative Islam which says you know we want to cut ourselves off from the rest of the community around us, we want to have a certain purity of belief and so forth?

**SAJID JAVID:**
I think that is a serious issue and we’ve seen that with the enquiries that were conducted in these schools in Birmingham and the results of that from Ofsted just in the last few days. I think it’s important to point out that the vast, vast majority of British Muslims are you know hugely important parts of the community that have played the same role as anyone else and respect each other and have a huge amount of tolerance just like anyone else …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) Yes and I wonder as a man …

**SAJID JAVID:**
(over) … what we would call British values. It’s always a small minority that spoils
it for everyone …

**ANDREW MARR:**
Absolutely.

**SAJID JAVID:**
…and although it’s a small number, they can have a great impact. That’s what we’ve seen in these schools. That’s what we’re potentially seeing with you know British people going over to Syria to fight, which I think is unacceptable.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Sure, absolutely. So very briefly, as a man from a Muslim background – though not I think a practicing Muslim at the moment – how do you react to language like “draining the swamp”, which I used earlier on and has been used?

**SAJID JAVID:**
Well I think you can use all sorts of language, but everyone recognises what the issue is. The Prime Minister has said, as has the Education Secretary, about taking a more muscular attitude to promoting British values, which is something that I’ve long thought we should be doing …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* You agree with that, okay.

**SAJID JAVID:**
…and I think that’s very important and I look forward to how we can do that in our schools.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Alright, Sajid, thank you very much indeed for joining us today.

**SAJID JAVID:**
Thank you very much.
INTERVIEW ENDS