

SADIQ KHAN

ANDREW MARR SHOW

15TH JULY 2018

SADIQ KHAN MAYOR OF LONDON

AM: Now my next guest had the honour of being described by President Trump as 'doing a terrible job.' He is of course the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. Sadiq Khan, we must start by talking about that balloon that was floating over Parliament Square. Lots of people thought it was a very witty, appropriate form of protest. Other people thought it was downright childish and dangerous.

SK: Well it wasn't my blimp or my balloon. But we have in our city

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AM: But you're responsible for it being up there though.

SK: We have in our city and our country, as indeed does the USA, a rich history of the right to protest, the right of free speech and the right to express our views. And the idea that we would curtail these rights because it may cause offence – and by the way, can you imagine the Founding Fathers in the USA or US jurists saying we're going to curter our rights for free speech in America. We're going to curter the First Amendment because somebody may be offended. And actually what you saw on Friday, was peaceful protest and done in a safe way.

AM: But here is somebody who is coming here as a guest. He is going to be very, very important, not just to the UK but specifically to London, how he treats us, he says he now feels unwelcome in London. It was designed to hurt him and it certainly did hurt him. Is that really wise politics at the moment?

SK: It's not my job as the Mayor to censor the view of Londoners. By the way who – what expressed their views, not just about President Trump, about some of his policies and some of his

views. Here's the point. We have a special relationship with the USA. It's like having a best friend. The expectations we have from the USA are far higher than we would have of another country or another leader, and basically Londoners and others are disappointed that the US President hasn't met those high standards. And we should be – we should celebrate the fact we've got these rights and privileges some would say in our city, and in our country. And actually so does the USA. And the US Ambassador himself, you know, Ambassador Woody Johnson made the point that the USA and the UK have this unique and rich history of freedom of speech and he sees no problem with that.

AM: So if somebody creates a rude balloon about Sadiq Khan, or free Tommy Robinson, those will be allowed to fly over Westminster Square as well, will they?

SK: Well if they are peaceful and they are safe and the police approve, yes. Yesterday, by the way, in London, in our city, there were people who wanted to protest and did protest, members of the extreme far right, pro-Trump protesters. Unfortunately there was some violence and we saw some arrests being made. One of the great things about pluralism, about living in a democracy, is people get to enjoy the rights and freedoms that have been fought over for many, many decades and long may that continue.

AM: You've had a really personal run in with Trump. He clearly can't stand you and you can't stand him and it's been going too and forwards. Is this do you think because you're Muslim?

SK: Well that's for President Trump and your next guest may be will have an answer, she's so close to him. But my point is very simple. Look, I didn't start this feud. It takes two to tango.

AM: ... a bit.

SK: Hold on a second. I mean he is the President who tweets about me voluntarily. He is the person who during an interview voluntarily talks about me as the Mayor of London and I make this

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point which is very important, because there's two points he made in his interview this week about myself as the Mayor of London. One, I'm somehow responsible for the immigration to Europe which he thinks has led to an increase in crime. I've got no powers of immigration in London let alone the UK or Europe. But secondly, that I'm responsible for terrorism. And look we suffered horrific terror attacks last June in our great city, 14 people lost their lives. In Manchester 22 people lost their lives in Paris, in Nice, in Brussels in Berlin, in Barcelona, in Orlando in the USA and one of the comforting things for us were the words of love and support from those in America. And I'm not sure why President Trump has singled me out as the Mayor of London. And maybe Prime Minister May raised this with him when she met with him this week. I'm sure she did.

AM: You've been very diplomatic. Here is your friend, David Lamey, being slightly less diplomatic. 'The real reason Trump blames my friend Sadiq Khan for the terror attacks last year is simple. He hates that London chose a Muslim mayor. The President is racist.' Do you think he's racist?

SK: It's not for me to say whether he's racist or not.

AM; Oh come on, do you think he's racist?

SK: I don't think he's racist, but I think when you amplify the tweets of Britain First, not once, but twice, Britain First have been banned from Facebook. The leader and deputy leader have been banned from Twitter. When you amplify messages of hate, when you use the language that President Trump does in relation to immigrants. 'Infestation' is I think the word he used and you can understand why people draw the conclusion that he's racist.

AM: He might have been right about one thing. He said you'd done a bad job on crime. When you were elected as mayor you said you were going to bring down violent crime. Since then violent crime and stabbings has soared and you've had all sorts of

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action plans and so on. When is it going to start to come down again?

SK: Well first whenever we talk about violent crime we should remember the victims and it's a tragedy whenever anybody loses their lives because of serious crime.

AM: Yes, absolutely. I'm asking about your record.

SK: Well let me talk about my record which is over the last two years, in the last four years crime has been going up in London and across the country. In the last year in London violent crime's gone up by 4%. I'm not happy with that. It's gone up in the country by 21%. In the last four years in Hampshire, in Cambridgeshire –

AM: Stabbings are up 23% in London.

SK: - in Essex, in Norfolk it's gone up by –

AM: But in London where you're responsible stabbings are up 23%.

SK: It's doubled. It's not good enough. We've got to make sure we take action. But I'll tell you this, Andrew, what doesn't help – what doesn't help is over the last 8 years we've lost more than £700 million. Police officer numbers have gone down. We need the government to help us in this regard, because look, I'm doing my bit in London and we've invested 140 –

AM: Well are you doing your bit in London? I mean that's the question.

SK: Well let me tell you what we've done, if you give me a chance. What we've done in the last two years, we've invested from City Hall £140 million in police and a new Violent Crime Task Force is getting knives off our street, is making sure we arrest those carrying knives. The context is though £140 million versus a billion pounds worth of government cuts and Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables, Home Office civil servants, all accept there's a link between a cut in police resources and an

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increase in crime. I'm not excusing criminality but we need the government to step up and help us.

AM: One other suggestion came from Cressida Dick, Head of the Met. who said that there needs to be harsher punishment, harsher was her word, for young people using knives or blades. More imprisonment. Do you agree with her?

SK: Absolutely right. We can't have a situation where we have a revolving door where people go into prison and leave prison and reoffend within a year. Something like 69% reoffend. We need to invest in young people though. We need to invest in prevention and diversion as well as enforcement. And we have over the last seven or eight years. You can't get away from this. Massive cuts in youth services, massive cuts in our school facilities, massive cuts in the health services, massive cuts in policing. And the point the Commissioner also said was it would be naive to suggest there isn't a link between an increase in crime and the cut in police resources.

AM: Okay, let's turn to another subject I'm going to be talking to Theresa May about in particular, which is Brexit. And in this case, no deal. What plans have you made as Mayor of London for no deal?

SK: Well, I'm talking to businesses every day and let me be frank. The independent analysis that's been done from Cambridge Econometrics and others show it would be catastrophic for our city.

AM: If it's catastrophic you need to do more than talk, don't you?

SK: Well, and we are talking to businesses trying to persuade them the strength of our city. London has many underlying strengths that will still be there. Our ecosystem, our talent pool.

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The fact that we have in London, not just the financial services, really important 92% of our economy is the financial services, is the legal services, is currency and we need to make sure that government has a plan how we protect those services. But the reality is look, Andrew –

AM: If there is no deal, if at the very most dramatic moment of that the planes stop coming in, because apparently that's one of the first things that might happen and you also have the Port of London which is the second largest port in the country. 40 million tons of cargo coming through that every year. Food, medicines, clothing, all sorts of things that people in London are relying on all the time, if that stops what plans do you have?

SK: Well, I'm not sure you're suggesting we unilaterally declare independence, which I –

AN: No, I'm suggesting that maybe you start about warehousing space and stockpiling.

SK: We're part and parcel of the country and I believe in the nation state and that's why it's really important that I have regular meetings with members of the government. I did with David Davis and to give David Davis credit and I want to give David Davis credit, he met with me regularly, he would listen to my concerns and would address them partially and he has addressed them partially over the last couple of years. Huge progress made by these conversations. We have a transitional deal now which we didn't have before. The government recognises the importance of a customs union. My big concern with London is the importance of the services sector.

AM: I can see that going forward is very important, but I'm coming to the actual moment when there might be a complete breakdown in relations. This is possible. No one wants it to happen but it's perfectly possible. In those circumstances I mean

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Simon Stevens for the NHS is stock piling medicines now. What I'm asking you is what is Sadiq Khan, Mayor London doing now?

SK: Yes and no, and let's not alarm people in relation to stock piling of medicines. We don't want to alarm people. What's happening is this. Up until October –

AM: That's what he told us.

SK: Well up until October the government's got to conclude the negotiations with the European Union. We have an agreement now of a transitional period until the end of 2020. What's important is by October we get a good deal with the European Union, in the meantime I'm quite clear as far as London's concerned, 92% of our economy is the service sector. We need to make sure not simply is there a deal in relation to goods during a post transitions. We need a backstop in relation to services and by the way, it's not just London. You speak to those in Birmingham, it's more than 80%, Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh. The services sector is crucial for our economy and that's why it's really important that the white paper you'll be discussing with the Prime Minister has no mention of what the government's plans are to protect that very important sector.

AM: Absolutely. Now it hasn't happened yet and there is a big and growing movement in the country which wants a second vote. A people's vote. A second referendum, whatever you call it on the final deal. Have you finally made up your mind to say that you think this the right outcome?

SK: No. I've been quite clear. If it's the case that parliament, our parliament, our sovereign parliament rejects the deal Prime Minister May does with the European Union this autumn, there are two main options. One option is a General Election, or the second option is a referendum for people to have a say on what the government has done in relation to the deal with the European

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Union. I'm not sure what other options the government has though. That's why it's really important –

AM: But it would be a big moment for the people's vote movement if Sadiq Khan said, yes, do you know what, overall I back what you're doing?

SK: Listen, I may be unhappy with the results of the referendum and I'm proud London voted to remain, but I accept the verdict. What I'm saying though is that if the government can't do a deal with the European Union that's satisfactory to parliament –

AM: Why can't you say that you'd like to see a second referendum?

SK: Because what I'd like to see is our government do a good deal with the European Union. I'd like to see us being in a customs union. I'd like to see us to be a member of a single market. I want a cast iron guarantee for EU citizens but also as Brits who are in the European Union. I want a good transitional period. If the government can secure that then they've managed to you know, get Brexit, but in a deal that's not too damaging to our country.

AM: From that you have seen as Mayor London so far, what would be the actual physical effects on London of no deal, a breakdown?

SK: Well, forget my opinion. The independent experts that we hired, and they did a number of scenarios, and the worst scenario for London was an extreme hard Brexit. That would lead to us not securing the jobs, growth, prosperity that we could do otherwise. That would lead to businesses leaving London. Not simply going to other European cities, but I'm afraid going to Singapore, New York and Hong Kong. It would start incrementally and already there are businesses in London that I speak to who have moved two, three, four, five, six, ten percent of their operation outside of London to

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other European capitals and I'm afraid that will be the start of a slippery slope which none of us want to see.

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