THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

INTERVIEW:

NIGEL FARAGE, MEP

UKIP LEADER

MARCH 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2015

Headlines;

- He says that if the suspended UKIP MEP Janice Atkinson knew about alleged wrong-doing by her chief of staff, she will have to stand down.
- He says that tax cuts for the lower paid would be a first stage priority for Ukip.
- He reiterates his belief that the Conservatives will emerge from the election as the largest party, and that there is a chance of a Conservative/UKIP/DUP coalition which could have ‘significant influence’ and ‘force a referendum on our EU membership’.

ANDREW MARR:

Now yet again last week Nigel Farage found himself fire-fighting embarrassing headlines about three more of his UKIP colleagues. After the euphoria of the European Elections, Tory defections and by-election triumphs 2015 hasn’t been a great year for the party, but it still hopes to be a serious player at Westminster after the General Election in May and Nigel Farage joins me now. Welcome to you.
NIGEL FARAGE:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
We’re in the aftermath of course of the Budget and you criticised the Budget. You said George Osborne had “kicked everything into the long grass.” So it’s an opportunity to ask you about UKIP’s budget thinking or long-term thinking for the economy because you want to save lots of money from our EU expenditure of course …

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
… and all of that, but you have made many commitments to big tax rises – sorry big tax cuts, I beg your pardon – and you want the deficit dealt with quicker. So how does it all add up?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well big tax cuts at the bottom …

ANDREW MARR:
Yes.

NIGEL FARAGE:
… meaning no tax on minimum wage to give people real incentives to get off benefit and get back to work.

ANDREW MARR:
But you also want to cut the top rate as well, don’t you?

NIGEL FARAGE:
No, that would not be a first stage priority. Ultimately yes, but right now the people
that have suffered in the last five or ten years are those at the lower end of the income scale and they’re the people that actually need real help.

ANDREW MARR:
So you raise thresholds dramatically?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yes dramatically.

ANDREW MARR:
So how do the numbers add up? You want to get rid of the deficit faster than the Tories and you want to give tax cuts.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well the point is, I mean the point is that this coalition government was formed to eradicate the deficit and it’s still running at 90 billion a year, and yet the Chancellor stood up there and said what a marvellous success this government’s been. Yes we have growth in the economy, but, given the scale of the deficit we’re running, that’s hardly surprising. So what we will talk about tomorrow, or Patrick O’Flynn, our economics spokesman will talk about tomorrow, will be yes the net 10 billion we will save by not being members of the European Union. The 10 billion a year, we want to cut off the foreign aid budget a small amount of money for genuine humanitarian missions, but not the rest of it, which the British public certainly supports us very strongly on; stopping some of the big white elephant projects like HS2.

ANDREW MARR:
Well I was going to say you have to go further than simply the EU money and the foreign aid money you’ve talked about if you’re going to deliver substantial tax cuts for working class voters.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well I mean interestingly just with the EU and the foreign aid budget, we will already be making a bigger real term reduction in spending than this government’s proposing because I’ve seen nothing from George Osborne that says to me they’re serious about
deficit reduction in the next five years.

ANDREW MARR:
Can I just be clear? Is it still the case that you want to get rid of the 45p rate and cut it to 35p …

NIGEL FARAGE:
No I wouldn’t …

ANDREW MARR:
… and get rid of the inheritance tax for most people?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Oh inheritance tax, we want to get rid of. Absolutely. You know that is dragging in far too many people for whom this tax was never ever designed. Taking down top rate tax is not our priority and will not be in our manifesto in this election campaign. Ultimately it’s a longer term goal, but it’s the struggling Britons that we really think need help.

ANDREW MARR:
What about welfare cuts? The Conservatives have committed to I think £12 billion of welfare cuts, but haven’t laid out exactly what that means.

NIGEL FARAGE:
No.

ANDREW MARR:
Would you support that and what would you … how would you do that?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well if we think that plan’s responsible then Patrick O’Flynn has said, we will support sensible, costed reductions of spending. But we need to see a serious plan to get the deficit down.
ANDREW MARR:
Does it go far enough?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well if you look at the last five years virtually nothing’s been achieved because we’re still running a £90 billion a year deficit. So I mean you know I think there is … We’ll show tomorrow that we can make some genuine savings by cutting back on bureaucracy, by cutting back on quangos, by not spending up to £70 billion on HS2. We’ll put some very practical plans on the table.

ANDREW MARR:
The Taxpayers’ Alliance, for instance, has suggested getting rid of three government departments and taking the savings from that. Is that the kind of thing that attracts you?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well certainly you know streamlining everything through our civil service and indeed in elements of our public services is very attractive indeed.

ANDREW MARR:
Now you know that politicians of all parties for many, many years have promised to get great big cuts out of savings in the civil service savings in bureaucracy, so I must press you. How much money do you think you could actually save and how would you do it?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Oh no, no, listen, we tomor… Let Patrick O’Flynn tomorrow give you some numbers on this and then more in our manifesto launch. You know we’re not yet fully in the General Election campaign, but we will be proposing some pretty radical cuts to middle management bureaucracy right through the state sector.

ANDREW MARR:
Now what about Janice Atkinson, your MEP whose agent – not her herself but her
agent – was recorded doing what appears to be straightforward fraud on the taxpayer?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
I was truly shocked. It’s one of the most awful things I’ve ever seen on film.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Her chief of staff, I should have said, not her agent.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yeah, we will have tomorrow a disciplinary hearing to establish what the link was between that member of staff and Janice Atkinson.

**ANDREW MARR:**
If she knew about it, should she stand down as a UKIP candidate?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Without any shadow of a doubt. I mean the one thing you can say to me … You can say well look, you know you’ve had to lose this person and that person. I have been utterly ruthless as UKIP Leader with people who’ve stepped over the line whether it’s with financial mismanagement or whether it’s saying things that frankly have erred towards racism. I have been ruthless at getting rid of people.

**ANDREW MARR:**
And you’ve been saying this for quite a while. I have a clip of you 18 months ago …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yeah.

**ANDREW MARR:**
… on this programme we can show you saying more or less exactly that.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well good, at least I’m consistent then. … (over)
[FARAGE CLIP - 6th October 2013]

We are a party that are taking elections seriously. And to do that, you need some discipline. Now that doesn’t mean we won’t push the boundaries of argument - I want all UKIP people to think freely and do that - but it does mean that we don’t need people causing massive distraction.

ANDREW MARR:
You don’t, but they’re still there …

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well yes, I mean look, I mean look …

ANDREW MARR:
… week after week after week. So what’s going on?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Now look, you know there are one or two other political parties who’ve been around for a couple of centuries and they appear to have some difficult headlines this morning. You know controlling human nature is not the easiest thing to do. I accept … I accept that sometimes things go wrong, but when they do go wrong I deal with them. And what is really interesting …

ANDREW MARR:
You promised to professionalise the party and deal all with this and we still have story after story after story.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well I tell you what you haven’t written about and no-one’s talked about, and that is the hundreds of UKIP candidates that are standing in this General Election who’ve got more breadth of life experience and represent a greater cross-section of what frankly has become a class divided politics in this country. We have got a fantastic range of candidates fighting this election.
ANDREW MARR:
But your internal sieve isn’t working well enough, is it?

NIGEL FARAGE:
I think it is, yes. No I think it is. I think we’re very, very good at weeding people out. You know honestly I do. And, as I say …

ANDREW MARR:
So we’re not going to see more of this kind of stuff?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well there are 640 people standing for UKIP. You know maybe one or two of them will prove to say silly things. But we have made sure - we’ve checked our people, we’ve checked their credit histories, we’ve done everything we can to give the electorate fair and decent people.

ANDREW MARR:
Yes your own agent, I think, was once a National Front supporter, was he not, which is …

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well over 40 years ago, yes, but his biggest crime was that he was Chairman of the Ramsgate Conservatives for many years. Obviously a very serious situation, but we’ve decided to let him off that.

ANDREW MARR:
Alright. Let’s move onto your election thinking because it is perfectly possible, as you’ve said in your new book, that you will have just enough ME, MPs to have some effect on the balance of power. You’ve made your offer to the Conservatives and they’ve said no thanks, so where do things stand now?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well of course they’ve said no thanks. I mean they’re generally fairly beastly about
UKIP. At the end of the day, this is all about numbers, isn’t it? I mean I still believe that the Conservatives will be the biggest party – not least of which is because Alex Salmond’s party is doing so well in Scotland – and I think between UKIP and possibly the DUP in Northern Ireland as well, there will be a body of MPs there to have significant influence and to force a referendum on our EU membership.

**ANDREW MARR:**
The problem with your offer to the Conservatives or your demands to the Conservatives, which is a referendum this calendar year, before this Christmas, is that it doesn’t clearly give David Cameron any chance for his renegotiation …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Ah …

**ANDREW MARR:**
... and therefore makes it much likelier the British people would vote no.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yes but Donald Tusk and Mr Juncker, the two bosses of the European Union, have made it perfectly clear there is no renegotiation. When it comes to the fundamental point of the free movement of people and immigration into the UK, which is the number one issue in British politics and I think between now and May 7th will start to dominate this General Election campaign, there is no renegotiation.

**ANDREW MARR**
If one of your candidates was recorded doing a deal with the EDL, how would you react?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
I’d be absolutely mortified and you know their feet wouldn’t touch the ground.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Right. Let’s move onto the final thing I need to talk to you about, which is Thanet South, because in your book it’s perfectly clear that you are at least a little uneasy
about your chances of taking Thanet South and one of the people you’re up against is Al Murray, the pub landlord. *Farage laughs* Now you say something interesting in the book about Al Murray. You say that he’s broken the limits on election expenses and, therefore, he won’t be allowed to stand. Is that really the case?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well that depends on the electoral commission and, given the number of times Elcom have let UKIP down, perhaps that won’t prove to be the case. Look what I’ve said about Thanet South is that as leader of the party, you know if I don’t succeed then clearly the party will seek somebody else. And this seems to have become a big news story. I thought all I was doing was stating the obvious.

**ANDREW MARR:**
But you are up against Al Murray as well as everybody else. It is possible that a comedian would stop you from taking Thanet South and, therefore, derail the entire Purple Revolution.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
I think … I think this very middle class Oxbridge educated comedian, who’s got a very good comedy act, when he turns up in South Thanet is seen to be very patronising to ordinary, decent working people. I don’t think he’ll get many votes. Thanet South will be a fiercely contested election. Labour are trying hard, the Conservatives are trying hard, we’re trying hard. I believe that I will win.

**ANDREW MARR:**
In your waters, you think you’re going to do it?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yes.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Nigel Farage, for now thank you very much indeed.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS