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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TV INTERVIEW
SKY NEWS LIVE
AM AGENDA
WEDNESDAY, 28 MARCH 2018**

SUBJECTS: Russia; cricket

HOST: With me now, the Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles. Thanks so much for your time. What sort of retaliation should we expect from Russia?

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Oh well we will wait and see what Russia do. I mean they've made it clear that they're going to act in some way, but the Government's made the right decision here. There are countries all around the world who are acting in solidarity with Britain. It seems very clear the Russian state have been a part of this. This is a breach of British sovereignty. It's a reckless action in terms of how other members of the public could have been impacted by it, and as the Foreign Minister said yesterday it's the first time we've seen a chemical weapon used in Europe since the Second World War. So, by any measure this is a very serious matter and it's right that we stand in solidarity with the United Kingdom.

HOST: It was laughable for the Ambassador to suggest they're career diplomats, but I guess he wasn't really going to say anything else was he, in that sense.

MARLES: I think he said what you would expect the Russian ambassador to say, but we've taken the right steps here to be expelling two people who are undisclosed intelligence officers.

It's important that we make our stand with the United Kingdom. It is a very serious matter which has occurred here and we stand with countries all around the world in expressing our disapproval to Russia about what's occurred.

HOST: One of the things that I spoke to the Foreign Minister about which I find interesting in this is the speed with which our Government and our intelligence agencies, security agencies, could point the finger at these two individuals.

Obviously this is a bit of a message more broadly, that you might think you're acting covertly in this country but we're across it.

MARLES: We often say this, and I guess it's hard for the public to know, but one of the privileges I've had in the role that I've had over the years is to see our security agencies work, and to see that up close, and when we say they are amongst the best in the world it's absolutely the case. We are very lucky to have these agencies protecting us and looking after us and it's no surprise to me that they would have a very clear hand on what's going on in this country.

HOST: A couple of other issues: we've seen the Foreign Minister suggest that she's had reaction from the diplomatic corps, in fact, about the cricket controversy. Cricket Australia is responding. It's amazing how much passion there has been in terms of the response to this.

MARLES: Well, this is quite literally bigger than cricket, and it doesn't surprise me at all that the Foreign Minister would have had that reaction. This is the most high-profile sporting team that we have. These are amongst the highest-profile Australians abroad, but unlike actors or business people, even some sports people, everything Australian cricket team does it does in the name of Australia. They succeed in the name of Australia, but they've cheated in the name of Australia, and it is in that sense that it really does reflect upon all of us, which is why it's so important that this is dealt with with the seriousness it deserves.

I'm pleased that Cricket Australia are acting in the way they are in terms of the urgency of needing to have a position before the Test starts on Friday. I guess I would make one point, which is that if you have learned anything in the last 10 years in public life every detail of what occurred in that change room is going to become public one way or another. It's really important that Cricket Australia do ultimately take the time to do the full investigation and make sure that they get this right.

HOST: Well, one thing that James Sutherland did get right this morning, I think, is a reference to the young children who of course loved the game and who look up to individuals like those who are who are now going to be heading home.

MARLES: And what I think is interesting, I mean, you and I, Kieran, are both cricket fans, so I suspect we've both felt about this in a pretty passionate way, but people who are not cricket fans have taken an interest in this and I've certainly had conversations with my kids about what is going on here, why their heroes are acting in this way, what's fair and what's not and how they should be treated. This is an issue which is I think deeply cultural and goes through a question of what's right and wrong, but goes or question of what is right and wrong in the name of Australia and that's why it's really important we get this right.

HOST: Yeah I remember as a young kid seeing the underarm incident and that shaped the view and the condemnation of that at the time is part of a lesson, I guess, for young people at that point, but I think this could also be a key point for

not just that sport but others just say well it's not just about winning, it's how you carry yourself.

MARLES: and we say that to kids when they go out and play sport. I certainly do with mine, and you want them to be competitive and part of what sports about is learning about competition, enjoying competition, but sport is obviously bigger than that because it's about how we relate to each other as human beings, and like you I can remember that day absolutely clearly. Trevor Chappell has said in recent days that it's haunted his life ever since. I think Greg Chappell has said it's his biggest regret from his time in cricket. Actually, what they did was legal. It was it was not in the spirit of cricket, but it was legal. What we've seen in this scandal is something which goes beyond the laws of cricket, which is why it's so serious.

HOST: Richard Marles, thanks as always. Appreciate it.