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TV INTERVIEW  
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***SUBJECT/S: US Election 2016, Trump.***

**DAVID SPEERS:** With me now is the Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles for more on how Labor sees this decision of the American people. Thank you for your time. Let me go straight to it.

We know that Bill Shorten and others have been quite harshly critical of Donald Trump through the campaign. Can Labor see areas of agreement with Donald Trump, and what are they?

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE:** Well, firstly there needs to be an acknowledgement of the achievement of Donald Trump in winning the American presidency and a congratulation to him in doing that. I mean, lots, David, has been said across the political spectrum about Donald Trump during the course of this election campaign, but you ask 'are there areas of agreement?' I mean, of course there are.

We share a commitment to democracy and to democratic values around the world. That's something that the Trump administration, that Donald Trump, believes in.

We see it as absolutely important that America plays a role in the world, underpinning and underscoring a rules-based order, and I fully expect a Trump administration will do that in the future as well, and most importantly from an Australian perspective we absolutely are committed to the American alliance as the centerpiece of Australian foreign policy, and again I would fully expect a Trump administration to have a similar commitment to the Australian alliance.

**DAVID SPEERS:** So, a similar commitment to the Australian alliance. Would you, I mean, you expect that, everyone expects that. Would you like to hear that from Donald Trump as well, that this is an alliance, the Australian alliance, that he does respect, support, it is not one of those which he has suggested needs to see the other side, ie Australia, do more and pay more. I mean, he has been saying that about NATO, he's been saying that about Japan and South Korea, in particular.

Would you like to hear some further assurance from Donald Trump, the incoming President, on the Australian alliance?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, I think, firstly your observation is right. His comments on alliances that America has around the world haven't included those, hasn't included Australia. It's also important to note that there is a bipartisan commitment in Australia to increase defence spending, for example, and that is something which is well received by America.

I think what's important though for Australia, and it was going to be important no matter who won this election, is that now that we have the result that every aspect of the Australian system is working very feverishly to work with the new administration around issues that we need to advocate, and principal amongst those is advocating for an ongoing presence of America in the East Asian time zone. It is really critical.

It is a pity, I think, that AUSMIN, for example, has been cancelled this year. I mean, this is a time where we need to be working with the American system as closely as possible, and I'm sure the government will be seeking to do this, but the challenge now for the Turnbull Government is to make sure that it uses every avenue that it has in its diplomatic arsenal to be talking to the transition team of the Trump administration about Australia's issues in the context of the alliance, and a presence in East Asia is very important in that.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Well, let me go straight, though, to the immediate question, and certainly in your Defence portfolio, about what a Trump administration going to mean about our men and women, Australian Defence personnel, who are currently serving in the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and in Syria. Donald Trump has a very different view when it comes to working with Russia here, and we know Russia support for the Assad regime is very strong in Syria. Does this change the equation in terms of that particular conflict?

**RICHARD MARLES:** It's certainly something that we will need to be talking with the Americans about, but we have a shared commitment, I think, with America, which I don't think will change under a Trump administration, around contesting ISIL, around dealing with the question of fundamentalist radical Islamic extremism and terrorism around the world. That needs to be combated. We need to play our role in that, and we are doing that, and I think that the—

**DAVID SPEERS:** -But the specific question here is, is Australia willing, are you willing, to support the retention of the Assad regime in Syria?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, look, I don't think tonight is the moment to go into that. We are playing our part in relation to contesting Islamic State in Iraq, and indeed in what we are doing in relation to airstrikes in Syria. It's important that we are continuing to play a role.

We must continue the dialogue that we have with the US in respect of that going forward, and I'm sure that that will happen past January with the Trump administration. It's important that we play our part in critical global issues such as this, where Australia obviously has a stake, and it's important that we play our part in

a context of our relationship and our alliance with the US, and I think it is a matter of continuing to work that through and those conversations will happen. Now, you know, as I said there are a number of issues that we will need to advocate about in the context of the alliance and-

**DAVID SPEERS:** -Would you like to see some clarity around what the Trump administration, what its view is, because certainly, all we have heard from Donald Trump is that it's better to keep Bashar al-Assad in power, and that's the very strong Russian view, we know. Is that something that you would like to see a bit of clarity around, and where Australia stands on that as well, now?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Be it this issue or the range of foreign policy issues that we will engage in with America, of course clarity is really important, and that's why it's really critical that every effort is now made from an Australian point of view to be in Washington engaging very actively with the transition team for the Trump administration to advocate our position in the context of the alliance, and understand where America is going. That is really critical

It is in that context why I am disappointed that AUSMIN is not happening this year, but it's very important that the Turnbull government get it skates on. I'm sure they're going to do this and be over in Washington in force to make sure that we get clarity on the full range of issues, but that's to be expected with any incoming administration and it's just important that we do that and we would have needed to do that if Hillary Clinton would have won this election as well.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Let me ask you another Defence-related question here. Do you support, does the opposition support, the use of torture against terror suspects?

**RICHARD MARLES:** We don't support torture. Of course we don't. We are a party to international conventions in respect of that.

The question of dealing with international terrorism is clearly one where we need to act fairly vigorously but, you know, we are a party to a whole lot of human rights instruments around the world and one of those is the convention against torture, so of course we don't support that.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Would Australia, should Australia, object to a Trump administration embracing the use of such torture?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, it's important that we use our voice. I mean, these are hypothetical question in that the Trump administration doesn't exist yet, so I think it's important not to get ahead of ourselves, but in a general sense I guess what comes from that question is the alliance doesn't mean that Australia doesn't have a voice within the global community. We have maintained that over the course of more than 70 years in the context of the alliance. There are plenty of positions around the world where we have had a different view to America and we have expressed that and that's going to continue going forward.

Now, we have a very strong view in respect to torture, as you've just mentioned, and I don't want to ascribe any future intentions on the part of an American administration

which hasn't been sworn in yet, but we can certainly answer that in terms of what our position would be, but the alliance does not mean that we absolutely sign up to every single thing that America says and it never has, but it does mean that we play our part in a partnership as allies with the US our issues—

**DAVID SPEERS:** -[inaudible] and saying to a friend and ally what we think is-

**RICHARD MARLES:** -of course.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Yeah, exactly.

**RICHARD MARLES:** And we've done that over a range of issues in the past.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Let me ask you how you characterise the politics of this election outcome in the United States. What do you believe has caused this result?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, it's been an incredible election. There is no question about that, and I think we have seen both in this election and the Brexit vote in the UK results that have been unexpected and asked questions of politicians across the democratic world

I don't think this is an issue about policy, as such. I don't think this is an issue about the need for people to move more to the left or the right, because in fact when you look at this election with the Trump administration, the Trump victory, it goes across traditional boundaries in the US, as indeed the Brexit vote in the UK did, but what I think it does say is in a world where, there is a lot of pain but in a world where there is a media which allows people to see their politicians up close much more, the capacity to connect with people in an individual way I think is really critical.

I mean the lesson I draw from this as a practitioner of politics here in Australia is that I certainly think it is absolutely essential that in going about my business that I'm able to connect in a very personal way with my constituents, and I think those who are able to do that are the ones who end up being most successful and I reckon that's the lesson that I draw from what I've seen from what has been a remarkable year around the world.

**DAVID SPEERS:** That's a really interesting point, the ability to connect with the people you represent. I mean, clearly what we are seeing here is a rejection of the political class in the United States, the embrace of someone who is completely removed from that political class in many ways, has not served, has not been a part of that political class in many ways, rejection of all the media advice, editorializing in the lead up to this election result, all of that has been ignored certainly by the majority in the States that matter who have gone for Donald Trump. So, what is the key to connecting with the people you represent? I mean, you talk about how you do it and I think you're right in terms of what I've seen in your particular capacity. What's the key to that? What's the message to Australian politicians who may be looking at what's happened here in the United States, maybe looking at the recent election in Australia as well and may be feeling rather nervous about how the trends are moving under their feet in relation to the political establishment?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, first I don't think it is about policy. I think it is more about the way that we go about our business.

I don't particularly feel like I'm an oracle in relation to this. I don't have all the answers and I think part of this is that we do live in a very different media environment to what existed in the '80s and certainly prior to that. It is a 24-hour cycle, it is a world of social media.

I think there is a basic thing, though, which does go to the heart of democracy when you really think about it: when I ask someone to vote for me I think they expect to know who I am as a person. Not just the things that I stand for - that I think, does matter as well, people want to know what positions I'm going to advocate for when I get to Parliament – but they want to know who I am as this human being.

Now, projecting personal through the media is not an easy thing to do, and as I say, I learn how to do that every single day in this job, but I think the lesson we take from this year is that there is a premium on that now. People want to know exactly who it is, the actual person they are entrusting with the keys to their government, and you know, that actually was one of the founding principles of democracies, so in a sense we get back to that, but in a way I reckon a new media which is much brighter, which creates a much bigger glare on politicians, I think amplifies the abilities of those which can engage in that personal connection, and I think that's the key. You know, in the context of that you need to be brave in terms of what you are and what positions you put forward.

**DAVID SPEERS:** It's about using the media environment, using the media landscape, and I suppose like Donald Trump you've got your own TV show as well, right here on Sky News, and that certainly can't hurt your particular capacity. Let me ask you, finally, Richard Marles, more seriously and honestly, were you shocked by this result?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Look, I think this has been a surprise, as Brexit was a surprise as well, but the one thing I would say is that I didn't wake up this morning certain that Hillary Clinton was going to win.

I think what we have learnt with Brexit, but also in our own domestic politics, is that opinion polls are much less reliable now than they have ever been and that is something that we are all getting used to. I think there was a period 10 years ago where you had some certainty in the science of opinion polling and I just don't think that's the case anymore, and so in a sense before any election I reckon you've got to be ready for anything. This is not the result I thought was going to happen tonight, but I also came in to tonight thinking anything is possible and this is certainly a remarkable event.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles, appreciate you joining us tonight with the reaction to what is a huge story, thank you.