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SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TV INTERVIEW  
SKY NEWS LIVE - THE MORNING SHIFT  
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***SUBJECTS: North Korea***

**HOST:** And we're going to go live to now to Geelong, where Labor's Defence spokesman, Richard Marles, joins us this morning.

Good morning. You no doubt had a listen to what the Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, had to say there. What is Labor's reaction to this very provocative action by North Korea?

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE:** Well, I did hear Julie Bishop's interview, and we agree with the content of that. This is a very provocative action on the part of North Korea, as you said. It needs to be condemned in the strongest possible terms, and we certainly do that. It's in breach of the UN Security Council resolutions which have been passed, obviously with the support of both Russia and China, so it's very important that the world is unanimous in its condemnation of what North Korea has done. In sending this missile over Japan, it is unquestionably a dangerous escalation of this whole event.

**HOST:** Does it surprise you that Japan did not attempt to shoot this missile down, or does it make sense in terms of if they make a decision that it's not going to harm anything that they can essentially collect information about the capability of North Korea by letting it sail over northern Japan?

**MARLES:** Well, with all of these questions, the initial assessment is whether or not there is a threat or a danger involved in whatever is heading in your direction. If you assess that there is no danger, well that's going to determine the outcome of how you react to it, and I think that's what's occurred here in relation to the way in which Japan have gone about their business. There may be something in being able to collect what evidence there is and getting intelligence off that, but I think the principle decision that Japan made was probably based on the idea that this didn't pose a threat.

**HOST:** So, what happens next, in terms of this? It does suggest that Donald Trump promising fire and fury is having pretty negligible effect on North Korea, doesn't it?

**MARLES:** Again, I agree with what the Foreign Minister said about the sanctions. I think the real development over the last development over the last few weeks has been the Security Council resolution, and indeed China indicating that they're going to tighten their sanctions on North Korea, particularly in respect of importing from North Korea commodities which in turn would give North Korea, or have in the past given North Korea, important currency, access to hard currency. I've been critical of China actually increasing those imports earlier this year, so their announcement that they are going to have those sort of sanctions going forward I think is very significant, and we do need to give time for those sanctions to bite.

But the game was always about trying to make sure that the edge in respect of North Korea can be hardened, but importantly that China be engaged. They have a particular relationship with North Korea. They have a particular role to play, and we have seen positive and encouraging steps over the last few weeks from China in terms of their desire to play more of a role. I think that's where hope lies.

**HOST:** Do you think that there's any prospect of regime change within North Korea, of some sort of internal, China-backed coup in some way, that they, China, in some way could have some influence on North Korea inside the country to try and change the direction in which they're going at the moment?

**MARLES:** I don't think that is the focus of international effort. I don't think it's the focus of Chinese effort, certainly not the focus of the effort of allies. It's really about trying to get to a point where North Korea stops acting in breach of the international obligations and applying as much pressure to that regime as possible to convince them to change the way in which they're going about their business, and I think that we need to use every possible lever at our disposal in respect of that to try and bring about that change.

Now, the point that the whole world has been making for quite a while is that a lot of those levers are in the hands of the Chinese, and they need to pull them, and so it is encouraging that over the last few weeks we've seen greater action from China in relation to this, and I do hope that given time that will bite and we see change.

**HOST:** OK, and just finally, is now the time to have a closer look at a missile defence system for Australia, as Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott have suggested? Clearly a favourite there for former prime ministers. A lot of people say it would be too expensive, it would take too long, it would be potentially a bit of a white elephant, but do today's action by North Korea suggest we need to take a second look?

**MARLES:** These are issues which are worth exploring. We, obviously, from the Labor and the Opposition point of view, want to understand what's practical in this space. I would make the point, ultimately, that there is a nuclear deterrent in place from the United States, which would apply to any action that North Korea took in respect of Australia, and I think we're a fair way down the list in terms of targets on the part of North Korea anyway, and ultimately I suspect that's going to be the most important measure that exists to take out of the mind of North Korea any idea that

they would fire a missile in the direction of ourselves. I don't think that that is a likely prospect, and I do think that our alliance with the United States is what is fundamentally critical in terms of providing us that protection.

**HOST:** OK, well, the Prime Minister has just confirmed what the Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, mentioned in that interview earlier, obviously the national security committee of Cabinet is meeting in Canberra later today, so no doubt there's be further updates, but thank you very much for your time in Geelong today, Richard Marles.

**MARLES:** Pleasure, Sam. Thank you.

***ENDS***