ANDREW MARR:
As we heard from the Jordanian Foreign Minister earlier, the ISIS surge in Iraq is threatening to further inflame the region and spread to other countries. The Foreign Secretary William Hague has just returned from Baghdad where he held crisis talks with the Iraqi Government. Mr Hague joins me now from Chevening in Kent. Mr Hague, did you tell Mr Maliki, the Iraqi Prime Minister, that it was time to go?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well I said that Iraq needs a new and inclusive government; that it’s absolutely vital that Shia, Sunni, Kurds all work together. It’s not for us to determine who is the Prime Minister of Iraq, but they need to hear it from the whole of the rest of the world and that there needs to be political unity in Iraq and that security operations will only work in that context, will only work with that strong political support from all elements in Iraq. And that’s why I want to ………..?? as well to talk to the Kurdish leaders, and I think there is a strong consciousness of that, but the big test is going to come … is going to begin when the Iraqi Parliament meets on Tuesday this week.

ANDREW MARR:
In your view, is Mr Maliki?? the kind of person who can unite Iraq?
WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well, as I say, it isn’t for us and it wouldn’t help anybody in Iraq for us to pronounce on who should be the Prime Minister of Iraq. But there has been a failure in recent years to bring together Iraqi leaders and people out of their sectarian divisions. No-one has succeeded in doing that in Iraq over the last eight years or so. So clearly they need a new, more inclusive government where people have a sense of genuine partnership in government. They are facing a lethal threat, a mortal threat to the Iraqi state …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) There seems very …

WILLIAM HAGUE: … and so I really impressed on them the need for everybody to work together. And then the extent to which the rest of the world can help them will largely be determined by their determination to do that.

ANDREW MARR:
What does it say for sort of Western intervention that Al-Maliki’s government has had to rely on jets from Belarus and Russia to protect him? Nothing from us at all.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well these are purchases that you’re talking about …

ANDREW MARR:
I am.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
… this is not an intervention by Russia. These are purchases of arms from other countries. And I would stress that all countries in the world have an interest in overcoming the threat from ISIL. No state on earth will benefit from the growth of ISIL’s activities in Iraq and Syria and so it’s very important that every nation helps in various ways. And we will help at the United Nations by putting forward proposals to make terrorist financing harder, to make it harder for them to use the economic assets that they have seized. Of course we want to make it harder for people to travel there
as well. We all have to join in with that.

**ANDREW MARR:**
No British military help of any kind at all from this struggling and failing government?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
We do have to stress their responsibility for this. I don’t think it would be wise to have a British military intervention in this situation and if there is any military intervention the United States has the best assets and capabilities to do that. So no, I haven’t discussed with the Iraqi leaders of British military intervention. I have discussed with them assistance with counterterrorism expertise over the medium term. We’ve been the quickest country in the world to get humanitarian aid to people displaced by the activities of ISIL. So we can help in many ways, but we are not planning or contemplating a British military intervention.

**ANDREW MARR:**
There are hundreds of people coming back from Syria, we’re told, who are now battle hardened Jihadis, to Britain. Is there anything new that we can do to stop them coming in here?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
Well there’s a great deal that we can do and are doing. There have already been many arrests. We have confiscated passports. The Home Secretary can and will cancel leave to remain in this country for people who live here but who are not British nationals and who are involved in these activities, so people should be in no doubt that we will use the full force of the law on this. One of the things that we need to increase is the …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Can we strip of them British nationality?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
*(might be a bit missing here)* … on this subject, so that we work closely with the countries in the region to identify these people. It’s a vast task of course, but I think
that will be an ever increasing part of our counterterrorism work over the coming months.

ANDREW MARR:
Can we strip them of British nationality if they have chosen to serve the Caliphate instead?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
The Home Secretary does have the power to do that. The power that she has been exercising is to remove passports so far, so people should be in no doubt about that.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) That can happen, okay.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
…………?? to do that and to launch prosecutions as well.

ANDREW MARR:
Now let’s move to the European story, if we may. Mr Juncker is a disaster for Britain presumably, but it’s also a disaster for the plan to hold a referendum and stay in Europe afterwards, isn’t it? We are heading towards the exit route.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Well I think these events make even clearer the need for what we are proposing – that it is essential to have change in Europe. And what has happened here, which is an increasing power for the European Parliament at the expense of the Council, the heads of government, makes the need for that even clearer. In British politics it’s only the Conservative Party that has a plan to do something about that …

ANDREW MARR:
Well …

WILLIAM HAGUE:
…and then to consult the people in a referendum. And so it is the British people who
will decide ultimately in a referendum provided there is a Conservative Government.

ANDREW MARR:
But the plan has two parts. First get reform, get real change inside the EU – and it tooks to an awful lot of people, including many, many Conservatives, that that now can’t and won’t happen. And then Part B: have a referendum. But if you haven’t got the big reforms - and it doesn’t look as if you’re going to – then the referendum is going to take us out of the EU, isn’t it?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
It would be far too early, Andrew, to say it doesn’t look like we’re going to get those reforms. The Prime Minister acknowledged that the task had got harder when he spoke about this on Friday. But look at the track record of the last few years. He is the first Prime Minister to negotiate an actual reduction in the European Budget. We have vetoed … He vetoed the Fiscal Treaty three years ago. I vetoed the creation of the European military headquarters. These subjects, we are not threatened with these things. Again even in the European Council …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) We just lost however …

WILLIAM HAGUE:
(over) … conclusions on Friday. Sorry, I don’t want to talk over.

ANDREW MARR:
I’m so sorry.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
I just want to point out in the council conclusions on Friday, there was an acknowledgement that what has happened has got to be reviewed, that the concept of ever closer union cannot just be applied to everybody in the same way – which is an argument we have been making.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Foreign Secretary, these are …

WILLIAM HAGUE:
(over) So yes we can succeed in reforming Europe.

ANDREW MARR:
These are ‘pourbois’. These are consolation prizes after we have just lost a huge battle. Do you agree with those who say that at least the tactics weren’t good; that playing the man and not the policy, making such a big thing of Juncker – whether he’s a drunk or not – was a bad idea?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
Actually our argument was always about the principle. The Prime Minister made this very clear about the principle of how this selection was taking place, about the need for reform in Europe. Did we think Jean-Claude Juncker was the man to do that? Well no, we didn’t think that either. The Prime Minister was very clear – look this was an argument about the principle of how the Commission President was going to be selected. And when it’s an argument about principle, well then you have to stick to your principle. And everybody can now see in Europe that when the Prime Minister says he will not back down, he won’t back down.

ANDREW MARR:
Right.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
He will stick to his guns and they will go into negotiations over the next couple of years before we hold a referendum here knowing that and being in no doubt about that.

ANDREW MARR:
Are you worried about Mr Juncker’s drinking?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
I’m really not … Having just explained that it’s a matter of principle and about reform
in Europe, I’m not going to go into any …

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* Just thought I’d ask, just thought I’d ask.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

*(over)* … personal matter about Jean-Claude Juncker or anybody else in Europe.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Okay, alright. Well let me ask you about another personal matter because it’s alleged in the papers that the person who introduced Andy Coulson to the top team of the Conservative Party was none other than Mr William Hague. Is that true? Was he an old mate of yours and, if so, what have you learned from these recent events?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

No, I don’t think that is true. Actually I did used to write a column for The News of the World a few years ago, but, no, I don’t think that would be true actually. The Prime Minister on these matters has apologised. As you know, he apologised unreservedly. As he explained, sometimes you give someone a second chance in life. Sometimes that turns out to be wrong. That is what happened in this case, so I suppose we will learn from it.

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* He was a kind of … He was a kind of friend, nonetheless. Do you have any sympathy for him now?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**

I’ve always got sympathy for the predicament of anybody I know who has fallen into very difficult situations or brought it on themselves, but I absolutely agree with what the Prime Minister said the other day.

**ANDREW MARR:**

And do you think perhaps that the sort of stickiness (if I can put it that way) of
relationships between journalists and politicians went too far and has to be rethought?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
I do think that, yes, on the whole, and I think that has changed now actually in the light of events over the last few years. There is a greater distance now between politicians and the press and I think that was a necessary thing, and I think that is probably healthier for our democracy than the situation that prevailed before.

**ANDREW MARR:**
And I hate to bring up even more horrendous words, but do you think Nick Clegg was perhaps right about Andy Coulson and that David Cameron should have listened to Nick Clegg? I’m sorry to keep using the words ‘Nick Clegg’ but you understand it’s my job.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
Nick Clegg is the Deputy Prime Minister. It’s absolutely fine. Well again I think the answer is what I just said. The Prime Minister apologised for this. No-one could be clearer than that. He absolutely apologised unreservedly about it. He said, as I said before, that sometimes you give somebody a second chance. That’s always a difficult decision to make in life and sometimes that turns out to have been a mistake. And so …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Are we going to … Okay.

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
*(over)* … don’t worry, you don’t need to apologise for mentioning Nick Clegg.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Alright, thank you for that. Now very, very briefly, are we going to leave the European Union in your lifetime?

**WILLIAM HAGUE:**
Well we’re going to have a referendum, so the truthful answer is provided there’s a
Conservative Government, it’s up to the British people whether we do that.

ANDREW MARR:
Right, okay.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
But our objective should be, the objective of the British Government should be …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) And would it be a disaster if the British people said no?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
(over) … to reform Europe and to succeed in keeping us in Europe on the basis of clear and genuine reform.

ANDREW MARR:
Would it be a disaster if the British people said no and we left Europe?

WILLIAM HAGUE:
This will be the debate in the referendum.

ANDREW MARR:
Okay.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
I have always argued against more power going to the European Union, but for us to be a member of it in Europe but not run by Europe.

ANDREW MARR:
Okay.

WILLIAM HAGUE:
The British people will decide in a referendum whether that is sustainable or not.
ANDREW MARR:
Foreign Secretary, thank you very much indeed for joining us this morning. It’s been a treat. Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS