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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TV INTERVIEW  
SKY NEWS - AM AGENDA  
WEDNESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2017**

***SUBJECTS: Julie Bishop and Australia's relationship with New Zealand***

**HOST:** Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles here now, heard the interview with Julie Bishop: unrepentant, says Penny Wong instigated the whole thing.

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE:** Well, this is an astounding set of events Kieran. Yesterday our Foreign Minister goes out and says that she can only work with New Zealand depending on who the people of New Zealand elect in coming months. I mean, that is what she said yesterday.

That is an unprecedented step for our Foreign Minister to take, and this morning in an interview with you, she doubles down. I mean, this is unhinged, desperate action in the face of what's unfolded in relation to Barnaby Joyce.

Anybody who has done a modicum of diplomacy and foreign policy knows that she crossed an absolute red line yesterday when she said that our relationship with New Zealand was not above party politics, but in fact was in her mind something that was partisan. It is utterly unacceptable.

**HOST:** You say she doubled down. She did in terms of her criticism of Penny Wong, but don't you think that she backed down from that assertion that they would find it hard to trust the Labour Party? She said she accepts Jacinda Ardern at her word.

**MARLES:** And I note she actually didn't answer the question when you said "you can work with the Labour Party in New Zealand", and what I saw this morning was a Foreign Minister who was unrepentant. I mean when you put the question to her there was no remorse whatsoever. She doesn't think she did anything wrong yesterday.

Now, this is a desperate government. It is a desperate foreign minister who has crossed an absolute red line, broken a golden rule of diplomacy. Our relationship-

**HOST:** -Another golden rule is that you don't consult other members of other parliaments in terms of a domestic policy issue. You'd accept that?

**MARLES:** Well, I think all that has gone on, if you're referring to Penny Wong's staff is that people across the ditch have had a gossip in the aftermath of what occurred with Scott Ludlam, and frankly I think you'd agree that was the only thing that anyone was talking about. But there was no procurement of questions in the way that's being alleged by the Foreign Minister-

**HOST:** -But gossip between two mates across the ditch is one thing, but you've got a Member of Parliament and the Chief of Staff of the Leader of the Labor Party in the Senate, both who used to work in Helen Clark's office.

**MARLES:** So two mates across the ditch having a gossip.

**HOST:** If there is any link to questions in the parliament?

**MARLES:** There is no link. And that's what's been absolutely clearly stated by Penny Wong today. So that's what you've got on that side and that's the height of the accusation.

What we've got with the Foreign Minister, though, is absolutely, overtly, and unrepentantly going out there and saying our relationship with New Zealand is dependent upon who gets elected in that country in the next month.

And more than that, Kieran, she said in respect of the Interior Minister that she didn't accept his account of why the information about Barnaby Joyce was ultimately released. She is absolutely going out there saying she does not accept the account of an Interior Minister of a Five Eyes nation. This is our Foreign Minister saying this.

This is unhinged, unprofessional, appalling conduct by our Foreign Minister, and there is absolutely no remorse whatsoever.

**HOST:** The Labour Party and Labour leader has expressed disappointment that these questions were put in the first place, that her MP shouldn't have been engaged in them anyway, and that's the point that Julie Bishop also argued this morning.

**MARLES:** Ultimately that is a matter for the Labour Party in New Zealand. But what is absolutely clear-

**HOST:** -Why isn't it a matter for our Parliament as well, if someone's seeking to have some impact from another Parliament?

**MARLES:** Firstly, as I read the comments of the member of parliament in New Zealand he wasn't seeking to have an impact here in Australia, but what you cannot escape from here is the actions of our own Foreign Minister.

What was really clear to me when I was engaged in foreign policy when we were last in government is that our relationship with New Zealand is as close as any two

countries in the world. It transcends party politics. Murray McCully, the Conservative Foreign Minister from New Zealand, and I were good friends, worked with each other, trusted each other, acted on the basis of faith. We're now hearing from our Foreign Minister that it's all conditional: the relationship with New Zealand is now conditional on who is elected to Parliament—

**HOST:** -But this Labour Member of Parliament, though, suggests that it is just flying it up the flagpole to find out the information in relation to Australia-New Zealand citizenship immediately after the controversy is here, there's no link at all, and you accept that?

**MARLES:** Well, that's what he has said.

**HOST:** You believe it.

**MARLES:** Absolutely, I believe it. That's what he has said-

**HOST:** -Coincidental?

**MARLES:** He has said that he was asking the question in general terms, and more to the point the Interior Minister in New Zealand said it was not that question which led to the release of the information - it was inquiries from the Australian media. That's what has gone on over there.

There is no question of whether or not we accept or don't accept what the Foreign Minister said. It was overt, it was clear and this morning she doubled down.

**HOST:** Do you really think it would have any sort of damage between the two nations? It's the closest bilateral relationship we have with any country, almost like siblings, and I put it to Julie Bishop she wouldn't have raised it with any other country. She wouldn't. She genuinely disagreed with that, but it's hard to see her asking that question of any other country, but in that context do you really think it's going to have any adverse ramifications? Surely they'll fix it in the meeting if they-

**MARLES:** -And the answer to that question is: of course. Our relationship with New Zealand is extremely tight and I've got no doubt in the context of our relations with New Zealand this blows over in an instant.

What doesn't blow over is the conduct of our own Foreign Minister. I mean, what Julie Bishop cannot walk away from is the way in which he's behaved. I mean, that is what will linger. It's the competencies and the actions of our own Foreign Minister and how she goes about diplomacy in this world. That's what will stay.

Of course we're going to be friends with New Zealand. We're as close with New Zealand as any country in the world, and that will continue to be the case.

But we now have seen what Julie Bishop will do in terms of trashing the foundations of our relationship with the closest country we have in order to pursue a political agenda here, and foreign ministers ought to be above that. This Foreign Minister is not.

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

**MARLES:** Thanks, Kieran.

***ENDS***