

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009, Interview with David Cameron, 7.46am

JAMES NAUGHTIE: As we've been reporting this morning, a survey for the BBC suggests a substantial majority of the electorate believes that MPs have forfeited the right to regulate themselves, voters are approaching the local and European elections on Thursday in a mood of anger, and it appears distrust. With me here in Westminster is the Leader of the Opposition, David Cameron. Good morning. ...

JN: On, more or less, the eve of an election, let me just ask you a couple of things about Europe, since we're having a Euro Election.

DC: Well, we're having an election, why not?

JN: Absolutely. Now look, you lead a party which is pretty well Eurosceptic these days. You're leading the main centre-right grouping in the European Parliament, and you think very clearly, that the Lisbon Treaty goes too far. Now, if you come to power and that Treaty has been ratified – the process hasn't been completed yet – will you try to renegotiate it, or will you accept it?

DC: Well, what we've said is we will not let matters rest, because . . . .

JN: And I'm asking you what that means.

DC: Well, I'm going to answer. What I mean by that is too much power would have been passed from Brussels to Westminster, and we want some of that power back. Now, I don't want to go into every last detail of what happens if a series of things happen. *If* there isn't an early election, *if* the Irish vote 'yes' in a second referendum, *if* the Poles decide to ratify this treaty, *if* the Czechs decide to ratify this treaty. That is four 'ifs'. I would rather than focusing on all those 'ifs' focus on the here and now, and today we are publishing a bill that could go through parliament right now to allow us to hold the referendum on the European Constitution that everyone promised, particularly the prime minister, and we can hold it on the same day as the Irish referendum. Now I know that, of course, my opponents would love me to focus on what happens if all of those things happen subsequently. Well actually, I'm not going to.

JN: Well . . . .

DC: I'm going to focus on the here and now, because on Thursday people can go into those voting booths, vote Conservative and pile the pressure on Gordon Brown to hold a referendum.

JN: Well . . . well . . . .

DC: And I don't want to let him off the hook.

JN: Okay, that's a fair enough political point, but people have a right to know what you'd do if Mr Brown doesn't ring you up and say, 'oh, I think you're right, we're going to have an election tomorrow'. If you go in, on the crucial part of Britain's relationship with the outside world, they will need to know how you deal with a piece of legislation that has been ratified, and the unravelling of which would mean, in the view of many people in your own party as well as outside, effectively challenging our membership of the EU.

DC: Well it isn't that, I mean every treaty is an effective renegotiation, and if we had a Conservative government we'd be going into those sorts of negotiations with a list of powers we'd want to have returned to the UK, because we think that we believe in being members of the European Union, but we want it to be about more . . . .

JN: How do you . . . .

DC: (*continues*) trade and cooperation, rather than this endless process of building a superstate. And one of the reasons, in fact the main reason for leaving the EPP and forming this new group, is that it will bring to European politics I centre-right group of parties that are committed to reform in Europe and change in Europe. It won't just be the British Conservatives, it will be other parties . . .

JN: (*speaking over*) You describe the Latvian Fatherland and Freedom Party as centre-right?

DC: We've announced the two major parties that we're going to be linking with. That is Law and Justice in Poland and the Czech ODS parties, that are parties of government, that are centre-right parties and that with us share the view that Europe needs to be reformed.

JN: Well, I . . .

DC: We ought to be dispersing power more widely, that we want a Europe about trade and cooperation, not about creating a superstate.

JN: Do you think that if you became prime minister, at some point, you would have a referendum on 'in or out'?

DC: No, I don't think that's right, because I don't want us to . . .

JN: You wouldn't want one?

DC: Well, I don't want us to leave the European Union.

JN: How deep is your commitment?

DC: Well, I thought that if being a member of the European Union was against the national interest, I would argue for us to come out.

JN: Can you see any circumstances in which it would be?

DC: Right now, I can't. I think we're right to be in this organisation, we want to be fighting to change it, and we're now going to have some partners to help us in that fight . . .

JN: What if you fail to change the Lisbon Treaty? Would you think that that made it not right.

DC: I don't go into things in life thinking I'm going to fail. I think . . .

JN: But there's no evidence that anybody else would be with you on that.

DC: Well, I don't accept that at all. Britain is a strong member of the European Union, and has a lot to bring, is an important trading partner. There's a very big negotiation coming up on the future funding of the European Union, and I don't want to see us increasing the funding at all, and it gives us enormous leverage in terms of making sure we get a good deal for Britain, and we build the sort of European Union that, not just the British Conservatives, but other parties in Europe want to see as well.

JN: David Cameron, thank you very much.

DC: Thank you.