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CHAPTER 11: AUSTRALIA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

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**48TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
ADELAIDE**

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

As we look to navigate the ship of state, the way ahead is opaque.

The choices we face are many and the decisions before us are not obvious.

In this sense, we face the most challenging set of strategic circumstances that we have since the Second World War.

And the decisions we make now will impact the security and prosperity of every Australian through the first half of this century.

China is rising, which is fundamentally good. This has had a lot to do with our continued economic growth for 27 years. It would be wrong to put a black hat on China. They are not the Soviet Union. They are responsible for the single biggest alleviation of poverty in human history. But they are also seeking to

reshape a global, rules-based order which has underpinned our prosperity for more than 70 years.

The US remains our key alliance partner, and our shared commitment to this global, rules-based order makes the Alliance more relevant today than it has ever been, irrespective of who is the President or the Prime Minister of our countries. And yet the American withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Partnership – a bipartisan position in the US – inevitably raises questions about America's role in East Asia.

So how we reconcile these relationships and those of other friends like India, Japan and the countries of ASEAN will greatly impact our future.

Because our strategic circumstances are challenging we cannot afford to be passive. It is not so simple as to say that the world happens to us. We are not a superpower but we are not without power. There is the room to shape our future if we can develop the leadership side of our international personality.

This starts by living up to the role that is expected of us by the world. We need to have a voice in East Asia. We are a key player in South East Asia. And we need to be a leader – albeit a listening leader – in the Pacific.

Under a Shorten Labor Government we will have a transformational view of the Pacific that will place it front and centre of our world view and one which places at its heart the welfare and the prosperity of the Pacific's 10 million people.

Developing the leadership side of our international personality also means asking the foundational questions about who we are as a country and what we seek to be in the world.

The aspiration to develop an Australian defence industry, for example, cannot be meaningfully pursued without a strategic rationale for it and such a rationale has its basis in these questions.

While the Liberals maybe shallow policy tourists in this space, a Shorten Labor Government will develop the strategic basis for an Australian defence industry in a way which seeks real buy in from both the military and the bureaucracy so that it becomes an enduring national endeavour throughout this century.

And if we are to shape our future we need to resource our defences through a spend of 2% of GDP.

The platform presented here today embodies this thinking and more.

This platform and a future Shorten Labor Government will embody thoughtfulness. We aspire to be a serious group of people thinking deeply about the challenges facing our nation and seeking to find solutions to them.

The adoption of this platform today will make clear the terms of the electoral contest next year: thoughtfulness versus the populism of the Morrison Government.

And for the sake of our children and grandchildren we need to work hard every day between now and May to ensure this contest resolves in Australia's favour.

ENDS

Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.