



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE**

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TV INTERVIEW
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SUBJECT/S: Census hacking, Trump candidacy, Offshore detention.

KIERAN GILBERT: Joining me live from Geelong the Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles, I'll ask you the same question I asked Mr Beazley, is China the prime suspect in this?

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Well again it's too early to tell and I haven't been briefed on that, but Kieran the census has been a shambles from beginning to end. Whatever or whoever is responsible for the hacking last night, contingencies should have been put in place, there should have been an understanding about the amount of volume that was going to be on the system last night. It's been impossible to make contact with the census bureau over the public phone line over the last two days this has been absolutely hopeless and chaotic. The census of course is a critically important exercise for Australia's public policy, so the Government have a lot to answer for here, but last night was a shambles.

KIERAN GILBERT: Isn't it a bit much to be blaming the Government and the ABS for what looks like a foreign cyber attack?

RICHARD MARLES: Well the government should have had contingencies in place, we well understand those sorts of threats on our systems across the board but last night was a very important night and it's not just how the systems operated last night or performed last night, but it's also the lead up to this, the way in which the census has been handled, the ability for people to be able to contact with census to be able to deal with these issues, the way in which the letters were sent out with the twelve digit numbers to begin with, I mean my electorate officers had a number of people ring and ask questions and raise concerns about this as I know other MP's have had their electorate offices receive the same sort of calls. This has been handled terribly from beginning to end and the Government does have a lot to answer for here.

KIERAN GILBERT: Well there might have been some issues with phone lines and some other questions but just on the specific issue of the hacking, if it's a malicious attack by a foreign adversary in terms of this cyber attack, again, I ask you is it fair to be holding the ABS and the Government responsible here if it is a malicious attack?

RICHARD MARLES: Attacks on our systems, on our computer systems, in terms of Government are not new or surprising, they happen sadly frequently and there are contingencies and cyber defence mechanisms in place across the board. It would have been an obvious target it seems to me the census system last night and I'm surprised the government didn't have contingencies in place for that. It's not like this has come out of the blue there are cyber attacks on Australia's systems frequently and contingencies needed to have been put in place for last night given how significant last night was.

KIERAN GILBERT: The Chief Statistician says that people's information is safe are you reassured by that? Do you believe that?

RICHARD MARLES: Well I think it's really important the Government makes clear to the Australian people that that is the case and their private information is maintained. I mean I understand the basis under which all that is collected and we do understand the significance of the census and what it does in terms of providing data for governments in making public policy but the Australian people need to be given a sense of confidence that their private information will be handled with security and with care and in light of what's occurred last night the Government obviously need to make that very plain to the Australian people that security remains in place.

KIERAN GILBERT: Do you think some of your fellow parliamentarians went too far in saying they wouldn't be filling out the forms as required to?

RICHARD MARLES: Well look, from my point of view the forms need to be filled out, our concern from a Labor point of view is that this has been a shambles from beginning to end. The way in which the census has operated has been hopeless and it's not just a matter of the last few weeks this has been in place for a long time but the government has a lot to answer for here and that last night played out as it did, I think is a matter of real concern for how the Government has managed this.

KIERAN GILBERT: Very grave warning. On another front from Kim Beazley this morning when it comes to Trump, warning about the implications of a Trump presidency not just for the Australia/US alliance but for security in our region unnecessary confrontations and well even much more than that, warning about the implications on the Korean peninsula and so on, the nuclearisation of South Korea and other countries incidentally reported by another newspaper, the Fairfax papers today, what's your reaction to Mr Beazley's warning about the prospect of a Trump presidency?

RICHARD MARLES: Well firstly there is no person, I think, in the Australian system more eminent in their understanding of our relationship with the US than Kim Beazley and when Kim Beazley makes comments like these we are well to listen very carefully to what he has to say, it's also very important to understand as Kim

has made clear as well that our national security framework, our foreign policy settings have the US alliance very much at their centre and that's how it's going to be and Australia will work closely with whichever government is democratically elected in the United States and we do need to remember that particularly at this moment. It is really important that America maintain its presence in this region and in East Asia, it's really important that America maintains its allied relationships obviously with Australia but with countries like South Korea and Japan that is a critical element to stability in North East Asia and it is very important that they maintain a presence there and whatever government where elected in the United States it would be critical for Australia to continue to encourage and urge the Americans to play a role in this region. I think it's also important not to get ahead of ourselves in terms of who wins the election there is a lot of water to play out in the US process -

KIERAN GILBERT: It's a two horse race so there is a fair chance, well that's true but it is a two horse race, the individual concern is that republican nominee even being described as the most reckless US president in history by 50 Republican national security officials, republican national security officials, so Kim Beazley is obviously not on his own on this front, but I want to ask you about the intervention here, he says Australia would need to be immediate forceful and sustained in terms of interventions into the US if Trump does win and use our capacity in terms of intelligence sharing and joint facilities in this country as a ticket to the table to say look this is our opinion on this, this and this and do it immediately and forcefully he says.

RICHARD MARLES: The first point to make is that an American commentator within the context of the American election obviously stands in a different position to a representative or a parliamentarian in another country which has an allied relationship with the US and that is important for all of us within the Australian political system to understand. There is a temptation to walk down paths of hypotheticals here which we should be careful about, it is absolutely the case that we need to be putting the alliance first and foremost in terms of our relationships with the US no matter who wins and that does mean that if there are questions around America's ongoing presence within the region we should be very forceful within the alliance to make sure we encourage America to participate in our neck of the woods as we always have and that's obviously clear and we should be focused on, if you like, the policy questions here and the policy questions that have been raised are America's participation in allied relationships with countries like South Korea and Japan their presence in East Asia it is obviously in Australia's national interest for America to be here in that context and we should continue to argue that no matter who is in the White House.

KIERAN GILBERT: And my final question here relates to the leak of two thousand incident reports from Nauru, from the offshore detention facility there, this is being reported by the Guardian it shows routine cruelty and a disproportionate representation of children in these incident reports in terms of abuse and mistreatment, this is a real worry.

RICHARD MARLES: Well of course these are concerning reports there is no doubt about that, so the first point that really needs to be made is that Nauru, Australia has

obligations in terms of the facility on Nauru and those obligations should be ensuring that these facilities provide safe, dignified, humane refugee to the people within them. It's really important that transparency is maintained it's why we have argued for independent oversight and we have been really critical of the Governments lack of transparency in the running of Nauru over the last few years as and we have made it particularly the case in relation to children. In the event, through private members bills that we have been sponsoring, in the event that there is any abuse of children if we were in government we would be ensuring that it would be a mandatory -

KIERAN GILBERT: Doesn't that go to the core of the problem, but doesn't that go to the core of the problem of offshore processing the way Australia has it that it's a foreign jurisdiction, there is only so much you can do in terms of oversight.

RICHARD MARLES: I think that the Government could be talking to Nauru actively to arrange systems of independent oversight for the facility, now it's not clear to me that those conversations have ever occurred between the Australian Government and the Nauru Government around that question. You could put in place systems that require mandatory reporting of child abuse as we sought to do through private members bills in the Australian parliament so there are steps that can be taken here, but the final point Kieran is people need to be gotten off Nauru, there needs to be third country options found for those who are on Nauru and indeed Manus and in that the Government has wholly failed and of course as people's uncertainty continues and hope is removed you are going to see increasing acts of desperation. The Government needs to get on its skates and find third country resettlement options for those on Nauru and Manus.

KIERAN GILBERT: Mr Marles we are out of time, thanks for your time this morning.