ANDREW MARR:
David Cameron goes to rainy Brussels this week where he’s going to be fighting against moves to increase Britain’s annual contribution to the European Union. He wants the budget frozen or, better still, reduced. But this will put him on a collision course with his fellow European leaders. Here the mood seems evermore euro-sceptic and the Conservatives are becoming evermore concerned about the growing popularity of UKIP. David Cameron’s one time rival in the Tory leadership election, now a backbencher, David Davis, will this week suggest a way forward for the party, and he is with me now. Good morning.

DAVID DAVIS:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Let’s just start with the events of the coming week. David Cameron has been sent to negotiate with a pretty firm message from the House of Commons that he has to come back with a freeze, preferably in real terms. There is very little chance of him being able to do this, however, is there?

DAVID DAVIS:
Yeah, it’s pretty tough. I mean even … One of the problems is his veto, his sort of final recourse actually is a rather weak veto because it can be gone round. And if your final recourse doesn’t work, then your negotiation leverage is you know cut to smithereens and that’s where he is. And he’s got pretty much the whole institutional structure against him. They all want to at least have an inflation protected budget, which is ridiculous. You know when you look at what they’re demanding of Greece and Portugal and frankly everybody, then for them to be protected really smacks of a sort of international gravy train par excellence, which is of course the problem.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So it’s going to be another disappointment, bad headlines here, lots of muttering about “must have a referendum some time”, which almost nobody will believe because it’s said so often?

**DAVID DAVIS:**
Nobody believes it and why should they? I mean the British public have been promised a referendum by the three major parties and every single one has not delivered. Now they may have their reasons, but they haven’t delivered, and so they feel - the public - that they’ve been lied to. They won’t believe any more promises on referenda, frankly.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So what is your recommendation, Mr Doctor?

**DAVID DAVIS:**
Well let’s … One thing before we get to the recommendation, one other piece of analysis. David and the rest of the Tory team have quite understandably viewed this as a third rail of British politics for a long time - very, very dangerous - so they’ve sort of …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) Walked away from it?
**DAVID DAVIS:**
… balked at it, they’ve balked at it. And the truth is they no longer can. I mean with
the Eurozone crisis, with the answer to the Eurozone crisis, which is more federalism, more centralism, they can’t walk away anymore. So that’s the first point to have right in the middle of your mind - that you actually can’t avoid this problem. There’s going to be a referendum whoever’s in power in the next five years because the British public will demand it, they won’t put up with it anymore. So the question is how can we actually turn this to advantage? We’ve got to somehow dramatically change our relationship with Europe. Not a little bit of a power here and a little bit of a power there. We’ve got to bring back lots of powers and we’ve got to change the constitutional relationship.

ANDREW MARR:
So you need a discussion, an agreement (presumably by the government) on the list of powers that need to be repatriated, a shopping list?

DAVID DAVIS:
Yeah you need that pretty much straightaway, certainly in the next twelve months, so we know what we’re doing, what our negotiating strategy is about, because there is a negotiating window here now because they want things too.

ANDREW MARR:
So you want Cameron to initiate that and come up and say this is our national menu?

DAVID DAVIS:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
And then what?

DAVID DAVIS:
And then I want him to put that to the British people, to actually say here’s a mandate referendum. Tell us do you approve of this, do you agree with it? As Ann Treneman says, I suspect we get a 90 per cent turnout, not a 15 per cent turnout, and I suspect we get 70 per cent support for the sorts of things most of us want. We don’t want Europe deciding our laws, you know we don’t want them telling what we can and can’t do in
a whole load of areas.

**ANDREW MARR:**
And you’d like this done when?

**DAVID DAVIS:**
Oh very soon, you know in the next year or so - before the next European Election. And the reason for that is twofold. I mean, firstly, it’s important for the election - and I’ll come back to that. But, secondly, because it gives the Government a huge negotiating lever. The only time in the last twenty years when the European Union has conceded to the nation states - given back powers or conceded components of treaties - is when there’s been a referendum. The Irish have done it par excellence with neutrality where they forced the change in the Nice Treaty effectively and …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Because I mean you know people say again and again and again, the trouble is it’s not practical politics. We go along looking for that kind of radical shift - effectively presumably back to the old common market sort of relationship is where you would like it …?

**DAVID DAVIS:**
*(over)* That’s where you want to go.

**ANDREW MARR:**
It’s just not practical. We’ll just be … we’ll be laughed at, we’ll be told to go away.

**DAVID DAVIS:**
Well you’ve got to have a lever and this is the lever. You’ve got to be willing to exercise a lever. And I’m not the only person to say something like this. I mean my predecessor as Europe Minister, I mean both of us Europe ministers, David Heathcoat-Amory argues similar - not the same things - but similar sorts of things. Now we’ve been there, both of us. We know what this negotiation is like. We know it’s tough, but you’ve got to have the lever.
ANDREW MARR:
And then, after you have the negotiation, you have your in-out referendum?

DAVID DAVIS:
That’s it. You say … You put to the people two perfectly decent options. One is this is the renegotiating structure, this is what you’re really going to have for the next decade or so; and this is the other option, which is to leave. You know actually that’s not a frightening option.

ANDREW MARR:
And to scupper UKIP, which is presumably also part of your intention, the Prime Minister must actually commit to a specific date to do this in a measurable time, not just talk about it generally?

DAVID DAVIS:
Not specifically a date. What he has to do is put it in law. He has to put it in law and say when we conclude this negotiation, then we will put the outcome to the British people.

ANDREW MARR:
And is this just David Davis speaking or is there a groundswell, a movement behind this idea?

DAVID DAVIS:
There have been a number of other people coming along and supporting it. The likes of the youngsters like Dominic Raab, Bernard Jenkin, people like that have begun to pick up particularly on the mandate referendum and the double referendum idea. So it’s beginning to get purchase. But what’s more important actually is now is the time. There’s a historic opportunity. We should take it.

ANDREW MARR:
David Davis, thank you very much indeed for joining us.

INTERVIEW ENDS