

ANDREW MARR 21ST FEB 2016

NIGEL FARAGE MEP

AM: Starters orders were off, as it were. Now whatever you think of the prime minister's deal he has at least fought the good fight. Let's start by being generous to him, he has argued very hard, he has been night after night fighting the case and he's done all right.

NF: Didn't ask for much, did he? I mean all he's asked for is some minor changes to benefits, and a couple of promises that might go in the next treaty. And the truth of it is he can't deliver this deal, because the European parliament can strike down the benefits deal and the European Court of Justice can rule out everything else. So to say to people please vote for this deal in a referendum when you can't guarantee delivering it, seems to be a rather weak position.

AM: I think quite a lot of people who didn't vote UKIP, who don't quite know what they think about Europe are concerned but don't know the detail will look at this deal and say well hold on a second, he has got a four-year tapered break on benefits for migrants. Nigel Farage asked for a five year one a little while ago, you know, he has got something on sending child benefit abroad. It's not nothing. It may not be everything but it's not nothing.

NF: But this is not the issue. The issue is not migrant benefits, the issue is an open door to five hundred million people and net migration running at a third of a million people a year and this, under a prime minister who promised us he'd reduce migration to tens of thousands a year. The issue is the fact we're paying over £50 million a day in a membership fee and nothing's been done to change that, and the biggest issue of all is our parliament and our courts cannot strike down European law that's against our interests. They're the issues that people will make their big

decisions on in this referendum, not the marginal issue of migrant benefits.

AM: Well let's start with migration since you raised it. You said that the prime minister had been scaremongering when he suggested that the closure of the Calais camp would follow us leaving the EU. But actually the French Interior Minister, Mr Cazeneuve, backed him up, as did the deputy mayor of Calais. There would be no reason – if we left the EU there'd be no reason for the French to put up with this jungle on their side of the border, they'll just say allons-y through the tunnel, off you go.

NF: And if they come through the tunnel we haven't got to let people in, you know, we can control our own borders -

AM: How do we?

NF: But what was laughable about what the prime minister said, he suggested that if people came through the tunnel and got into the United Kingdom they'd set up camps. No they wouldn't, they would disperse within minutes. Look, we –

AM: What would you do in the new order, post Brexit?

NF: Be much tougher and stricter about who can come into the country, clearly, and I want us ultimately to have an Australian -

AM: We'd either need to build our own jungle –

NF: An Australian style point system. Let's have an Australian style point system. Let's have immigration that is based on merit, let's stop discriminating against the Commonwealth in favour of Romania or Bulgaria or wherever else it may be, and do you know something, that is what 8 out of 10 British people want.

AM: Okay, but let's go back to the real gritty practicalities. We've left the EU, the French have no reason to stop people going from across the EU. People are still pouring in from Africa and the Middle East, they're coming in across the EU, they want to be in Britain for all sorts of reasons. The French, we have a tunnel, we

have ports, we have ships, they just arrive, what are you going to do about it?

NF: Well it's very easy. Honour the principles of the Geneva Convention and say to anybody trying to claim asylum in Britain, I'm sorry but you have to claim that at the last safe country you came through. It's not difficult, you just need to have a tough British government prepared to do it.

AM; But people would still come through in large numbers. Would we build a camp in Kent to –

NF: No, wouldn't build a camp anywhere.

AM: Would we block up the tunnel?

NF: We wouldn't build a camp anywhere. We certainly wouldn't block up the tunnel, you know, because an awful lot of trade and business goes through that tunnel and that's very, very important. No, what we would do is make it clear to people if they come they will be sent back. It's as simple as that. You know, you're not allowed in. It's simple.

AM: Well, we'll see how it would work in practice. Again on the subject of what happens post Brexit, we're still unclear really about the process but the prime minister has said again today there would be turmoil, there will be turbulence and so forth.

NF: Yeah, yeah, well, we heard all that.

AM; That it would take – it would take two years to negotiate the terms of our exit so there will be two years of uncertainty without doubt.

NF: Two years of complete certainty because during that negotiating process everything continues as normal other than we won't have to accept any more new European laws. So the rules say up to two years, there's no reason why it can't be substantially quicker than that. What's important isn't the speed of it, it's getting it right. That's what matters to people and during that time we'll be completely protected. But what the prime minister is saying today and making it very clear in the Sunday Times, is that

he says we wouldn't be able to access the single market unless we accepted the free movement of people. And let me tell you that is completely and utterly untrue. The European Union –

AM: To be fair, the Norwegians, and the Swiss and other ones have accepted the free movement.

NF: Because the Norwegians, the Norwegian people voted against joining the European Union and against the will of the Norwegian people the Norwegian government signed them up for Schengen and there's now a clamour for a referendum in Norway to come out of Schengen. If you think about trade across the whole world, think about deals that America has, think about deals that even the European Union has, nowhere in the world do people say that to trade freely you have to have the free movement of people. It is a complete red herring.

AM: Except up to now the EU itself has tried to demand free movement of people and the price tag as well for getting into their markets.

NF: No it hasn't, it has not. The EU has trade deals, you know, across other parts of the world which bare no membership fee and no free movement of people. There are two exceptions which are Switzerland and Norway. Norway sells a vast amount of its overseas goods, about 75% to the European Union marketplace, and another lie, it doesn't pay a bigger membership fee than us, than we do, it pays money directly to poor countries in Eastern Europe.

AM: Well let's move to a country that's much bigger and perhaps more comparable, Canada, which has done now a trade deal. It took 7 years to negotiate that.

AF: I know. You're absolutely right. The idea that an unelected European Commissioner should be making our trade deals on our behalf at this sclerotic pace in a modern global economy is crackers. We should be making our trade deals. The Swiss by the way, make their own trade deals and they have more free trade

agreements around the world than we do because they do it for themselves and in their own interests.

AM: But if it took us 7 years to negotiate a new deal with the EU, presumably a free trade deal, that would be a very, very difficult seven years for British exporters, British business.

NF: Look, Iceland has 300,000 people and you know, the prime minister will tell you later we're too small. We're too small to negotiate our own trade deals. We're not big enough. Perhaps he doesn't think we're actually good enough. Iceland have negotiated their own free trade deal with China. If Iceland can do it, I'm absolutely certain that the world's 5th biggest economy can do it.

AM: To win this referendum you have to win over people who, as I say, are not particularly obsessed or interested in the whole EU issue and I suspect in the end it's going to come down to a kind of visceral feeling. Those people on the other side will be those who think, do you know what, I don't love Europe, I don't like Europe but I think on balance it's just a little bit safer to be in. Nigel Farage and others are saying it's going to be fine, cross fingers, come with us, but it's the unknown. We don't know the kind of Britain that we're going to be if we leave, we don't understand it, we don't have a picture in our head of what it's going to be like. So it's just safer to stay where we are.

NF: Well, yeah, and again the prime minister calls it a leap in the dark. Well, let me shed some light on it. There is one absolutely certainty if we vote to leave the European Union and that is that we will be in charge of our own country. We will make our own laws. We will run our own ministerial departments. I thought Michael Gove's comment yesterday that every day ministers are told, sorry minister, you can't do this, it's against EU rules, shows you the extent to which we've given away control of our own future. We will be in charge. And if we vote to remain, we're voting to remain in a union whose currency is failing, whose

migrant crisis has led, according to the chief of Europol this week to up to 5,000 Islamist extremists coming into Europe in the space of the last year and we'll be part of a Europe that wants Turkey to be a member within five years.

AM: You mentioned Michael Gove just now, would you accept that you are a divisive or Marmite politician?

NF: Well, that of course, is the talk in Westminster and it's the talk amongst the Tories.

AM: That's why I'm asking you.

NF: And the truth is, if you look at the research and polling into this those people that believe in the European project, that believe in free movement of people, the more I appear on programmes like this, the more upset they get, and the more they dislike me. Amongst the undecided voters I have a potentially positive effect. There are people out there who are undecided who will listen to what I have to say in this referendum campaign, and the truth of it is this - there are only half a dozen people involved in this referendum campaign who can really shift public opinion and I'm one of them. But it's not about one person Andrew. It's not about that.

AM: Let's move on to two people because that photograph of you and George Galloway, your enemies on the other side of the argument are saying that is the best recruiting poster they could possibly have. It goes back to Tony Benn and Enoch Powell -

NF: Well no it doesn't.

AM: And an impression of incoherence.

NF: No it doesn't. Back in the 70s there were very few political figures or public figures that appeared on no platforms. On that night, yes the Respect party were on the platform, so were the Conservative Party. So was Ruth Lee, the economist. So was a London taxi driver, so was Sir William Cash. So was Kate Hoey who was here this morning. The point about Grassroots Out is we're bringing people together from across the spectrum. I don't

suspect there's a single domestic policy, in many cases foreign policy, of which George Galloway and I would agree. He said some very disobliging things about me -

AM: I've got one of them here.

NF: No but look, but Andrew, look, sometimes in life an issue comes along that is bigger than traditional differences and this question of getting back control of our country, living in a democracy means that we've done in Grassroots Out is said we cast aside previous quarrels and differences and we will work together.

AM: Where would you draw the line? Is there a line to be drawn in terms of this very broad coalition? If the English Defence League or Britain First wanted to join, would you have them?

NF: No, no. I don't think we would for one moment -

AM: Why not?

NF: And if the British national Party still existed that would have given us a problem, but I think we would have said no. In fact I'm sure we would have said no. Look, we have got – we have got one of the most broadly based coalitions that has ever been seen in British politics, we want to work with everybody and we have to reach out to large parts of this country and however controversial George Galloway is, he does actually speak to a large Muslim community in this Britain, he speaks to people who at the moment are on the remain side, there's going to be a big team effort from lots of us.

AM: Final very quick question, are you hoping that later today Boris will join your side? Would you like to see him as one of your leader of Brexit?

NF: Absolutely. Absolutely. He's one of those half a dozen people that reaches out you know to a large number of voters and we'd love to see BoGo as the headline tomorrow, would be just great.

AM: So your fingers crossed.

NF: Absolutely.

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