

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

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
SKY NEWS AM AGENDA  
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***SUBJECTS: China; foreign donations; Government split on climate policy***

**KIERAN GILBERT:** With me now, Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles. Before we get on to that climate debate, which is dominating a lot of the focus, I want to get your thoughts on James Clapper's comments last night alongside Kim Beazley, says that he's more optimistic about China and its potential role in the world as opposed to Russia. Do you agree with that assessment?

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE:** Yeah, I would agree with that assessment and I've spoken about this in the last few weeks as well. I mean China, is a growing economy. It's a growing power. It has regional aspirations.

The point I've been making is that those regional aspirations, having aspirations to be a regional power, are legitimate provided that this is occurring within a rules-based order. We should be supportive of the rise of China, a peaceful rise of China, within a rules-based global order, and that's obviously the direction that we should be trying to urge China to take. I think that seeking to restrict China's growth obviously makes no sense, and it's been very much to our advantage that they have grown.

**GILBERT:** The Fairfax papers, via Nick McKenzie, Richard Baker and their colleagues today have another story out of the Labor Party in relation to Chinese donations. Your respected colleague Anthony Byrne wants a full parliamentary inquiry into foreign donations and attempts at influence in our system. Do you think that that's a good idea?

**MARLES:** Well Bill Shorten wrote to the Prime Minister last week suggesting that these kinds of matters be referred to that committee to have a look at these issues and to scrutinize them-

**GILBERT:** -Including your own colleague, Senator Dastyari.

**MARLES:** Well, without going into individuals, I mean this has to be done across the board and only makes sense if we're having a review across the board. You only need to look at what's going on in the US and the concerns that are being expressed

there about the interference of one country in another's elections to know that this is a really serious issue, and we need-

**GILBERT:** -Does this worry you, this New South Wales case of the former Senate candidate?

**MARLES:** The NSW Party will deal with that.

Foreign intervention in our elections is a concern. It's obviously a concern. It needs to be dealt with seriously, and I think this committee does have a role to play, and certainly Anthony Byrne is as respected as any on that committee and so I certainly listen to his comments very carefully, and as I say Bill Shorten wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting a joint approach in regard to this last week.

Let's also be clear about this, Kieran: there is one party, the Labor Party, which at the moment has a proposition in this parliament to ban foreign donations, to reduce the threshold in terms of disclosure about donations, which would increase transparency within our system. That ought to be supported by the Government and we'd want them to come and join us in doing it.

**GILBERT:** You've heard the Energy Minister this morning playing down discussions about the conflict within the party. He says it was constructive-

**MARLES:** -Hard Job.

**GILBERT:** Sure, but you'd welcome that wouldn't you? I mean this is about bipartisanship. Surely you want the national interests to prevail here not just your own political interests.

**MARLES:** Well, of course we want the national interest to prevail.

**GILBERT:** Doesn't sound like it.

**MARLES:** Of course we want the national interest to prevail.

**GILBERT:** The way Mark Butler and others have been commenting, referring to Tony Abbott endlessly, if you wanted bipartisanship wouldn't you look for common ground?

**MARLES:** Bipartisanship is fine, but before we get there the Liberal Party and the National Party have to come to a common position. I mean, you can't have bipartisanship when one party here is completely split.

I mean I hate to say this, but we've seen this script before and the idea that the media has been sent detailed lists of who spoke, how many people spoke in favour or against, says everything about how utterly divided this party room is and the respect which is being shown towards the Prime Minister.

I make this other point: remember back in 2009, Kieran, this Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, staked his leadership on the question of a market-based

mechanism dealing with questions of emissions within our economy. Can anyone seriously imagine Malcolm Turnbull today staking his leadership on a question of principle now? I mean it is a laughable prospect.

He is being treated with the respect that he deserves by his party room and that's not much respect at all.

**GILBERT:** But in relation to the Labor position on this moving ahead, surely it's in your own interests as well as the national interest to try and come up with some common ground here?

**MARLES:** Well, we're happy to try and talk about that, but at the end of the day what you need is consistent positions here. Our position in relation to dealing with climate change, dealing with emissions within our economy -

**GILBERT:** -But you're already drawing a line in the sand when it comes to coal. Why would you do that? If there is a market investment, if there is an energy company that wants to make that investment, why would you say 'No, this should not be incentivised'?

**MARLES:** We're not saying that companies can't make their own investments in relation to this if they want to. The question is whether or not public money is put in play in relation to that, and as the Finkel report says -

**GILBERT:** -But if emissions are low enough, why not?

**MARLES:** But as the Finkel report makes clear it would it would be a strange thing indeed to provide incentives for coal in the future. I mean, that that comes out of the Finkel report.

We have been very clear about embracing a market-based mechanism for as long as I've been involved in politics. We've been very clear about an emissions target, a reduction target across the economy, and we've been very clear in relation to a target in respect of renewable energy. We have a consistent position on this which would have Australia playing its part in the world in dealing with what is an enormous challenge for all of us.

If the Government wants to actually join us on this - I mean we know that the pea of a heart that is inside Malcolm Turnbull previously actually supported this idea - we're happy for them to work with us, but before we talk about that right now the Government have got to get their act together, and what we saw yesterday was a shemozzle.

**GILBERT:** Mr Marles, thanks for your time.

**ENDS**