ANDREW MARR:
Now on Wednesday we’ll find out more about the priorities of this majority Conservative government when we learn the contents of the Queen’s speech. But obviously renegotiating our relationship with the European Union is at the very top of David Cameron’s to-do list. In the in/out referendum itself nearing … gets the business case for and against membership, that will dominate the debate, so where does the new Business Secretary stand? Sajid Javid is with me. Welcome, first of all …

SAJID JAVID:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
… and congratulations. You are now part of the negotiating committee that will oversee this process. Am I right therefore in saying that the issue of the rights of immigrant workers when they come to this country (at least for a few years after they come here) is absolutely central to this, and in particular in work benefits and even more than that tax credits, and that is becoming the big crunch issue? Is that how you see it?
SAJID JAVID:
Well we will look at a number of things and clearly welfare and immigration changes you related are all part of that package. Also there are a number of other things the Prime Minister has set out over previous months, including making sure we’re not part of the commitment to an ever closer union, making sure we can cut more red tape, and also powers flow not just to Brussels but also start flowing back to the parliaments.

ANDREW MARR:
After a successful renegotiation, would parliament be sovereign?

SAJID JAVID:
Well a successful renegotiation will include all those elements that I’ve just mentioned and you know key to that will be, for example, you know you touched on in work benefits, also including things like tax credits and housing benefit. So we want to make sure that people that are coming, jobseekers from the EU coming to Britain don’t get access to those benefits for at least four years …

ANDREW MARR:
Sure.

SAJID JAVID:
… they only get six months to look for a job. So these are the kind of things that we’re going to be focused on.

ANDREW MARR:
And that’s the kind of thing – removing tax credit rights for foreign workers – would actually require a big treaty change and all the signs from Brussels are that’s the kind of thing that might become a crunch issue. So if you don’t get those kind of things - if you don’t get a big change in red tape, if you don’t get more guarantees for the House of Commons as a sovereign parliament – would you be in favour of leaving?

SAJID JAVID:
I’m confident that we’re actually going to get these changes. You know, first of all, the fact that we’re having this referendum, that the British people have voted for it – a straightforward in/out referendum before the end of 2017 – I think helps to concentrate the minds now of our European partners, so they will take us seriously on these issues and I think we’ve already seen the start of that process. We’re not pretending it’s going to be easy – we’re going to need some patience – but I think we’ll get there. Now if you look at our track record, if you look at the Prime Minister’s track record over the last five years, there are a number of things many commentators said he just wouldn’t be able to achieve when it comes to the EU.

ANDREW MARR:
And do you think now he can?

SAJID JAVID:
I think he can. And just look at the track record where people said you wouldn’t get us out of the bailout that Labour signed us into. We did. They said you wouldn’t cut the EU budget. We did. They said you couldn’t veto a treaty. We did. So that track record I think speaks for itself.

ANDREW MARR:
Sure, but you also know that for an awful lot of people immigration is the big issue and it seems that whatever happens in this renegotiation we will not have control of our borders vis-à-vis the rest of the EU after it. In other words, there will still be free movement of people.

SAJID JAVID:
Immigration is an issue. And just to be clear, you know immigration for Britain over many decades has been a good thing and I think it’s one of the things that helps make our country great. What people rightly want to see at the same time though is control of our borders, and that is at the heart of many of these changes and that’s where these welfare changes come in. You know we’ve seen the recent immigration numbers. We’ve managed to cut E… non-EU immigration. EU immigration, as you rightly say, is not something we currently have any say over and so that’s why we won’t see some of these changes.
ANDREW MARR:

(over) Well we won’t in the future, will we? I mean we might be able to sort of stop some of the benefits tourism so-called, but we won’t be able to control the number of people coming here from the rest of the EU. And if our economy’s growing faster than the rest of the EU economy, that pull factor will always be there.

SAJID JAVID:

Well I hope our economy continues to grow fast.

ANDREW MARR:

So the pull factor will be there, so immigration will carry on a big rate.

SAJID JAVID:

That’s all … that is part of the explanation why we’ve seen an increase in immigration, but I think the changes that we’re talking about, the welfare changes, they will make a difference. Let’s just take sort of one of the things that you mentioned, which are the in work benefits – the tax credits.

ANDREW MARR:

Tax credits …

SAJID JAVID:

So if you have someone from the EU coming to Britain working full-time, some would say a couple of kids, they will get currently around £700 a month. That’s almost £8,000 a year in tax credits. That’s twice as much as Germany, three times more than France would give, so you can see the pull that generates and that’s the kind of thing we need to change.

ANDREW MARR:

And so that is an absolute red line in terms of these negotiations: getting rid of the tax credits?

SAJID JAVID:
It’s a very key part of our negotiation.

ANDREW MARR:
Okay now we talked about immigration. Your own father came here and worked in a cotton mill and then as a bus driver and worked in a shop and all the rest of it and you’re a shining example of somebody who’s done very well as an immigrant to this country: you’re in the cabinet, you’re very wealthy and so forth. Are you not in danger, do you not feel that you’re sort of somehow saying to the rest of them it was alright for us, in my time it was fine, but there’s now too many of you, you can’t carry on doing it – in a sense pulling the ladder up?

SAJID JAVID:
No I don’t think so at all because, as I’ve said, immigration for our country has been a good thing and you know we’ve benefited from that not just economically but culturally and so many other ways and no one wants that to change. What this is about is control. I think what everyone rightly expects is for our country to have more control over its borders. You know with Labour in office, they had an open borders policy. We saw over 13 years of Labour Government two and a half million people come into Britain. That’s more than in the previous 30 years, that’s enough to fill Birmingham two times over.

ANDREW MARR:
The last figures in terms of immigration are very, very high indeed. You haven’t as a government, with respect, in the past done very much about it either.

SAJID JAVID:
We’ve made changes to non-EU immigration and we have seen that fall. But what we are now rightly focused on and you started your conversation with is the EU bit of that, and that’s what we’re determined to change.

ANDREW MARR:
Nigel Farage said that he distinguished between people coming from, for instance, India, the Indian sub-continent and Australia, who were more likely to speak English, understand the common law, the rule of law and so forth, and preferred those kind of
immigrants to people coming from ex-communist countries. Do you make that kind of distinction yourself?

SAJID JAVID:
No I don’t. When it comes to non-EU immigration, we have already toughened up some of the rules around being able to speak English, for example. I think that’s hugely important. I think we should have had rules like that before. It’s important not just in terms of the world of work, but just sort of integrating with the rest of your community. But in terms of you know who comes into Britain, I think it should always be focused on the people that are going to add the most value. So if it’s people that have skills that our businesses need, that’s where the priority should be.

ANDREW MARR:
Now if you have an Enterprise Bill as part of the Queen’s speech coming up. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Are you going to go back over some of the Beecroft ideas for deregulation – things like, for instance, having no fault dismissals for small companies to get rid of people more easily, that kind of thing?

SAJID JAVID:
No I won’t be looking at that again. What we will be doing though is looking at you know deregulation and taking it even further. During the last parliament, we saved businesses from about £10 billion of costs collectively in regulation and I think we can do at least that again. I’ve set out some of the examples in a speech I made recently about the kind of things that we can do in reducing red tape, so I want to build on those. The other thing that I want to do is to help more small businesses with some of the challenges they face – not just red tape but especially the issue of late payments. So businesses, you know the small businesses …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Sure, very important.

SAJID JAVID:
… in our country are owed I think about £30 billion. That’s a record high in late payments. And also we’re going to set up a small business conciliation service to help
deal with that.

ANDREW MARR:
But all those things, as I say, about dismissal or about parental leave rights for people working for small companies, all those things that the Beecroft Report said were very, very important to get rid of some of the red tape and problems around small business, that’s off the table at the moment, is it?

SAJID JAVID:
No we’ll be looking at all sorts of issues. There’s plenty of stakeholders out there that will bring us new ideas. I’ve asked businesses and others to bring the ideas about deregulation. I don’t believe it’s just the government that has these ideas. And also I want to take a look at regulators as well to see if regulators can be made part of a system to help cut regulation on businesses. But you know in terms of what we’ll ultimately do, we’ll start setting out more information in the Queen’s speech, but over the coming months I think there’ll be a lot more detail.

ANDREW MARR:
Transport – very, very important for business of course. When are we going to hear about the new runway and is it true that Gatwick is becoming more favoured now at the moment than Heathrow?

SAJID JAVID:
I don’t know. I haven’t seen the final report.

ANDREW MARR:
Right.

SAJID JAVID:
I think it will come out actually probably quite shortly, in a couple of months or so. When it does come out, we intend to move ahead quickly with it.

ANDREW MARR:
And what about this row with the Scots because a lot of Scots are very upset that HS2
is no longer going to go to Scotland? They thought it was going to be a union link between the two countries.

**SAJID JAVID:**
We’re committed to HS2. We’ve always said that it’s something that’s going to benefit every part of the country and that will include benefitting the Scottish.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Okay. Now you got into a semi-public row with Theresa May around the time of the election about whether or not Ofcom, who regulate the broadcasting industry, should in effect be a censor – seeing in advance some certain kinds of interviews of potentially dodgy characters and so on and saying you can’t broadcast that imam or whatever it might be – and you were very worried about Ofcom becoming a censor. Are you still worried about Ofcom becoming a censor?

**SAJID JAVID:**
Well I read that story. I think it’s a bit of over excitement in the press. I mean, first of all, let’s recognise you know Theresa May has a very difficult job to do with the challenges that she faces. She’s been an outstanding home secretary and extremism is one of the biggest things in her in-tray, and so the whole government – including me – will work with her in dealing with those challenges.

**ANDREW MARR:**
But you were worried. I mean the words were clear, black and white, that you were concerned that there was a danger of a censorship role being taken over by Ofcom and that was un-British and wrong?

**SAJID JAVID:**
It’s perfectly normal within cabinet to discuss policies and proposals. I think what matters are the policies that we actually come up with and try to legislate for, and those will be well-balanced policies and at its heart will be the protection of freedom of speech.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Let me ask you about something which is not on your brief at all, which is these
terrible events happening in the Middle East, Syria and Iraq with Isis. There’s been
calls thes morning for British troops to go on the ground; for Western forces, British
and American forces to look back at that conflict. This is simply too big a struggle for
us to walk away from now. We are seeing an incredibly dangerous Islamic caliphate
taking shape and spreading very, very fast and we have to rethink all of this. Do you
agree?

SAJID JAVID:
I agree this is a hugely … this is a huge, serious problem for all of us – obviously here
in Britain but our allies in the Middle East and many others. There is a need for troops
on the ground, but not British troops. I think …

ANDREW MARR:
The troops that are there are losing though, aren’t they?

SAJID JAVID:
Well clearly the news that we have had this week is very difficult and we need to see
what more can be done in terms of providing the help that we already are both in
terms of training or in terms of intelligence, in terms of equipment, but the answer to
this is not going to be British troops on the ground.

ANDREW MARR:
Under any circumstances? This sounds like we’re losing a war and we’re not going to
do very much about it.

SAJID JAVID:
This war has to be won by the people that are most affected. It’s the Iraqis, the
Syrians. And we’ve got to provide them help with our allies, as we’re doing, but this
is not a war on the ground for British troops.

ANDREW MARR:
Sajid Javid, thank you very much indeed for coming in.
SAJID JAVID:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS