ANDREW MARR SHOW 21ST FEBRUARY 2016 DAVID CAMERON

AM: David Cameron is with me now. Good morning to you.

DC: Good morning.

AM: Hot foot back from Brussels. You must be knackered.

DC: Well, I had a decent night's sleep last night and, you know, I think it was important work.

AM: It was important. I want to go through some of the detail of the important work, but before we do I thought I'd give you the chance – two million people watching, probably Boris Johnson as well, can you tell them why they should be voting to stay in the EU despite all the things they've heard against it?

DC: Well, I want what's best for Britain, and I think what's best for Britain is staying in a reformed European Union, because we'll be better off safeguarding our position in this massive single free market that we have in Europe. I think we'll be stronger in the world, being able to get things done, whether that's making sure our country is safe and our people are safe, and I think we'll fight terrorism and criminality better. We'll be safer inside the EU because we're able to work with our partners, strength in numbers in a dangerous world. That I think is a positive choice for us. I think a leap in the dark with uncertainty already in our world, why take a further risk? You don't need to. We've now got a better deal.

AM: Now, in terms of the details of the deal, you did promise before the election that no children of EU migrants would be getting benefits as a result of it. You haven't got that have you? DC: Well, what we've achieved, which I think is a big achievement is to say that for new arrivals they will get child benefit not at British rates but at a rate that reflects the cost of living in their country, and for existing people here, over the next few years we'll move to a system where they get that lower rate of child benefit too. Now, these are things that many people thought were impossible to achieve. Not least your last guest on the programme, who argued for welfare restrictions, said they were very important, and now we've got them seems to say they're irrelevant.

AM: We'll come onto him later on, but I just want to establish for clarity and in terms of being honest with people watching what you wanted in the manifesto you haven't quite achieved on child benefit. It said no children, however long people have worked, however long they've been here, not at all. And you haven't got that.

DC: I'm very happy to look at the manifesto, what we promised, getting out of ever-closer union. We got out of ever-closer union. Making sure we trade –

AM: Returning to child benefit.

DC: Absolutely, it's a negotiation. But you can see in each case what I've asked for and what we got. And we got many things that people said were simply not achievable. Nigel Farage and others said you'll never get Britain out of ever-closer union, and we have. What this means is the best of both worlds —

AM: I'll come back to that.

DC: - because we're out of the things we don't want to be in: the euro, we're out of the no borders agreement, we're now out of

ever-closer union. We keep the full access and the say over the single market, and the political cooperation to keep the people of our country safe.

AM: But just sticking with benefits – the same is true – we didn't get what we wanted on child benefit or on the overall benefit package for EU migrants coming in, because it was going to be four years with nothing, and now it's four years with tapered increasing benefit.

DC: Well, that's right. What we've said we wanted is you shouldn't get something for nothing. You have to pay into our system before you get out of it, and you won't get full access to our inwork benefit system for four years. And what I think I've achieved that is, I think, even more strong, is that this mechanism is going to last for seven years. So let's say we get it in place in 2017. It'll still be operating in 2024 when people won't be getting full benefit at until 2028.

AM: But they will be – hold on, they will be getting some. I mean, if I'm a Hung- imagine me as a Hungarian arriving in this country, how long do I have to work here before I get any benefits at all?

DC: Well, if you come here, even in 2024, you're not going to get full access to our in-work benefit system till 2018.

AM: Sure. You say full. I'm asking how long is it before I get anything?

DC: Well, what we've said is that you get nothing to start with and you don't get full access till after four years. And now we have to settle the details and put all that in place, which we will.

AM: So we don't know actually –

DC: What we know is you – you get no benefits to start with and you don't get full access for four years. No more something for nothing. Everyone has to pay in before they get out. Again, I think something people said we wouldn't achieve and actually something that has been achieved.

AM: So far – sorry – so far as you're aware now after six months I can get 90 per cent of benefits.

DC: Well, it's going to be phased in over four years.

AM: So we don't know how ...

DC: So you don't get the full – actually we're going to settle all that later. But it's a very important move, because people want a country where there is no something for nothing. You don't come here and immediately claim benefits. You have to pay in first. And I think this is important.

AM: The benefits deal is now very, very complicated because we're going to be paying a proportion of benefits paid in 27 different countries at different rates and different times. For a Work and Pensions Department which has struggled to introduce universal credit for six years, is this actually plausible?

DC: Yes, it's absolutely doable. It's not a difficult calculation. You just have to work out the relative cost of living in different countries and therefore you pay that level of child benefit. But it does raise –

AM: Iain Duncan Smith agrees with this, does he?

DC: Look, all of this is deliverable, otherwise I wouldn't have agreed to it. And it, I think, meets what we set out in our manifesto, the commitments that we made. But I would make this

point, because it was interesting listening to Nigel Farage. If we were to leave the EU and we were to try and insist on full access to the single market, like Norway has for instance, every other country that's got that sort of deal has had to accept the free movement of people and a contribution to the EU budget.

AM: He says that is simply not true.

DC: I'll come onto that. But it would be ironic actually if we left the EU, negotiated our way back into full access to the single market and then wouldn't be able to exercise these welfare restrictions that I've just negotiated. Now, what Nigel Farage was saying, and this is important, of course there is the option of having a trade deal with the EU. But you could look at all of the trade deals, they do not cover every industry. And this is crucial.

AM: Canada has done quite a good one.

DC: Well, it hasn't been finished. It's been going for seven years. And I think this goes to the heart of the argument. If we remain in a reformed EU you know what you're going to get, you know how to do business, you know how to create jobs. You know how to continue with our economic recovery. If we leave, seven years potentially of uncertainty. And at the end of that process you still can't be certain that our businesses will have full access to the market, so it could cost jobs, it could mean businesses, overseas businesses not investing in Britain. It would be a step into the dark, a real risk and uncertainty, and that's just the last thing we need in our country right now.

AM: When it comes, for an awful lot of people on the other side of the argument, the fundamental question is sovereignty. Can you look me in the eye or look the camera in the eye and say as a result of this negotiation Britain has control over her own laws? DC: Well, absolutely. That what we've get – getting out of evercloser union, so actually we're now best of both worlds. We are -I'll come onto the sovereignty question, because it's so important. You know, we're going to be in the single market, in the political cooperation to keep our world and our people safe, but out of the projects that we don't like. Out of the euro, out of the no borders agreement. Now, on sovereignty, yes of course if Britain were to leave the EU that might give you a feeling of sovereignty, but you've got to ask yourself is it real? Would you have the power to help businesses and make sure they weren't discriminated against in Europe? No, you wouldn't. Would you have the power to insist that European countries share with us their border information so we know what terrorists and criminals are doing in Europe? No you wouldn't. Would you, if suddenly a ban was put on for some bogus health reasons on one of our industries, would you be able to insist that that ban was unpicked? No you wouldn't. So you have an illusion of sovereignty but you don't have power. You don't have control. You can't get things done. And to me this is in a way quite simple. You boil it down to if you love this country – and I love this country so much – you want what's best for it. And you want to make sure we are stronger, we're safer, we're better off, we're able to get things done in the world. That's what this is about. And that's really the question we have to ask.

AM: Isn't the big truth about this that the old EU with its treaties, the Lisbon treaty and the Nice treaty and all the rest of them, overhanging our laws, and its over-centralised massive, blundering machine, imperial in its ambitions, carries on, and because we are still under those treaties we carry on under it? DC: Well the difference is that of course now we're not only out of the euro, out of the no borders agreement, but we're also out of ever-closer union, so we won't be part – yes.

AM: Well, are we? Because this depends upon a treaty of undefined scope, at an undefined time, with new leaders we don't even know about, so it's taken on trust.

DC: Hold on. First of all, what was agreed by 28 prime ministers and presidents of every EU country on Friday evening, that is in itself an international law decision, a treaty that will be deposited at the UN. And it cannot – it is legally binding, it is irreversible. The only way it can be reversed is if all the 28 countries, including me, were to turn round and say we don't want this any more. So that's not going to happen.

AM: This is exactly what John Major said in 1992 when the Danes got their legally binding and irreversible agreement, which was then destroyed or shredded.

DC: It wasn't. 23 – the Danish had a protocol to give them some special status in the EU, 23 years on that special status continues. So we have got not only – not only – it's survived – not only have 28 countries made this legally binding decision but we also have in two vital areas the commitment to treaty change. Treaty change to carve Britain out of ever-closure union. So we're in the bits of Europe we want to be in but out of those we don't want to be in. And crucially, and this is a more technical issue, but there's a simplicity at its heart, treaty change to make sure that not only can we keep our currency, the pound, forever, but also the pound and our businesses cannot be discriminated against in Europe. And I think this is a really important point, because to me the weakness of the Leave campaign is that I think they forget that even if you leave, the EU still exists. It's still on your doorstep.

AM: I want to come onto that absolutely.

Cameron: and what I will have with deal is to make sure we can never be discriminated against. Leave the EU and your businesses can be discriminated against, your financial services can be discriminated against and there's not much you can do about that.

AM: But meanwhile we are under supreme EU law and that was the point that Michael Gove. Now I know he's a friend of yours and you must have been disappointed by his decision, but I think you'd also agree he has put things very, very clearly with characteristic crispness and so I'm going to read some of them to you and see how you respond. He says that our membership of the EU 'prevents us being able to change huge swathes of law and stops us being able to choose who makes critical decisions which affect all our lives. Laws which govern citizens in this country are decided by politicians from other nations who we never elected and can't throw out.' He's absolutely right, isn't he?

Cameron: Well first of all on this sovereignty issue I mean we should stand back for a moment and recognise this referendum, this is an enormous act of British sovereignty. This is Britain and British people saying let's make a choice here. Second point I'd make is, look, sovereignty really means are you able to get things done? Are you able to change things? To fix things? And as I say you might feel more...

AM: [Over] In the end is means which law is supreme.

Cameron: ...sovereign, but if you can't get your businesses access to European markets, if you can't keep your people safe, if you can't insist on the passenger information, the terrorist information that we need then you are not actually more in charge of your destiny. You're less in charge of your destiny. And there is of course this crucial point, that if you leave the EU and then want

full access, unimpeded access to that single market the other countries have got that and had to sign up to all the rules of the EU without having say. So take one...

AM: After your negotiation, sorry, after your negotiation in Brussels you suggested that you were going to introduce some new mechanism or law in this country enhance sovereignty, are you?

Cameron: Yes. We're going to set out in the coming days proposals, as I've announced I think before on this programme, to make clear that you know the British parliament is sovereign, we have chosen to join the EU, would could choose to leave the EU and I think there's some important work to put that point ...

AM: Does it actually matter? So long as we are under the treaties there is no law that this parliament can pass which gets us out of those treaties, we can't declare UDI from those treaties

Cameron: What you can do though is just put beyond doubt in people's minds 'cause sometimes this is questioned.

AM: It's PR isn't it really?

Cameron: No, I think it's not. I think for a lot of people it's important. As I say this is an act of sovereignty holding a referendum and I think it's important for people to know that in the end what our parliament does, our parliament can undo. It is a sovereign parliament. Look, I approach all these issues in a very simple way. I am passionate and love the institutions and the Constitution we have in our country. I do not love the institutions of Brussels, but I make a clear eyed determination of what will make Britain stronger, what will make us safer, what will enable us to protect our people in this world and it's to get the best of both worlds in this amended EU.

AM: Is it possible to give more powers to our supreme courts to somehow keep back the ever encroaching world of the European Court of Justice, which as Michael Gove again says ministers sit there and they see all this slew of legislation and changed law coming across their desks and they're told they can't do anything about it?

Cameron: Well there is this argument which our proposals will address, that countries that have written constitutions have sometimes been able not only to assert the sovereignty of their own parliament, as we've just discussed, but actually to go further and say that those constitutional principles have to be taken into account. But we'll be making this clear Andrew. You're trying to get me to pre-empt on your programme. You're going to have to wait.

AM: I'm going to ask you one easy to answer straight forward open question about this. Are you suggesting that we need a written constitution in this country?

Cameron: I'm not making that argument. I think we shouldn't have to do that in order to give to ourselves what some other countries have managed in ..

AM: Cos that would be a massive change wouldn't it?

Cameron: No that's – I don't think that's necessary. We'll have to wait for the detailed proposals, but I think they're important.

AM: All right, let's turn a little bit from the edge of the politics of this. Not only Michael Gove, one of your closest friends has come out on the other side, Boris Johnson who's watching this interview, all the drumbeats of this endless dance of the seven veils seems to be ending up with him going the Brexit side as

well. The Conservative Party, right to the top is deeply, deeply split on this now isn't it?

Cameron: Well we had a very good, very civilised, very dignified Cabinet meeting in which the 29 people who sit round the table, 23 absolutely believe that this – actually everyone agreed that the deal made in Brussels was a good deal. Everyone agreed on the referendum, the 23 of 29 agreed that Britain is better off in a reformed European Union. But of course people like Michael and Iain Duncan Smith you know all their political lives have believed, particularly Michael, that Britain would be better off outside the EU, so that's why we have this position in place, that people can campaign in a personal capacity. Obviously you know I'm sad that a close friend is going to be on the different side of this argument, but you know we respect each other's positions and we'll you know make the case accordingly. As for Boris I'd say to Boris

AM: He's probably watching. Talk to him directly. He's watching.

Cameron: I would say to Boris what I say to everybody else which is that we will be safer, we'll be stronger, we'll be better off inside the EU. I think the prospect of you know linking arms with Nigel Farage and George Galloway and taking a leap into the dark is the wrong step for our country and if Boris and if others really care about being able to get things done in our world then the EU is one of the ways in which we get them done. We're members of NATO, we're members of the UN, we're members of the IMF. I care about Britain being able to fix stuff. Now whether it's stopping pirates off the African coast, whether it's closing down illegal migration routes and closing down smugglers, whether it's standing up to Vladimir Putin with sanctions, whether it's the sanctions we put in place to get Iran to abandon its nuclear programme, having that seat at the table in the EU just as being a member of NATO is a vital way that we project our values and our

power and our influence in the world. And I don't say this for any exercise of national vanity, this is about our national interests. That you know Britain, this amazing country, 5th largest economy in the world, we can succeed whatever we do. But if you ask me having sat here as prime minister for six years how we'd be safer, stronger, better off, in or out I'm absolutely clear we'll be better off in and I'm going to take that message round the country for the next four months. If the British people make a contrary decision I will do everything in my power to implement it as best I can. But I'm absolutely clear that after the years that I've spent in this job that this is the right thing for Britain to do.

AM: You have bust a gut on this negotiation, you've tried very, very hard and it's beginning to look as if you behind you there is a very very carefully coordinated campaign of Brexit people working against you. Do you feel in any sense betrayed? You've been out there and feel knives in your back as you head back through the tunnel?

Cameron: No, not at all actually. The Cabinet meeting yesterday was - was I say very dignified and everybody said first of all they back the referendum, they back the date. Everyone also said they thought the deal improved on the status quo. Because it's undeniable we're going to be able to stop people's welfare benefits. It's undeniable that we're out of ever closer union. One of the – this crucial point of making sure not just we keep our currency but British firms can never be discriminated against while there is this parallel currency, the Euro, these are really important for the future of our country. But of course, you know, in the Conservative Party, as in the Labour Party and you heard it with Kate Hoey you have some people who've always believed Britain's better off out. I think it is a risk, I think it's uncertainty, I think it's a leap in the dark and I think it would actually weaken our ability to get things done. Our sovereignty as it were rather than strengthen it.

AM: And the choice is not very far away. If we do leave the EU, if Brexit happens these are dangerous times economically and in other ways as well, what do you think happens to the rest of the EU? Does it carry on unchanged?

Cameron: Well I think it would lose, obviously, one of its strongest players. One of its – it would lose the country that argues the most for free trade deals. That argues the most for a competitive single market.

AM: so it would become more protectionist?

Cameron: But you know, it wouldn't go away. I think this in a way is one of the weaknesses of the case for leaving, is this idea – as Patrick McLoughlin put it brilliantly at Cabinet yesterday, he said in a way perhaps only he could look, I'd love to live in utopia too but I've got a feeling when we get to utopia we'll find the EU will still be there. And that's the point. Cos in the end this is a hard headed calculation about what's best for Britain, for British people. How do we create jobs, how do we safeguard livelihoods, how do we fight terrorism. How do we make sure in a very dangerous world we're strong in the west and we have strength in numbers in a world where you've got Putin to the east and ISIL Daesh to the south, how do you stay strong? You stay strong by sticking with your neighbouring countries, your partners and your friends. Yes, this organisation is imperfect, has it got better? Yes. Is there still a lot more to do to improve it? Absolutely and the case for reform doesn't end, but if you leave the EU, the EU will stop reforming, in my view it would probably get worse and that actually would impact us very badly, because if we're outside the EU, the euro goes on as a currency, the migration crisis goes on.

AM: Let me take you back to this unhappy prospect of Britain voting to leave the EU and everything's on a knife edge, no one knows what's going to happen. Last time we spoke I asked you

whether you would stay on as prime minister and you said in effect 'you bet', but if that happened you would go down in history as the man who got Britain out the EU against your own will. That would be a catastrophic thing to have on your CV.

Cameron: Well I stood and the whole Conservative Party stood on a very clear manifesto of a promise I made three years ago that we would have a renegotiation and hold a referendum and we are meeting those commitments. The renegotiation is now complete, after exhaustive work, travelling right across Europe, meeting every single prime minister and president, getting a better deal for Britain and now we meet the commitment to hold this referendum. And the people are sovereign. We talked about sovereignty, well the people of our country are going to make a sovereign decision. They're going to instruct their prime minister either to stay in a reformed European union, and fight for Britain's interests in that way, or to leave. And I will you know, meet their instruction and answer their instruction whatever it is. That's my job.

AM: Michael Gove, Bojo Zac Goldsmith, they're falling away one by one. Do you think you're losing this?

Cameron: Not at all. I think you know you've got the overwhelming majority of the Cabinet backing that we're better off to remain in a reformed European union. You're going to see – you know I'm sure somebody will try and paint it as the establishment against you know the sort of rebel alliance. Well you don't get much more establishment than the Lord Chancellor and the Leader of the House of Commons and frankly I've got many things to say about Jeremy Corbyn but I don't think I'd describe him as a member of the establishment. I mean on my side of the argument there will be you know the Green party, the Liberal Democrats, most of the Labour party, trade unionists who not always do I have a huge amount of agreement.

AM: Are you happy about this?

Cameron: Yeah because – yes because in the end this question is so much bigger than any political party or any politician. It's about the future of our country for our children and our grandchildren. What sort of country do we want to live in? I would say let us have a big bold Britain. Doing great things in the world in these organisations making us stronger, more prosperous and safer.

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