

ANDREW MARR SHOW, 30TH SEPT, 2018 – THERESA MAY

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30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

THERESA MAY, MP

PRIME MINISTER

AM: Prime Minister, welcome. The Chequers Plan, as it's currently constituted, is dead, isn't it?

TM: No it isn't. Let me just perhaps explain Andrew, why we put the Chequers Plan forward. We had on the table from the European Union two options, neither of which were acceptable to the UK. On the one hand it was effectively keeping us in the customs union, in the single market, and that would not have delivered on the vote of the British people. On the other hand it was offering a free trade agreement, a basic free trade agreement for Great Britain and carving Northern Ireland out of the – away from the rest of the United Kingdom. Neither of those were acceptable to us. So we said no, we will put our plan forward. We will put a plan forward that's ambitious for Britain, that delivers on the Brexit vote. It ensure there's no free movement. Ensures we keep control of our borders, control of our money by not sending vast annual sums to the EU every year. Control of our laws by no longer having European Court having jurisdiction in the UK. But in doing that it deals with the issue of no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, protects jobs and protects our Union.

AM: There is a very comprehensive explanation of Chequers. You say it is not dead, it's resting. But if it's only resting can I ask, are you prepared in any substantive way to alter your plan to get an agreement?

TM: What I've said to the European Union is very clear. They've said they have some concerns with the proposals we've put together. Let's hear what those detailed concerns are. If they've

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got counter proposals let's hear what those counter proposals are. But what I'm clear is that what we've put forward is in the national interest and we did it because what the European Union was offering us was unacceptable.

AM: And you're in a listening mood. Are you then in a moving mood as well?

TM: Let's hear what the European Union's concerns are with the Chequers Plan. At the heart of the Chequers Plan is a free trade deal. A free trade area and frictionless trade. I think it is frictionless trade that ensures we can maintain our guarantee to the people of Northern Ireland of no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. And Chequers, at the moment, is the only plan on the table that delivers on the Brexit vote in the way I've set out and also delivers for the people of Northern Ireland.

AM: So they said at Salzburg fairly clearly that what they wanted was more and stronger language on the Common Rule Book about regulations and so on going forward. Having listened, are you prepared in any sense to compromise?

TM: What I'm saying to them is if you've got concerns let's hear what the detail of those concerns is.

AM: I come back. Are you prepared to compromise though?

TM: Let's hear what the detail of those concerns is. If they've got counter proposals let's hear what those counter proposals are. They've said there's much about the Chequers Plan that they can accept and they want to talk through with us. So where they have problems let's actually hear them, and then – it's only then, Andrew - that you can actually identify what the issue really is, if, you know, where there are issues that lie behind this.

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AM: But also it's pretty pointless if they're going to come forward with their ideas if you are then going to completely ignore them. So I ask you again, are you prepared to compromise once they have come forward with some ideas? I'm not saying I want the details of the compromise, I just want to know what your mood is.

TM: Well what my mood is is to listen to what the European Union have to say about their concerns and then to sit down and talk them through with them. Now they've made some statements about their concerns which we actually think we have counter arguments for. We think that we are putting forward a proposal that will maintain the integrity of the single market from their point of view. What we're talking about is a different arrangement. It's an ambitious arrangement and the reason – the reason the European Union has been saying that they have concerns with it is precisely because this is an ambitious arrangement for the United Kingdom for the future. 'Cause I think we should be ambitious for Britain.

AM: I'm sure we should.

TM: I don't think we should just take an existing off the shelf model. I think we should say, we're the UK, we're the 5th biggest economy in the world, let's work out a really good trade deal between us.

AM: But if you move an inch, or maybe I should say a millimetre towards them you bust your party wide open. Boris Johnson says this morning that the Chequers Plan, as it is, is 'deranged.'

TM: As I've put forward, I've just explained to you why I believe that the plan we've put forward is a plan that is in the national interest. What do I want to as Prime Minister and as a government? First of all I want to ensure we deliver on the Brexit vote and that means ensuring there's no free movement, that we can have control of our borders delivering –

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AM: This is a plan he thinks is deranged. I mean just completely impossible to deliver and wrong in principle. Vassalage.

TM: This is a plan which ensures that we deliver on the vote of the British people. That's the first thing we need to do. People voted for an end to free movement.

AM: He doesn't even think you believe in it. He said today: "Unlike the Prime Minister I campaigned for Brexit. Unlike the Prime Minister I fought for this, I believe in it." He thinks in the end you don't really believe in a proper Brexit.

TM: I do believe in Brexit, but crucially I believe in delivering Brexit in a way that respects the vote and delivers on the vote of the British people, while also protecting our Union, protecting jobs and ensuring that we make a success of Brexit for the future. That's why I'm being ambitious for this country. That's why I want us to get a really good free trade deal with the European Union which is what lies at the heart of the Chequers Plan.

AM: And you took the Chequers Plan to Salzburg and it was rejected unanimously by the other 27. President Macron said afterwards – he said – "the proposals in their current state are not acceptable. The Chequers Plan cannot be take it or leave it." Now if you take exactly the same plan back to exactly the same people next month and get exactly the same result, you can't know what we're not heading for no deal, can you?

TM: Well, first of all what leaders across the European Union have been saying – I met a number of them when I was in New York last week – is that they do want a deal, they do want us to be able to come to an agreement and as I do. That's what I'm working for, that's what government is working for.

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AM: But you're going to have to move if you're going to get that agreement.

TM: A good deal for the United Kingdom.

AM: But you're going to have to shift to get that agreement.

TM: Andrew, you seem to be of the view that if the European Union says, oh we have a problem here, then we should somehow make some adjustment without knowing what that problem is.

AM: No, both sides have to move, but that includes you.

TM: The point is very simple. Until we know what their problem is that's what we need. We need to know what their concerns are. You know, this is challenging for the European Union I accept that, because it is an ambitious deal. It's a deal like no other, it's a deal that hasn't been – they haven't entered into with anybody else.

AM: It's a deal they think destroys the single market.

TM: And we believe it does not destroy the single market and we need to have that conversation with them.

AM: Now if we don't get the deal we want your plan B at the moment is no deal at all. Can I ask, doesn't the British people deserve a better, proper plan B?

TM: I am working to get a good deal for the United Kingdom. I'm working to ensure that we get the best deal for the United Kingdom.

AM; But you can't be sure, can you? You can't be sure.

TM: Well, we don't know what the outcome of the negotiations is going to be. That's why we are making preparations for no deal, because as a government it's entirely right that we should be able to say to the British people whatever the outcome of these negotiations we are putting into place what is needed to ensure

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we make a success of Brexit. But if we look at what is happening at the moment, I'm out there –

AM: Will no deal make a success of Brexit?

TM: We will make a success of Brexit regardless of the outcome of the negotiations. That's the task I've set government. But if you look at what is happening at the moment we are working for a good deal for the UK with the EU for our future relationship. My message to the Labour Party is that they should stop playing politics with Brexit –

AM: And agree with you?

TM: - and start acting in the national interest. My message to my party is let's come together and get the best deal for Britain.

AM: Well good luck with that because an awful lot of our own MPs, according to Steve Baker, around 80 MPs in your own party hate the Chequers proposal as you know, and they much prefer – the free trade deal that you were talking about earlier on. Can you explain in terms what is so awful about the free trade deal?

TM: Well, Chequers is a free trade deal.

AM: I'm talking about the so called Canada style, you know very well. Come on, you know I'm talking about the Canada style free trade deal.

TM: No I think this is important because people often differentiate Chequers from a free trade deal. At the heart of Chequers is a free trade deal. Now if you look at the issue on the so called Canada –

AM: The heart of Chequers is the Common Rule Book, surely.

TM: At the heart of Chequers is a free trade deal. If you have a trade agreement you have to agree the rules you're going to trade with them on.

AM: So what's the problem with Canada?

TM: You've asked about Canada. First of all Canada for the UK is not on the table from the EU. What's on the table is a basic free

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trade agreement for Great Britain with Northern Ireland remaining in the customs union, remaining in the single market and effectively be –

AM: Which they say would be generous and no tariffs and very easy frictionless trade and all of that. They make it sound quite good.

TM: You wanted me to explain Canada, perhaps I can complete my explanation. What they have on the table is a basic free trade agreement for Great Britain. Northern Ireland remaining in most of the single market and the customs union. Effectively creating a customs border between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom. Effectively carving the United Kingdom into two customs territories, carving Northern Ireland away from the rest of the UK. That is unacceptable to us. But if you look at Canada as well, as a free trade agreement what Canada does is it would mean that there would be checks, regulatory checks, customs checks at borders. The Northern Ireland border, the Dover Calais border.

AM: All right, so you don't like the Irish border question. If we leave on no deal, WTO rules, does that have to be a hard border in Ireland? Does there have to be a hard border in Ireland?

TM: Your phrase you used was that I didn't like the Irish border. This is about the people of Northern Ireland who are part of the United Kingdom. It's about standing up for the whole of the United Kingdom and we have been very clear from our point of view that we do not want to see a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

AM: But if we leave on so called no deal, WTO rules, that does mean an Irish border, doesn't it? We've checked with the WTO, it does mean a border in Ireland.

TM: Obviously there are certain WTO rules. What we are committed –

AM: Breaks our own promise.

TM: No, we are committed to making sure that we can provide that guarantee to the people of Northern Ireland. Now nobody wants a good deal with the EU better than I do, and that's why I'm working hard for that good deal and ensuring that we can deliver for every part of the United Kingdom.

AM: But if we leave without a deal you cannot guarantee that there isn't a hard border in Ireland, can you?

TM: We are working to make sure that we leave with a good deal. That's what my focus is on.

AM: But if we leave without a deal there will be a border in Ireland, won't there?

TM: If we leave – if we get to the point of no deal, we're making the preparations because we don't know what's going to come out of the negotiations. If we leave with no deal, we as the United Kingdom government, are still committed to doing everything we can to ensure there is no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

AM: So you'll try but you'll inevitably fail, because on WTO rules there has to be a border and we should level with people and explain that.

TM: As I say, as a United Kingdom government we will remain committed to doing everything we can to ensure no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. There is only one plan on the table at the moment that provides for that frictionless trade across the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland and indeed between the United Kingdom's other borders with the

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European Union. And that is the plan that the UK government has put forward and which has become known as the Chequers Plan.

AM: But you are telling people at the moment that if you don't get your way the answer is going to be no deal and people are beginning to get very worried about that and I want to examine exactly why. If for instance we did what you don't want us to do – I do understand that – and did the so called Norway model, stayed inside the EEA, our domestic product would fall by 1.4, nearly 2% over (50?) years. That is a really bad drop. If we want for the Canada deal, that kind of free trade deal it would fall by nearly 5%, really serious. But look what happens if we go out with no deal. It falls by 8%, nearly 8%. 7.7%, that is pretty catastrophic. That goes alongside all those people actually running businesses. Jaguar Land Rover, Toyota, tens of thousands of really high skilled British jobs would go down the Swanny, according to the people running the businesses concerned. And then there's a police talking about disruption at the border and all the other problems and the aircraft and the lack of pet passports and you name it. This looks a pretty pretty ropy answer and yet this seems to be your plan B. And so I say again, don't the British people deserve a better plan B?

TM: I think what you've just been arguing for is a sort of plan that the United Kingdom government's put forward, in the Chequers Plan which actually delivers on the frictionless trade which businesses such as those you've cited have raised as one of their issues, so it protects jobs, protects livelihoods here in the United Kingdom. It also delivers on the issue of the border.

AM: You don't have to go for the worst option, do you?

TM: No.

AM: You don't have to go for TWO rules.

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TM: What we're doing at the moment, Andrew is we're in the final straits of this negotiation. Now I always said it was going to be tough and it was always going to get toughest towards the end of the negotiation. But we're continuing to focus on getting a good deal for the UK. Now that's about understand where the EU has concerns with the proposal we've put before them. It's about understanding what their counter proposals might be. But what drives me, what drives the government, is the national interest. That's why I'm saying to everybody in politics today let's focus on the national interest. Let's focus on ensuring that we're all working to get the really good deal that this country deserves.

AM: When you first stood on the steps of Downing Street as Prime Minister, you talked about there being burning injustices that you wanted to correct, the first burning injustice, you said, was that if you were born poor in this country you were likely to live nine years shorter than if you were born to a better off family. Has that got worse or better under your premiership?

TM: We're doing a number of things to ensure that we're putting in place what is necessary to help people in those circumstances. Now, there's a variety of issues that come into people's health prospects. Obviously their living conditions, obviously the ability of the national health service to deal with any diseases, any conditions that they have. There's not a single –

AM: It's got worse.

TM: Well, there's not a single answer to this. It's a whole myriad of government actions that need to be taken. So we need to build more homes so more people actually have the opportunity of owning their own home and living in those decent conditions. That's what we're doing.

AM: Things have got worse. Let me ask you another burning injustice which you didn't mention but I think a lot of people would regard as a burning injustice, which is the treatment of all of those West Indian people who came here in the 1950s and

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1960s, asked here to work, people from the Caribbean and elsewhere. We were very, very short of jobs in those days, we brought them into this country and as a result of your hostile environment policy their lives have been turned upside down. I'm talking of course of the Windrush generation. Do you not think that was a burning injustice?

TM: And I've apologised for what happened to the Windrush generation and it was something that was taking place over a number of years, across governments. What matters is that – you're absolutely right, we asked those people to come here. They came here, they helped to build our great institution of the national health service and they deserve to be treated better. And that's why we've apologised, that's why we've been working with governments, for example, in the Caribbean to make sure we identify cases where perhaps people have gone back and not been able to come back to the UK, so that we can actually support people. It's why we're helping people to get the documents. The issue was they didn't have documents given to them at the time which proved their status here in the UK. We all knew they were British, we knew they were part of us, and we're rectifying that for them at the moment.

AM: Do you know how many people of the Windrush generation have lost their homes as a result of your hostile environment policy?

TM: The Home Office has been looking at all the issues that have been affecting people from the Windrush generation. They have set up a task force so that people have got somebody they can call into where they've had a problem. They will be helped and supported. And as we've made clear, there is a compensation scheme available.

AM: Do you know how many people of the Windrush generation have been refused NHS treatment as a result of your hostile environment policy?

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TM: Andrew, what we are ensuring is that those people from the Windrush generation are being given the help and support that they need. There were many people from the Windrush generation who did actually get their documentation, and who've had no issues. Sadly there are some who are not in that category who we now need to support and who we have been supporting since this first came to light. I think that is –

AM: How many people of the Windrush generation have lost their jobs and been unable to get benefits because of your hostile environment policy?

TM: Andrew, what we have been doing is looking at every aspect of the impact of people from the Windrush generation and ensuring that - as I say, these people are British. We have apologised for what happened to people. This should never have happened to people. And it is right that we're making every effort to ensure that we can give people the – it's not just about papers, it's not just about status, it's about giving people the confidence and the reassurance of knowing that what they always felt and knew and what everybody else always felt and knew is not in question, they're part of us.

AM: But I keep coming back to it, it was your policy and their lives were turned upside down. Let me give you the case, for instance, of Sarah O'Connor, who came here in 1967 from Jamaica. She's sadly since died. But before she died she said this:

O'CONNOR

I lost my job last July. Couldn't work because I haven't got the right document. You go and try and get some sort of help from the unemployment and get told no, you're not entitled to anything. Apology is all good and well, an apology doesn't help the things that the Windrush people have gone through.

AM: What's your message to her family?

TM: Well, I hear what Sarah said about apologies, but I can only apologise for what Sarah went through and for what her family have gone through. This shouldn't have happened. We have been doing everything we can to ensure that we are supporting those who have found themselves in difficulty as a result of being part of the Windrush generation, of not having the documents that guaranteed their status. We're making every effort to ensure those people are being supported properly.

AM: Can I ask what you're apologising for? There's apologies which say I'm sorry something bad happened, and then there are apologies which say, do you know what, my policy, my policy made these bad things happen and my policy was wrong and I'm sorry for it. Are you prepared now to say that to the Windrush generation?

TM: If you look at what has happened to the Windrush generation, actually there are people who found themselves in some difficulty without documents before we came into government. But let me just look at what the policy –

AM: People watching, they want to know if you're actually going to apologise for the policy.

TM: Well, I just want to explain the policy to you, Andrew. The point of the policy was to ensure that those people who were here in the United Kingdom illegally were identified and that appropriate action was taken. What went wrong was that people from the Windrush generation who were here legally, who had every right to be here, who had helped to build our great national institutions found themselves unable to show that through documentation and got caught up in that. But I think for most – I think for most people – no, I'm sorry, Andrew, because I think this is very important, because for most people they do want to know that the government is taking action against those people who come to this country illegally or stay in this country illegally. What we need to do is make sure that in doing that we don't find people

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who have every right to be here being caught up in it. That's what went wrong in Windrush.

AM: But this policy went, as we have just demonstrated, catastrophically wrong. I'm asking you again, you were Home Secretary during most of this period, it was in effect your policy, Theresa May's policy, the Council for the Welfare of Immigrants say that this lady died after a long period of terrible stress 'as a result of Theresa May's Immigration Act. The buck stops with the Prime Minister.' Will you apologise for the policy?

TM: The policy, the purpose of the policy, it was to ensure- and we maintained the compliant environment policy – the purpose of the policy is to ensure that those people who are here illegally are identified and appropriate action is taken. I apologise for the fact that some people who should not have been caught up in that were caught up that, with, in some cases, as we've just seen, tragic results.

AM: Alright. You've got a big announcement on housing today. You're going to tax foreign millionaires and billionaires who come into this country and buy homes. Why?

TM: Because we're very concerned about the impact that actually foreign buyers have on the housing market and the impact they have on people who are living here who are trying to get onto the housing market. Because the evidence is, and this isn't from government, King's College London, for example, foreign buyers coming in actually pushes house prices up and lowers home ownership here in the UK. I want to ensure that people here in the UK are able to own their own homes. And the money we raise from this extra stamp duty on foreign buyers, people who are non tax resident in the UK, is going to be spent on dealing with the issue of rough sleeping. We've already put money into projects to ensure that we're helping those who are sleeping rough. This will enable more money to be put in.

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AM: You walk around Birmingham, you walk around London these days and see huge numbers of people sleeping rough. What's happened to rough sleeping under the Conservatives?

TM: We've sadly seen rough sleeping going up recently. We've seen rough sleeping going up. Which is why it's important that as a government we are taking a number of actions. Now, we've done various things, we've got a pilot here in the west midlands, Housing First, to try to ensure that we can deal with this issue of rough sleeping. What we're announcing today, which is that extra stamp duty for foreign buyers will I think not only be helpful in terms of the housing market here but will release extra money that can go into dealing with rough sleeping.

AM: There was an extraordinary march on Downing Street this week, not by a political party or a trade union, but by lots and lots of head teachers from the heart of Tory England, absolutely furious about what's happened to school budgets. And they're ex maths teachers, they know the numbers that really count are the numbers of per pupil funding. What's happened to the pupil funding in England over the last two years?

TM: We are putting – overall we're putting £1.3 billion extra into schooling, into schools' budgets this year. We've also introduced of course, because this is caught up with the national funding formula, we've introduced a fairer formula for funding across the country so that we can ensure that actually the money that is going into schools means there is a cash increase available for every school.

AM: But per pupil funding has fallen over the last two years. It's now being frozen. And that's why they're so upset. Lots of your own MPs think this country has had enough of the lean years and it's time to change direction radically.

TM: Well, if we look back at what has happened over the last few years, of course when we came into government in 2010 it was necessary for us to take some tough decisions to deal with the

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public finances because of the mess that the Labour Party had left them in. And people have made sacrifices as a result of that.

AM: And they may have to make a lot more if we go for no deal. But I'm afraid we're out of time, Prime Minister. Thank you very much indeed.

(ends)