



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TV INTERVIEW
SKY NEWS LIVE AM AGENDA
THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY 2018**

SUBJECTS: TPP; Annual Curtin Lecture

KIERAN GILBERT: Let's go live now to Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles, you heard the Treasurer he says Labor would need economic modelling to put your pants on, what do you say to that, that this is all common sense, you should get onboard?

RICHARD MARLES: Well, you know I heard the Treasurer's interview and there's a lot of politics in that, but it doesn't bear much relationship with the truth. I mean, if you look at Labor's history and how we go about things right now, we have always been in favour of trade liberalisation, we have a very proud history in respect of that. I mean, the TPP itself, Kieran, really is the practical trade manifestation of APEC and the Hawke/Keating Government was absolutely instrumental in having APEC established. So there's no doubt that Labor supports trade liberalisation, we understand that as a middle power, a relatively small population, we need to be a trading nation in order to have the living standards in this country that people would expect, we're very clear on that. But trade deals are deals, and it's not just a matter of going along and signing up to anything, you've got to get the best deals, both in terms of making sure that jobs at home - existing jobs - at home are protected, and that the jobs that are promised by trade deals are actually realised and all we're saying is that that effort needs to be put in to make sure we get the very best deals we can.

GILBERT: In relation to the broader view though, a similar question that I put to the Treasurer, I'm interested in your thoughts on the importance of this as an arrangement for arguing that agenda of trade liberalisation in the face of quite strong forces of protectionism, as we've seen just in the last 24 hours out of the Oval Office. But not just in the US, out of Britain as well as it prepares to leave the EU.

MARLES: Well as I indicated, we understand very clearly that trade is fundamentally important to the economic future of Australia given the size of the country. And in that sense we're in a very different situation to United States which has a domestic market of hundreds of millions of people, or even England which is far bigger country than our own. But for us, in order to maintain the living standards that we've come to expect we're going to need to be a trading nation, so we

understand that, and we understand the importance of that, and it's why we want to make sure that whatever trade deals we ultimately sign as nation are the best deals possible. I mean it is common sense to be engaging in trade deals, but it's not enough to stop there as the Treasurer did in his interview with you Kieran, you've actually got to go and make sure that the deals that you do are good deals, and that's what we're saying needs to happen here. Which is why we think there should be independent economic modelling by the Productivity Commission of any prospective trade deal to ensure that the deal that is actually signed - as common sense as it is that you would do a deal - the actual deal that is being signed is one which benefits jobs in our country.

GILBERT: Just turning attention now to a speech you're going to give, I think, later in the day as Shadow Defence Minister, a broader, strategic view and you're going to argue that Australia needs greater clarity in its sense of national mission, that there are some blind spots in defence and foreign policy. What exactly do you mean, what are the points you're going to make today?

MARLES: Well, Kieran I think that over the period since Federation we've done very well in security and foreign policy, we're well-regarded around the world, we have very high standing. But as I've looked at the way in which other countries have gone about their business, and I've seen most countries in the world in fact, hundreds of countries in terms of how they have gone about their business, I do think that there is an argument to say that our sense of national mission could be stronger, needs to be stronger, and needs to be clearer. It's about understanding the situation that we're in, the size of the country that we are, the place in the world that we are - we're in the East Asian Time Zone. Unlike a European country as a member of the EU or a African country as a member of the African Union, other than New Zealand we don't have a group of countries that we operate with and so the way in which we plot our course in the world is something that we really have to determine ourselves. And what that means is, in working it out ourselves, we need to be strong learners, we need to be in the great councils of the world to understand what's going on, and that means we need to play big and we need to be taken seriously.

Now, none of what I've said there is rocket science. But as soon as you get to the point of understanding that's a key part of how our circumstances are, and how we're going to go about our business, well then immediately you think, in a region like the Pacific where we are expected to take responsibility, we simply have to and right now we don't have a clear vision for the Pacific going forward and that I think is an example of blind spot that needs to be dealt with. So it's not that we've been getting it radically wrong -

GILBERT: Sure.

MARLES: - but it is that there are blind spots and we need to rectify them.

GILBERT: And you talk about that in the context of working with US in the age of Donald Trump and also the rise of China, what do you mean by those two particular issues?

MARLES: Well, again in the East Asian Time Zone what we have is, I think, a period of change. When you look at North Korea, certainly, a period of

volatility. And again we want to be very clear about what our national mission is and where we're going in order to navigate those waters. To deal with the question of our relationship with China, in the context of China becoming a rising power and seeking to extend its influence within the region and around the world in a way that we've not seen before in quite the same way, the South China Sea is an example of that. Now much of China's growth, in economic growth and power is obviously legitimate, but it is - we've got to be very clear about where we stand in that relationship. Equally in terms of the United States, it's critically important I think that we encourage the United States to remain a vigorous and vibrant part of the East Asian Time Zone. They have been since the Second World War, the guarantor of a rules-based order in our region and around the world; we want to see America continue to be that, and again that means that we've got to play our part in encouraging the US to stay.

I go back to that blind spot in the Pacific, I think were we to articulate a plan for the Pacific, it would demonstrate to the United States that we are a reliable partner - which we clearly are right now - but we're also a partner willing to share the burden of strategic thought and I actually think that's something that would encourage the US to stay, and I absolutely believe they will.

GILBERT: Richard Marles, appreciate it, we'll talk to you soon.

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