

Australian
Labor



TRANSCRIPT

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TV INTERVIEW
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SUBJECT/S: Liberal leaks and cabinet division; National security; Immigration

KIERAN GILBERT: Front bencher Jamie Briggs and Labor's Richard Marles. Gentlemen it's extraordinary Sepp Blatter survived seventeen years, Jamie first to you, it's quite unbelievable the first reaction not to quit four days ago.

JAMIE BRIGGS, ASSISTANT INFRASTRUCTURE MINISTER: Well look, I think this is obviously a matter for FIFA but it's important their administration is above repute and obviously there are questions, quite clearly there are serious question about the quality of the administration that Mr Blatter led, it seems as Prince William put it the other day to be their IOC moment and I think it's important for soccer fans across the globe that this be resolved as fully as possible and clearly if the FBI has taken the amount of interest that it has, I suspect these, these instances of inappropriate behaviour or alleged corruption will be exposed and that's the right and proper thing to happen because obviously this is a well-supported sport right across the globe and people want to ensure that they have got faith that it's being administered properly.

GILBERT: Yeah indeed and it's not like, but I guess the point is Richard that these allegations are new. Obviously the FBI's role in it is new but there's been a stench around FIFA for a long time.

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION: That's right I mean these are not new allegations and I think the step that Sepp Blatter has taken in the last twenty four hours is perhaps the most sensible move he has made in some time. I mean this is arguably really the most important sport in the world and I think all of us here are sports fans and the drama and the joy of sport is knowing that it's clean and you can believe in what you're actually watching on the screen, what you're seeing on the field and I think that's why I think it's so important that corruption in sport has no place and is stamped out and I think

it's a very important move that Sepp Blatter has made and this gives FIFA the opportunity to do the reform it needs to do.

GILBERT: Ok, I want to play you a comment that Julie Bishop has made after her talks in Paris with French, with international colleagues, foreign ministers in relation to the IS threat but she's been asked about those cabinet leaks once again, she was on ABC radio.

JULIE BISHOP, FOREIGN MINISTER: I'm not going into the detail of what I said in the cabinet meeting I am just pointing out that the reporting of the conversations is not necessarily accurate but my position is that there are a number of legal consequences that have to be worked through that's why there should be a public discussion about this, there are examples from other countries including the United Kingdom, Canada the United States, other countries are looking at this issue of citizenship, it's a serious matter and deserves serious public consideration.

GILBERT: The Foreign Minister there in her ABC interview this morning, Jamie Briggs I guess it just an unhelpful ongoing distraction those leaks, she's adamant her conscience is clear, the PM she said knows she was not responsible for those leaks to Peter Hartcher, I guess she wants the focus as the Government does on the national security response, but those leaks from Cabinet obviously distracted from your broader messages didn't it?

BRIGGS: No I don't think that's right, I think ultimately the Australian people look at the Coalition for two things and that is to ensure their national security and ensure their economic security and we are doing both. These changes will strengthen our national security at a time when we face an unprecedented threat, they are sensible changes, they are well supported in the community -

GILBERT: Which part though, the ones relating to dual nationals or the sole citizenship?

BRIGGS: Absolutely and the proposals we are putting through and we will take to Parliament in the coming weeks are supported very strongly by the party room with a strong support of the Prime Minister and the party room yesterday these very strong support from the Prime Minister on this issue.

GILBERT: What about that specific issue on sole citizens though that's gone to the discussion paper, do you think, do you think, that the Government should go further like Dan Tehan and other have been arguing?

BRIGGS: Well look I think the Government will put forward a series of propositions and I think it's good that the back benchers are engaging in what is a very serious concern of the community and they are engaging in a very strong and unified voice. Now people are entitled to have a different view in these debates, however as I say, the Prime Minister is very conscious that he has a grave responsibility and that is to protect the Australian people. He is doing as we want him to, as the leader of the Government exactly what the Australia people expect him to do. He is ensuring our domestic security, he is ensuring our national security, he is ensuring our economic

security with a Budget which has instilled confidence, which is about growing the economy and ensuring that Australia is a stronger and safer place.

GILBERT: This is not the first ministry to leak, and if you look at the outcome it's as Tony Abbott would hope for it, a dual national response and then you know, cracking down on dual nationals and then putting the other component out for public discussion. It makes him look like he is leading the charge on this which I guess would be welcomed in the electorate.

MARLES: Well I think to make out an argument that Cabinet leaks are somehow a good thing is a big stretch; it's never a good thing. Look on this issue of national security what we're seeing from the Coalition is an unedifying all in brawl, that's the fact of the matter, I mean they are all over the place. There is more intrigue inside the Cabinet than a John Grisham novel, although it probably wouldn't be one of its best sellers and what you've got here is 40 backbenchers attempting to stand over the Cabinet, you've got Cory Bernardi coming out one imagines as the voice of reason, you've got Scott Morrison taking one view into Cabinet and then an alternative view a week later when it seems like the whole thing has turned into a huge mess. I mean we want to have a sensible conversation with the Government about this issue, we think there is an important principle to support here, but who on earth would know who to actually talk to at the moment. I mean on a national security issue this is a government which is all over the place and the fact that we are seeing these sorts of leaks coming out of the Cabinet is an enormous concern for the Australian people, nothing is stable here.

GILBERT: But you still haven't said, has Labor given a clear indication -

BRIGGS: That's right, that's right...

GILBERT: I'll come to Jamie in a tick but have you responded on the dual citizenship though, what Labor would do?

MARLES: Well we have given a very clear indication based on what information is actually out there and it's this Kieran, there is a principle in our law right now that if you take up arms against Australia you lose your citizenship. Now that is cast in the context of a traditional state on state conflict, we are absolutely supportive of updating that principle to take into account the phenomenon of an organisation like IS, we want to do that bearing in mind we don't render any one stateless, now we are happy, now that's a pretty clear position and given what information we've got on the public record it's kind of impossible to go into any more detail because we don't know what the detail is, we are happy to have that conversation.

GILBERT: Let's get Jamie's response to that, because that sounds reasonable doesn't it?

BRIGGS: We don't know where Labor is -

MARLES: Well you do now, I've just told you.

BRIGGS: They've got what will be a blood bath at national conference on this issue, on boats, which Richard of course is the poor billy in the middle who's going to be in-between trying to drag the left to a sensible position and he has got no chance of being able to do that because Richard actually knows that the best way to stop boats arriving is to have the policy that we've implemented, he knows that the rest of the party doesn't.

MARLES: We're talking about citizenship?

BRIGGS: The Labor Party on national security are weak they always have been and they always will be because they have run to the left, that is the reality.

GILBERT: You're saying the Labor Party or the left of the Labor Party?

BRIGGS: The Labor Party is weak on national security they always have been and they always will be, the Australian people know they can trust the Coalition to protect their national security, because we believe in stronger border protection, we believe in stronger national security laws to ensure that our people are protected.

GILBERT: What about international obligations and the statelessness convention which we signed in 1973, do you support that was well?

BRIGGS: You know what I support? Making sure that our people are safe - that's what I support.

GILBERT: Even if you breach an international convention?

BRIGGS: Well no, I think the convention that we have with the Australia people is to ensure that they are safe, absolutely that is the number one obligation that we have as parliamentarians in this place, our rule of law -

GILBERT: International law is law and shouldn't you respect the rule of law in that process?

BRIGGS: What's the rule of law for people who are killed by people acting outside the law? We have an obligation to our people to make sure that they are safe and we are facing an unprecedented threat and we will not stand by and watch what is an unprecedented threat to our people take the lives of innocents because of some legal principle that people on the left think that we should abide by.

GILBERT: And the electorate you would think every time the Prime Minister acts in fact I know this from a senior Liberal, that the view of the electorate in terms of their polling, their barometer, is every time the Prime Minister acts, the pundits might think that his gone a fair way but the electorate in general terms want him to go further.

MARLES: Keeping Australians safe is the first obligation of any government and the comments that Jamie makes about the respective merits of Labor and Liberal in relation to national security are absolute rot, the fact of the matter is we approach this or we would like to approach this or would like to on a bipartisan basis and when it comes to national security the way in which we ought to be acting is in a calm, in a

methodical way, not beefing up the rhetoric but to listen to our national security agencies take their advice and work out what steps need to be taken and some of them may well be difficult steps in order to keep us as safe as possible and that's the path that Labor would want to go down and that's the conversation that Labor would want to have with the Government, but right now who on earth do we talk to? Do we talk to the 40 back benchers? Do we talk to Cory Bernardi? Do we talk to the former immigration minister? Do we talk to the Prime Minister? Who would know?

GILBERT: Back in just a moment with Jamie Briggs and Richard Marles.

GILBERT: This is AM Agenda thanks for your company with me now is Liberal front bencher Jamie Briggs and Labor front bencher Richard Marles, we are going to have a look this upcoming TV series called the Killing Season about the Rudd Gillard era, this was Ed Husic one of our regulars on AM Agenda and he was asked about this this morning.

Clip of Ed Husic shown

GILBERT: So Ed Husic trying to liken this and play it down, Richard first to you before I come to Jamie, I guess this is going to bring up some old wounds though isn't it?

MARLES: Well I think it may well be a painful thing for a number of us to watch in terms of reminding us of the past, but the point that I want to make to you know is that it is well and truly in the past and the lesson that comes from that era is that if you don't present to the Australian people as a unified team you're going to suffer the consequences and what you have seen from Labor since the last election is a caucus room which is completely behind its leader and we will be that right through to the election and I'd ask people as they watch this to bare that in mind that there is a very different Labor Party now and one that is utterly unified and in fact if you want to find a lack of unity in this building you now look to the Government benches, to the Coalition to see the current version, the next episode of this drama.

GILBERT: Jamie Briggs this TV series do you think most people are really sick of Rudd Gillard or do you think there's relevance, I guess you do.

BRIGGS: Well I mean the problem for Ed is that Neighbours is still on TV and this show is still happening, this show is not about Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard, they are figures from the past, but this show is about Bill Shorten and the reality in the next couple of weeks is that Bill Shorten and a couple of his very senior members of the leadership team are going to be absolutely exposed for who they are, they are people who cannot be trusted. Kevin Rudd couldn't trust Bill Shorten and then Julia Gillard couldn't trust Bill Shorten and the Australia people can't trust Bill Shorten, this man is running to be Prime Minister of the country, he is getting a sweetheart run at the moment and people are going to start looking at his character because character is important when it comes to who should lead our country and Bill Shorten does not have the character to be the Prime Minister of Australia, Richard's right -

GILBERT: When you say he is getting a sweetheart run, the polls don't show that the electorate is warming to him though, you must be encouraged by that, he has been on the slide for months.

BRIGGS: Well I think the press gallery is giving Bill Shorten the best run the Leader of the Opposition that we have seen since Mark Latham and the reality is, just like Mark Latham the Australian people cannot trust Bill Shorten. Julia Gillard couldn't trust him, Kevin Rudd couldn't trust him, the man does not have the character to be the Prime Minister of Australia. Yesterday we saw Bill Shorten launch an attack on the house prices of Australians. Anything tactical, any tactical move each day to try and get a hit is what Bill Shorten is all about, he is not about what is best for Australia's future, the Australian people can't trust Bill Shorten, the Labor Party couldn't trust him when he was in Government, the Australian people won't be able to trust him to put in place the right policies to ensure our national security, to ensure of economic security, to ensure we have the right protections to grow the economy and to ensure we are the strong country we want to be.

MARLES: I can't let that go without a response.

GILBERT: No no, you can respond to all of that but I guess the key point is that this is just fodder for the Government they can just say Shorten was in the centre of both changes, his name is going to be referred to several times by these figures who have done the interviews, it's hardly what he needs now when his polling is already tanking.

MARLES: Well look what we see in that show, as I said it before, are events from the past and they are well and truly in the past and the lesson to be learnt it one of unity and you have that on display in spades in the Labor party right now. What we have heard from Jamie just then was an attempt to shift the question and make that a whole sale attack on Bill Shorten's character. To suggest that Bill Shorten has been given the easiest run as an opposition leader is absolutely -

BRIGGS: Since Mark Latham -

MARLES: Since Mark Latham is absolute rot -

BRIGGS: You supported Mark Latham, you tried to make Mark Latham Prime Minister of Australia.

MARLES: We have seen Bill Shorten subjected to more personal attacks, well its true, than I have witnessed in my time at least in this place than any other political figure and if you want to see the strength of his character, getting up every day and you know the personal attacks that he has been under, getting up every day and performing in the way that he has performed and leading a unified party in the way that he has lead it has been frankly absolutely heroic and that is the way in which the caucus sees him, its true and that is the way the Australian people see him. Look I do come to this particular table having been a close friend of Bill's since university, but I'm not going to stand by and hear that kind of attack on Bill Shorten's character when I actually know his character well and this is a person of enormous strength who would make a fantastic Prime Minister of this country, who is standing up to an

enormous number of personal attacks which are absolutely below the belt and we've all watched them play out but he has got up every day and he has kept talking about the issues which matter to the Australia people and I'll tell you what, housing affordability is a good example of it.

GILBERT: On the housing affordability issue, let's drill down on that, Jamie Briggs because you referred to it earlier. If you're a home owner you'd be sympathetic to the points that were made by the PM earlier in the week, but if your just trying to crack the market, particularly in Sydney it's a, you know, the argument that house prices should keep going up that's not going to go down to well with those individuals.

BRIGGS: Well it's a supply issue that's the reality I mean the Labor Party all of a sudden after six years in Government when they didn't do anything in government about this have this magic bullet that's going to fix the housing affordability issue by allowing house prices to continue to rise but at the same time, you know federally somehow intervene to ensure that there is more availability then that would be a wonderful thing to see the actually answer to that, but they don't have the answer to that. This is just typical Labor who are trying to pick on an issue and get some political points out of it without any solution, without any plan. It gets back to the point people can't trust Bill Shorten, people know that he is not someone that can be trusted; you know all the things Richard just said were the same things the Labor party used to say about Mark Latham before they tried to make him Prime Minister, they were the same things they used to say about Kevin Rudd before they tried to make him Prime Minister, they were the same things they used to say about Julia Gillard before they tried to make her Prime Minister. The reality is people are seeing Bill Shorten, his character and that fact that he can't be trusted, he can't be trusted to ensure we've got the economic and national security policies that we need.

GILBERT: Richard finally to you, we've got about thirty seconds left, your reaction.

MARLES: Well that is rot, but when it comes to housing affordability simple point here, the Treasurer said he was going to do something about this before the next election and we are still waiting to hear what this Government is actually going to do on this issue, and now we have the secretary of the Treasury warning of a housing bubble and the Prime Minister simply denying that fact and pointing to the fact that his own house price is going up, so everyone is happy, if you want to talk about somebody that's out of touch look at Tony Abbott.

GILBERT: We are out, of time Richard and Jamie thank you so much for you time a quick break on AM Agenda we will be back in just a moment.

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