

ANDREW MARR SHOW, 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2021. SECRETARY JOHN KERRY

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JK: Well, over time that's happening anyway in the marketplace. I mean the marketplace has made a decision about coal. You couldn't build a new coal fired power plant in the United States 'cause you can't finance it, nor even in Europe and other places. Korea just made a decision with respect of not funding external coal. Japan and other countries are thinking about that now. We've been pushing very hard for countries to be moving away from fossil fuel and towards alternative renewable sustainable energy sources and I think again the marketplace is going to be making that happen. In addition disclosure is coming in countries around the world. There are going to be finance disclosure – financial disclosure requirements that are also going to change the direction of investments. So I think moving away from coal fired power and fossil is an inevitability here in terms of what the market is doing.

AM: But that's in terms of new power stations. Meanwhile at the moment you have in the United States the world's second largest fleet of operating coal plants, around 11% of the total. And the United Nations Secretary General

JK: Yeah.

AM: - says that; "phasing out coal from the electricity sector is the single most important step to get in line with the 1.5 percent degree goal." Now if you're leading the world surely you should be phasing those power stations out.

JK: We are. It's already been happening. There are many of those plants that have phased out. We have about 58 of them slated for a phase out now and more to come.

AM: Do you have a date for the ending of coal powered fire stations in the United States?

JK: As soon as it's feasible and practical it's going to be happening. It's happening right now. We are moving to alternative renewable energy. Our incentives are towards renewable alternative energy. 75% of the electricity that's new, that came online in the last years came online through renewables. So we're going to do what we need to do to do our fair share of this and to take a leadership role, and we're doing that now.

AM: So if the UK calls at COP26 for the ending altogether of coal fired power the United States will support that?

JL: Well, again, what's the phase out schedule, is it reasonable, is everybody working in the same direction? There are questions I'm sure President Biden will want answered, but he is leading this charge to move America onto renewable alternative energy and we're already doing it. So I can't speak for the President on that specific proposal, but we are behaving in the way that we are talking, which is moving towards alternative and renewable as fast as we can.

AM: There is perhaps a broader point about consumption. Consumption by the average single American leads to 17.63 tonnes of CO2 every year and that is about three times the average of a Chinese person or ten times the average of an Indian person. Isn't the real problem, frankly, that Americans consume too much?

JK: Not – It depends on where the energy source is. I mean, yes, if we – we are producing too much carbon, no question about it and the United States is the second largest producer of greenhouse gas emissions in the world and we're determined to turn that around. A year ago, two years ago it was 15%. It's now down to 11, and if you look at the track that we're on, we are going to be moving very rapidly to a new economy building out a new grid and moving towards alternative (global) energy. Also

pushing the curve on discovery of new technologies, whether it's green hydrogen or whatever, there are a lot of possibilities out there. Bill Gates is pursuing a small modular next generation nuclear capacity. We're going to find our way to zero emissions as fast as possible. President Biden has set a goal already of getting the entire power sector of the United States totally carbon free by 2035. And we're on an aggressive schedule already to achieve that.

Isn't the simple, slightly brutal truth that you're going to have to tell Americans eventually to eat less meat?

JK: Not necessarily because there's a lot of research being done now that will change both the way meat is produced. Cattle are herded and fed. There's research being done that actually reduces the amount of methane. So we're don't know some of the answers to these but I guarantee you the United States of America is not only setting the goal but is moving rapidly on track to reduce all of our emissions to become carbon free in the power sector by 2035 and to do what other countries are doing also, Europe and elsewhere to move as rapidly as possible to net zero. I want to and I know President Biden wants to get there just as rapidly as we can and he is going to push the technology curve as much as we can to hopefully come up with the new technologies which will make that happen much sooner than some of the target dates that people hear about today. We recognise that President Biden ran on this. It's one of the top four issues that he is focused on is the climate crisis and he is determined that the United States will not just talk about it but will lead in our efforts to be able to transition to this new energy economy. And I'm convinced that we're not only going to get there, we'll get there sooner than people think.

AM: It sounds to me as if you're relying very, very heavily on technology to give the answers and yet American consumption is way out of line with the rest of the world. I can remember George

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Bush Senior, President George Bush Senior saying: "The American way of life is not up for negotiations, period." That's really still true isn't it?

JK: Well I think there's a false choice here that you're presenting people. You don't have to give up a quality of life to achieve some of the things that we know we have to achieve. That's the brilliance of some of things that we know how to do and will do. I think that we're determined that we'll move in that direction as rapidly as possible, but here's a reality for you and for anybody who's thinking about the rapidity of this transition. I am told by scientists, not by anybody in politics but by scientists, that 50% of the reductions we have to make to get to net zero by 2050 or 2045, as soon as we can, 50% of those reductions are going to come from technologies that we don't yet have. That's just a reality. And people who are realistic about this understand that's part of the challenge. So we have to get there sooner rather than later. We know that. But you know, look at what we did to push the creation of vaccines. Look at what we did to go to the moon, look at what we did to invent the internet. We know how to invent and innovate and we're going to put every effort we have into making this transition happen as fast as possible and I'm not going to join the pessimists who think we're sitting around waiting for some new technology.

AM: Well you are of course one of the United States most senior Statesmen in the world at the moment, so let me ask you, is the Middle East heading for war?

JK: Look, I'm – I'm hoping not as the world hopes not. Nobody wants that to happen but that is not my portfolio today. I'm working exclusively on the climate issue and the White House and Secretary Tony Blinken are believe me greatly seized by the challenge of what's happening on the ground there and I'm sure they'll have more to add to that.

AM: All right, Secretary Kerry, thanks very much.

JK: Thank you, sir, appreciate it.

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