

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

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TELEVISION INTERVIEW
AM AGENDA
WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBUARY 2017**

SUBJECTS: *Peter Dutton; Visit of Prime Minister Netanyahu; South China Sea.*

KIERAN GILBERT: With me now on the program to discuss the issues of the day, including those comments from Peter Dutton on *The Bolt Report* last night it's the Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles. Mr Marles, thanks for your time.

It looks pretty clear that this is a message that the government wanted the US to receive, that if they renege on the deal with Manus and Nauru, well, those refugees that Australia was going to take from Costa Rica, that were going to go to the US, this was a deal done by Malcolm Turnbull to take the Costa Rican refugees, well they won't be taking those individuals.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, the comments last night by Peter Dutton were remarkable. I mean, firstly, you're right, it does appear as though this was a deal done by Malcolm Turnbull but, that's not what he said last year. In fact every time this was put to Malcolm Turnbull he said there was no deal in relation to the Costa Ricans-

GILBERT: They're saying they're saying it's not a quid pro quo, that this is part of a broader, when I said the deal I mean that was one that he did with the US to take the Costa Ricans last September. The government, though, argues it's part of a broader alliance relationship where both sides at various times take large numbers of people.

MARLES: Yeah, I agree that that's what they've argued, but it's totally evident that's not the case.

I mean, look, everyone knew it was a deal, and last night Peter Dutton, playing politics as always, belled the cat when he made it clear that it was contingent that taking people from Costa Rica was contingent on America taking those from Manus and Nauru, so clearly this was a deal and yet-

GILBERT: -Can it be argued though-

MARLES: -quid pro quo, one foot before the other, that is what happened last year. That's evidently what occurred and yet we have had a government which has been denying that from day one. This is a government which hasn't lacked transparency across the board since it was elected back in 2013. No more area of policy has it been more significantly done than here.

GILBERT: Can it be argued that the two deals were done separately, which is what the government says both publicly and privately, that's their point, but this could be you know, it looks to me like a shot across the bow of the US government who has been critical of the

other arrangements to take refugees from Manus and Nauru, so if they're if they're wanting to say if you renege, if you renege on that, well we will do the same.

MARLES: I think what's gone on here- I don't think that was Peter Dutton's intent. Last night I think Peter Dutton was playing politics as always, trying to chip Labor on the Malaysian arrangement, which is, you know, the government's own shame if we're if we're looking at their history on this whole issue, and in the process got himself into trouble and made it clear that in fact there was a deal. There had been from day one. It is contingent, and that's what became clear last night.

So, it's impossible for the government now to argue that this was not an arrangement, a quid pro quo, back then. Everyone in the industry knows that this has been the case, everyone in the sector, and now Peter Dutton has made it clear.

But I think there's another issue here, Kieran - what we are told that this is such a done deal that Julie Bishop doesn't even need to raise it with the American Vice President in her visit to Washington today, and yet if you look at Peter Dutton's comments clearly he's putting a question mark on this, so is this going ahead or not? I mean, is it enough of a done deal that we can be certain that people will be taken off Manus and Nauru or not?

The government has a whole lot of questions to answer now after Peter Dutton's stuff up last night.

GILBERT: I want to ask you about Netanyahu, this historic visit by the Israeli Prime Minister to Australia, the first time the Israeli PM has been here. Difficult meeting though for Bill Shorten to have, isn't it, given you've got some Labor Party icons and some of your most senior figures in recent history saying that Labor and Australia should recognize diplomatically, give formal diplomatic recognition to Palestine.

MARLES: Well, firstly it's not a difficult meeting. Indeed Bill and I met with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Israel in December. The question of settlements, for example, has been something that we have long been concerned about in terms of Israeli policy. We discussed that issue with Benjamin Netanyahu back in December and I've got no doubt that will occur again, as it should.

GILBERT: Your platform says, the Labor Party platform says, if there is not clear progress towards peace then you reserve the right to recognize the Palestinian state.

MARLES: Well, the platform says we'll review this in government, and this is a dynamic process and we should continually review the review this question-

GILBERT: -Well, there's not much sign of peace heading towards peace now given the legalization of previously illegal settlements that were done without permission of anyone.

MARLES: And that is a decision that we have criticized. As I say, we have always been critical of settlements. That is an issue that was raised with Benjamin Netanyahu by Bill Shorten and myself in December. I've got no doubt it will be raised again in the coming week.

There are Labor senior Labor figures who have given their opinion on this issue and they've got a right to do that. Look, our position, in terms of the question of recognition when we were last in government was that we saw a lasting peace, a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, as being the best way forward, and that was the basis on which recognition should occur.

It's a dynamic issue. We'll have a look at it again. We should do that. You know, senior figures have got their right to air their view.

GILBERT: Mr. Marles, finally, Angus Houston says I don't see in relation to the freedom of navigation ideas through the South China Sea within 12 nautical miles of the reclaimed

territory in the South China Sea of China, he says I don't see a need to put a ship in close proximity to an artificial island claimed by China. I think that that is something that would result in consequences we would rather avoid.

So it's a clear repudiation of the idea that we would undertake freedom of navigation within Chinese sovereign territory, as they see it.

MARLES: Well look, firstly, our view and our national interest in this issue is freedom of navigation, in as much as the UN Convention on the law of the sea provides for that, and it's important that Australia be able to navigate the South China Sea because of the amount of trade that we have going through it.

We have always asserted that what ought to be done is freedom of navigation operations which assert the UN Convention on the law of the sea, because that goes to Australia's national interest in this part of the world.

We've also made it clear we don't take sides on the various sovereignty claims which have existed within the South China Sea. We've been clear on that as well.

I make one other point, though, that the court of arbitration last year did make clear its view in respect of the artificial-

GILBERT: -So you disagree with Houston?

MARLES: That's not what I am saying. What I'm saying here is that our view is freedom of navigation ought to be done in pursuit of the UN Convention on the law of the sea because that goes to our national interest, and I don't think that's inconsistent with what Angus Houston said at all.

GILBERT: Mr. Marles, thanks for your time.