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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
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SUBJECTS: Terrorism laws; submarine capability gap; North Korea; gas

HOST: Our first guest this morning on the program is Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles, who joins me now. Thanks for your time, Richard. I might just start on these details of what the Government's going to push for at the COAG meeting. The main, obviously, aim here is about getting some more uniform laws about the timing, how long you can have people held for, but does Labor have any concerns about being able to question people given it would be minors as well; about the biometric face matching?

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Well, look, Tom, we agree that our laws need to be continually updated to meet the challenges that are posed by terrorism and by events such as what we've seen in the United States, and our instinct and our reflex is always to achieve bipartisanship on this and we've worked hard with the Government to be on the same page on a whole raft of laws that have made Australia a safer place.

I think having consistent laws around the country makes sense. We obviously want to have a look at the detail of what's being proposed, but I would think that we would be working very hard to make sure that we're on the same page as the Government when it comes to this at the end of the day.

HOST: What about one example, that terrorism hoax that they want to broaden and also make uniform. My mind turned to one example, perhaps, of someone at a school, a student, perhaps, calling in a bomb threat. Hardly something we want to happen, but would that be something that could mean someone's on a terrorism hoax charge, or should it?

MARLES: Again, I think the detail of all of this needs to be looked at carefully and properly examined, but these are serious issues and at the end of the day we need to be acting in a way which keeps the public safe, which keeps kids at school safe, and our first instinct when it comes to what steps we should be taking in terms of counter terrorism laws and regulations is to be making sure the community is as safe

as possible, and it does require us to look at a whole range of options in relation to that, but it's important that we walk down that path.

HOST: Alright, well, as you say we'll see some of the detail. We were getting a bit more detail yesterday about how the Government will have this capability gap no longer, in terms of our submarines. They're going to upgrade the Collins Class subs, once considered duds, of course. They had some initial problems. Are you confident in this plan?

MARLES: I think it is important that we see an upgrade of the Collins Class. The first point to make here is that there is a unity ticket between the Government and the Opposition in respect of the Future Submarine program, but what we're seeing is a program which won't have the first of the Future Subs in the water until the 2030s, and that means that Collins needs to be maintained through the 2030s. That's longer than was originally expected, and so we do need to see an extension of life program applied to the capability of the moment, which is the Collins Class. I heard the Defence Minister yesterday talk about that need. We've all known it for a while. I'm yet to hear a meaningful, detailed explanation of exactly how the Collins Class extension is going to occur, and it really is incumbent upon the Government to provide the Australian people with that explanation so that we have a sense of security that this very important capability is going to be maintained through until the Future Submarines come about, and right now we actually haven't heard the detail from the Government at all, and that is a concern.

HOST: Well, are you hearing any concerns from anyone within this sort of area about the viability of this solution?

MARLES: I think everyone gets that right now, given when the Future Submarines is going to come on board, the game is about Collins. It's about making sure that the capability that we have right now is able to continue beyond the life that was originally expected of it, and I reckon there are people out there- we know this is what's got to happen, and there are people out there who are wanting the Government to actually come up with an explanation of how this extension of life program is going to be rolled out and the manner in which it's going to occur. I think the Defence community are looking for the Government to fill in the detail here and right now they're not doing it.

HOST: I want to ask you about one of Donald Trump's comments not so long ago on North Korea. He was talking about what he saw, the failure of his predecessors, Bill Clinton, George Bush, Barrack Obama. Does he have a point on this, because the proof might be in the pudding, here. North Korea now has this capability. This happened, essentially, on the watch of those previous presidents.

MARLES: Well, North Korea, it's right it's been an issue that's been around for a long time, and it's been a very difficult issue, and it's very easy to point the blame in the past.

I think what's much more meaningful is working out a way in which we go forward, and it is really important that we see a garnering of the international community to try and shape North Korea's behaviour in a different way, because quite aside from the

prospect of conflict on the Korean Peninsula, which would be absolutely catastrophic were it to occur, if it becomes an accepted fact that North Korea is nuclear-capable, that puts a really unbearable pressure on countries like Japan, South Korea, even a country like Vietnam, around possibly going down the nuclear road themselves, and what that in turn means is that the cause of non-proliferation, which has been a successful cause, really, since the end of the Cold War, is suddenly turned on its head. I think that's the real significance of what we're seeing here with North Korea, and that's why it's so important that it not be seen as a *fait accompli*, as an accepted fact, that North Korea become a nuclear-capable state, and it's why we really do need to see the international community working together. As we've said on many occasions, China does have a particular role to play in that, and it is good that that role is starting to be played.

HOST: And there's one part of this that you look forward on and what to do with North Korea, but what I'm asking as well is: do we need to learn a lesson out of this, that if there is another rogue state down the track we don't let it get to this situation, even. That's the lesson out of this: the strategy of strategic patience was a failure.

MARLES: It is important to learn lessons. You're right in saying that. I think it is important that when lines are drawn they're meaningful.

I think it's also absolutely right to say that we can't, as an international community, allow a country to get to the point that North Korea has got to in the future, so you're right that there are a whole lot of lessons that need to be learnt here, but I think playing a blame game in respect of administrations in the past, I mean, that can happen within the American domestic polity, but I don't actually think it helps in the here and now and we really need to be focussed on looking forward and how we can shape North Korea's behaviour given where they stand on this day.

HOST: I want to turn your mind to gas and this ongoing debate. In Victoria, in your home state, should the Government lift the current moratorium on exploration of conventional gas?

MARLES: We've made it clear, Federal Labor has made it clear, that we think consideration of onshore gas in a sensible and safe way is important to look at what gas reserves are there, and we've said that specifically in relation to conventional gas. Now, we need to follow the science here and allow it to be our guide in terms of what is safe when resources are being exploited, but it is important in our view that that be looked at and there be an open mind in respect of that.

HOST: The corollary of that is a blanket moratorium, which is in place at the moment in Victoria, is not in keeping with what you've just said, so they should change that policy.

MARLES: Well, as I say, from Federal Labor's point of view, our view is that, bearing in mind the science and allowing it to be our guide as to what's safe, there does need to be an open mind in respect of the exploitation of conventional gas reserves in our country and that's the view that we would take if went into government.

HOST: So, in that point, then, you would say to Victoria that they should change that policy. They have a moratorium. There's no exploration at all of any type of gas, including conventional onshore, until 2020. From what you just said then their policy is not in keeping with yours. You would hope they would change that?

MARLES: I can re-state it, and I will, if you like, that it is our view that we should be looking, given what's safe and given what the science says, the exploitation of conventional gas onshore. That is the attitude we would take were we elected to government, and that's the basis upon which we would start working with the States around Australia.

HOST: And that's not in keeping with Victoria's current policy, is it?

MARLES: You've stated Victoria's policy and I'll leave that to-

HOST: -Are you saying that's not the policy of Victoria?

MARLES: No, I'm not. I'm studiously avoiding going down that path in terms of your questioning. I'll leave Victoria's policies to Victoria.

What I can talk about is where Federal Labor would be at, and I've articulated the position we would have if we were in Government, and whatever the State that we were working with and whatever the government was running that State we would work with them on that basis.

HOST: So, the question then is how forceful you'd be, because it's a state responsibility. What do you make of getting the Commonwealth Grants Commission to factor that in? If Victoria's not in keeping with your policy of a case-by-case scientific basis, should they be in effect punished for not having an exploration of conventional gas.

MARLES: I'll leave that to Mark Butler and those pursuing that portfolio, and I think they're questions that go to what would happen a fair way down the track, but as a statement of principle our view is that conventional resources onshore do need to be looked at in the content of what is scientifically safe, and that's the position that we would take and it's from that basis that we would start negotiating with state governments around the country.

HOST: Alright, well, it could be an interesting problem to have if you do win power. We'll see how it all plays out, but Richard Marles, thanks for your time today.

MARLES: Thanks, Tom

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