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**NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ADDRESS MARISE PAYNE, PENNY WONG  
13 MAY 2022**

LAURA TINGLE: Good afternoon and welcome to the National Press Club in Canberra for today's Westpac Address. I'm Laura Tingle, the club's president. Today we are hosting the two women who hope to guide Australia's foreign policy after the election on May 21, Senator Marise Payne and Senator Penny Wong, and we give them a platform to debate their respective policy positions. The guidelines of the debate have been agreed and are fully set out on the club's website, but here are the main points: each speaker is allocated five minutes for opening remarks. There will then be questions from the media. The questions should be posed as one question for both speakers or one question to one of the speakers. Separate questions to the two speakers will be disallowed and only the first question will be dealt with, this will be firmly enforced. There will be a maximum of two minutes to reply to questions, and if the question has only been put to one speaker, the other speaker would have the option to respond to the answer given for a maximum of one minute. I'll endeavour, however, to ensure there is a free-flowing discussion and grant extensions to time if this assists that discussion. As moderator, I may ask my own questions, ask for clarification, or seek more information from one or both participants in response to their answers. At the direction of the moderator - that's me - speakers will be permitted to ask one question of each other during the debate. Each speaker in the reverse order of operating statements will be given two minutes for opening remarks. And there's been a coin toss to determine the order of speakers in opening addresses, and that's gone to Senator Penny Wong, and I'd like to invite you to join me in thanking her to the- sorry, it's been a long week.

[Applause]

PENNY WONG: Thank you very much. Well, I'm very pleased to be here, so can I thank the National Press Club for hosting us, can I thank Marise for agreeing to the debate, and thanks to all of you, including the members of the diplomatic corps who are here and those

watching. I first acknowledge the traditional owners of this land on which we meet, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to elders past and present. One of the many reasons - and there are a few - that I hope Australians will elect an Albanese Labor government is to fulfil the promise of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. You see, foreign policy starts with who we are. We tell a more powerful and more persuasive story of Australia when we tell our full story, our full story. Our modern diversity and the rich heritage of our First Nations peoples. It is a story the world is ready to hear. It counters narratives from countries that seek advantage over us. So, I am pleased to announce today that, if elected, Labor will deliver a First Nations foreign policy that weaves the voices and practices of the world's oldest continuing culture into the way we talk to the world, and in the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We will appoint an ambassador for First Nations peoples, and we will ensure First Nations peoples have a stronger voice in our engagement with the world, deepening their long-held ties across countries of the Indo-Pacific.

The Uluru Statement gives us the chance to be a more unified nation, stronger and more resilient at home and in the world. And Australians understand why that matters. Our nation has not known such a vexing convergence of circumstances since the end of World War II. From Mr Putin's illegal and immoral war against the people of Ukraine, to a more expansionist and aggressive China in our region, the world has changed. Our region is being reshaped. This generation of political leaders has a responsibility in this reshaping to secure Australia's interest today and in the future. It is our job. We don't have time for more of the same, and more of Mr Morrison means more of the same defence capability failures. More of the same it's not my job to pick up the phone to the region. More of the same chest-beating while letting Australia get beaten to the punch.

And we are seeing the consequences of those failures. Just as we saw with the bushfires, with the floods, with vaccines, with rapid antigen tests, now we see in Solomon Islands that Mr Morrison's inaction has made things worse. The fact is the risks Australians face will be compounded by three more years of Scott Morrison. More of the same excuses, the same political buck-passing, the same political games ahead of the national interest, whilst our problems just get bigger. And the rest of the world trust Mr Morrison as little as Australians do. Australians know their Prime Minister's standing in the world is defined by his leaking of private text messages against a close partner. Australians know they're stumping up \$5.5 billion for submarines that don't exist. Australians know that veterans issued warning after warning about the need to get people out of Afghanistan well before Kabul fell. And Australians know the world has changed and that China has changed.

Australians want a plan to shape a better future for ourselves in the world, and Labor has that plan. We understand that security in the world means we must use all elements of Australian power - strategic, economic, social, and diplomatic - to maximise our influence and deliver for our interests. We understand that security in the world means we have to secure our region. Playing to our strengths with our Pacific family to address our shared challenges, including climate change. Strengthening our relationships in South-East Asia to uphold the rules of the road. Shaping the world for the better and working with our friends and partners to preserve public goods, give form to our values, and solve global problems. Making a difference on climate at home and in the world. And I will say this: as someone who has fought for over a decade against people like Barnaby Joyce and Tony Abbott, it is only a Federal Labor government that will deliver real action on climate change. We need to bring together all elements of our national power to maximise Australian influence and to deliver for our security and prosperity.

As our Chief of Defence has said during this campaign, this is a need for greater integration of power. That is what an Albanese Labor government will deliver: stronger in the world and more unified at home.

LAURA TINGLE: Ladies and gentlemen, could you please welcome Senator Marise Payne to the podium now, please?

[Applause]

MARISE PAYNE: Good afternoon, and thank you very much to the National Press Club, to Senator Wong, to Laura, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects for their elders past, present and emerging. I start today by acknowledging the shock death on Wednesday of the Honourable Sam Basil, Deputy Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, a friend I had known since 2008 and worked with even more in recent years. His death is a great loss to Papua New Guinea, and I send my sympathies to his family, the Government, and the people of PNG.

These are important discussions here at the National Press Club. We are in the most challenging global period in many decades. COVID-19's economic and health impacts continue. Authoritarian powers are asserting themselves, seen in Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine - a violation of international law that must not be repeated, including in our region. Strategic competition is intensifying and requires careful attention to ensure it does not escalate into confrontation. For the foreseeable future, our region and our globe will be characterised by change and disruption, and this will be the case whoever leads Australia

after May 21. This Government has, for years, recognised and responded to these trends, which has meant making both significant, and at times difficult decisions for our nation.

We joined the AUKUS partnership with the United Kingdom and United States. We have revived and significantly advanced the Quad, with India, Japan, and the US, which was abandoned by the Rudd Government in 2008. We introduced the Pacific Step Up and provided important pandemic support in partnership with our Pacific neighbours. We have significantly deepened cooperation with our key partner, India, through both a comprehensive strategic partnership and our economic cooperation and trade agreement.

We've also struck trade agreements with the UK, with Indonesia, and joined the CPTPP and the RSEP. We have deepened our partnerships with others in the Indo-Pacific, including through our ASEAN Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the first country to have a CSP with ASEAN. We've supported the Pacific in climate resilience and adaptation, and in their presence and engagement at multiple international climate discussions. We've legislated to ensure state and territory consistency on foreign policy, and for Magnitsky sanction reforms. And, we've prioritised health, security and equality for women and girls in our region. Our approach, which we will maintain and grow if we are re-elected, is built on resilience, on relationships, and on rules.

We are increasing our national resilience by strengthening our economy and investing in our defence security and diplomatic capabilities, while also supporting the resilience of our partners in the region. We know that strong sovereign states are vital to the security and prosperity of all.

We have expanded and deepened our relationships because a strong network of partners and allies increases our capacity to exercise positive influence. The sovereignty of our partners is paramount. We don't lecture them. We cooperate closely while respecting their sovereign decisions. We've advocated strongly for the rules-based global order because a level playing field is good for both our national security and our economy.

Consistency has been vital. Under the Morrison Government, Australia has not blinked. We have shown we will not bend to coercion. We have shown our friends and allies that we can be relied on to act in accordance with our clear values. And a re-elected Morrison Government will continue to build our strength at home, including our economy, our security, our human and social fabric, and work ever more closely globally with others - particularly like-minded democracies. This is the best way to preserve our ability as a nation to make our own choices and the best way to protect our freedoms as Australians.

LAURA TINGLE: Thank you, Senator Payne. If I could open up - you've both obviously addressed a more aggressive China in your opening statements. We know what Australia has been doing until now about China, and we know what China has been doing. And you've just said, Senator Payne, that we've shown we won't blink. Well, what are we going to do in the next three years about China? We've got a complex relationship with them - it's not just a strategic one, it's also a trade relationship. What are we going to do about the relationship? And it's emerged in the last couple of days, for example, that neither leader has met the new Chinese Ambassador. What do we do to try to improve and de-escalate the bad blood in the relationship? And maybe Senator Payne could go first.

MARISE PAYNE: I think the premise of your question, Laura, which includes the phrase: de-escalate the bad blood, implies, in a way that I don't necessarily accept, that Australia has not done the right thing in terms of protecting our national interests and our national security - which is what we will always put forward first and foremost for our nation and our people. We will work closely with our partners, as we have, to secure and pursue the security, the prosperity, the stability of the Indo-Pacific region. But, overall, we will continue to seek a constructive relationship with China. But it has to be a relationship in which our sovereignty and our interests are respected, and in which no party is coerced or subjected to pressures that breach international rules.

So, is the de-escalation that you talk about accepting a 200 per cent tariff on Australian wine? Or is it accepting the coercive impositions on Australian barley? Or is it accepting one of the 14 points in the document that was handed to your media colleague, Jonathan Kearsely, by the Chinese Embassy?

I've had a very constructive initial meeting with the new Chinese Ambassador in Canberra, and I'm very pleased to continue and to grow that relationship. I have said at every opportunity that Australian ministers, foreign ministers, prime ministers, trade ministers, finance ministers, treasurers, are open and available to engage with our colleagues in Beijing. And, of course, we are. But that opportunity has not been availed by the government in Beijing. And ultimately, Australia continues to indicate that we are open to that constructive engagement, and I look forward to it being taken up.

LAURA TINGLE: Senator Wong?

PENNY WONG: Well, our relationship with China has changed because China has changed, and we should start from that premise. And to be very clear, an Albanese Labor Government would not take a backwards step when it comes to standing up for Australia's interests, in this relationship or in any other relationship. And, Marise is right to point to

the coercive economic measures. We put our view very clearly on that publicly, gave bipartisan support to the Government on that, and it was a view I put, as Marise did, when we both separately met the Chinese Ambassador.

What I would say is this, though: In many ways, focusing only on that relationship perhaps misses the central point which is the reshaping of the region in which we live. And so whilst we might not be able to change China and it's- how it chooses to engage with us, what we can do is focus on building the sort of region we want. And we want a region which is peaceful, prosperous, stable, and in which sovereignty is respected. And that is why our position on the South China Sea, for example, matters. It is a bipartisan position of both parties of government, and so should it be. So, my view about it is, we should be very clear about what our interests are. The reality is, whoever wins government - and Mr Albanese has said this - there will be differences between Australia and China that have to be managed, regardless of which of us is the foreign minister after the election. And those interests have to be managed very- with very clear view to what Australia's interests are.

LAURA TINGLE: Well, if I could just have a follow -up on that with just a one minute response from both of you. You both, basically, are saying Australia will not back down. Is there a marker that the Chinese can give to show their good faith in trying to improve the relationship?

PENNY WONG: Well, they could desist from the coercive economic positions that they put in place in relation to Australia. I think that's a position both parties have. They could comply with the decision of arbitral tribunal in relation to the South China Sea. I mean, these are matters which go to the rule of law. Rules of the road for the region, which are not only Australia's interests, they are - but they're Indonesia's and the Philippines'. These are positions which matter to the region.

MARISE PAYNE: We've consistently raised the points that I commented on in my answer to your first question, in relation to economic coercion, but also in relation to Australia's freedoms to protect our national interests and they are, in our view, fundamentals. But in addition, we have been clear about our concerns in relation to human rights, particularly with regard to Xinxiang. We see further arrests this week, including of a Emeritus Cardinal in Hong Kong, and other freedom, democracy, I should say, advocates. These continue to be of concern, with great strength. And with the rise of China, welcomed by the world, comes also responsibility - responsibility that other great powers consistently exercise in relation to the rules-based global order that has stood us in such good stead over many decades.

LAURA TINGLE: Ben Packham.

QUESTION: Thank you, both. Ben Packham from *The Australian*. Senator Wong, you've been Shadow Foreign Minister since July 2016. How many times have you met with senior Chinese officials during your time in that role? And, is there any problem with that sort of thing? And to Minister Payne, Scott Morrison, today, said Richard Marles' meetings with the Chinese Ambassador were: a bit strange. But was your office informed about each of those meetings? And did your office clear them?

PENNY WONG: Me first? I certainly went to China for a visit. I'd have to look at what occurred between 2016 and 2019. I think, this term, I certainly met with the outgoing Chinese Ambassador and, as I said, met with the new Chinese Ambassador. And we ensured we had a discussion with Marise's office, because I think it is very important, on the issues that we've averted to, whether it's the economic coercion or human rights issues, there is a very clear bipartisan position put to the Chinese. And we've done that.

I, certainly in the last term, I met with the then Chinese Ambassador to inform him that Labor would not be supporting the China extradition treaty, despite being asked by the Turnbull Government to do so. So, I have met with the Chinese. I mean, look, I- we all understand why Mr Morrison is saying what he's saying. We all understand that, you know, in the lead-up to an election, he will- things will get increasingly desperate, and accusations would be made. But I just want to make this point, because there's been too much of this in this campaign: you know, we are all patriots. We are all patriots. Mr Morrison and the Liberal Party do not have a monopoly on patriotism.

MARISE PAYNE: In relation to specific approaches from Mr Marles, my understanding is a small number of those meetings were advised to my office. It's not my role to clear them or otherwise – I would describe them as being noted – but a small number, certainly not the number reported today. But I would say that it is important to be consistent, and that is certainly the approach that this Government has taken in all of our engagement across the Government. We know from reporting that Mr Marles has, for example, confirmed that he's provided a speech in advance to the Chinese Embassy. I would not do that myself – in fact, I wouldn't provide a speech in advance to any other embassy for any reason. He has spoken favourably in relation to Chinese engagement in the region. He's spoken favourably in *The Tides That Bind* - I'm sure you've read every word, Ben, of the Chinese relationship more broadly in the Pacific, and Australia's engagement as well. They are statements of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the person who would be the Deputy Prime Minister, on the record. They're not entirely consistent with the policies presented now by the Opposition, and I think it is appropriate to note that and to draw attention to it.

PENNY WONG: I just would make this point and, you know, I'm disappointed Marise has joined in because generally she's made a mature decision not to in some of this domestic politics. I can recall very positive comments being made by Mr Morrison about China. I can recall very positive comments being made by Tony Abbott about China. Mr Morrison said: China provides real stability to the region, in 2017. I mean, let's get real here. We understand – both parties of government understand – the difficult challenges of the relationship with China. And I think trying to play politics with it in an election campaign is not of benefit to the country.

LAURA TINGLE: Do you want to say something more about that? Just...

MARISE PAYNE: I think I responded in my previous answer.

QUESTION: Thank you.

LAURA TINGLE: Okay, Anthony Galloway.

QUESTION: Thank you both for the debate today. I just wanted to ask, I think we can all agree that China has not yet offered a major olive branch to Australia. The trade strikes are still in place, there's no dialogue at the ministerial level. If Labor is elected to government and a major overture is made, such as the trade strikes are removed and/or Foreign Minister Wong does secure a meeting with her Chinese counterpart, how should a new Labor Government respond to that olive branch in the early days of government?

PENNY WONG: Well, I think Marise made the point that, you know, the position of the Government, notwithstanding some of the politics, has been that people are available to meet. China isn't going anywhere. And neither is, you know, China changing some of the positions you articulated. You know, we would- I think all Australians would welcome China complying with its international obligations, both in relation to human rights, in relation to international law, and, you know, we will continue to press for the coercive trade measures to be lifted.

QUESTION: Did you have a response?

MARISE PAYNE: It's a question for Senator Wong, so...

QUESTION: [Talks over] Yes, but it- sorry.

LAURA TINGLE: Yes. You're entitled to a one-minute comment on her answer.

PENNY WONG: Yeah, you get to have a go at me.

MARISE PAYNE: Well, my observation would be that there is an open invitation – in fact, a sincere willingness to engage. I have corresponded on a number of occasions with State Councillor Wang Yi in relation to COVID-19, in relation to Afghanistan, in relation to the circumstances of detained Australians, particularly the circumstances of their detention and the need for it to be in accord with international law and detention requirements. I continue to do that, and I patiently await a response.

LAURA TINGLE: Next question is from Stephen Dziedzic.

QUESTION: Hi. Thank you both for your time. We're in Canberra, so forgive me for asking a very Canberra-focused question. Would I be able to ask both of you – perhaps first, Senator Wong – are there any key institutional barriers that you've identified in Canberra to the pursuit of effective Australian foreign policy, perhaps including within the Department of Foreign Affairs, or between the interaction between the Department of Foreign Affairs and other agencies in Canberra, which you would seek to tackle should you become foreign minister? And Senator Payne, can I ask you, obviously...

PENNY WONG: There was- did you notice, there must be some public servants in the room, because there was a ripple...

[Laughter]

PENNY WONG: It's alright, I'm not- actually going to answer the question. It's fine.

MARISE PAYNE: There may or may not be public services institutional barriers.

QUESTION: If Senator Payne would care to comment, she's so welcome to.

LAURA TINGLE: Sorry, what was the last bit? If Senator Payne wishes to comment?

PENNY WONG: Look, I think that- I've been clear that I think we need a greater capability within DFAT. I've been clear about that. I've also been clear, as I avert you to my opening and, you know, occasionally I hope you read my speeches. I've said it previously: we need to get much better at integrating the different aspects of state power. Strategic power matters, but- you know, it is enhanced and furthered, as the CDF said, I think it was

last week or the week before, by the other elements of state power. So, I do want more capability within DFAT, and I do want – I do want – much better coordination between the different aspects of government in what is an unprecedented time. I mean, I remember in 2017 I wrote an article for Australian Foreign Affairs, and – maybe it was 2019 – and I made the point that the play book of past decades wasn't of great utility now. It was probably a bit wordy for a National Press Club discussion. But my point is, it isn't business as usual, is it? And we face very different circumstances to- at any time really since the end of World War Two, and that the proposition that the world is changing and our region is being reshaped has to be, you know, our laser-light focus across government. And we have to ensure we have the capacity and leadership to respond and deal with it.

MARISE PAYNE: Thanks, Stephen, and I think it is important. In fact, it's essential that there are no, to use your words, institutional barriers, and that we have the strongest engagement between the key national security agencies, in particular. And we've worked very hard to ensure that that is the case, that our- and you're the one who started bureaucratic language, so I'm going to extend it a little further. But what are known as inter-departmental committees and such are very much hold of government to deal with the critical responses to some of the greater challenges that we face, to make sure that when the table is prepared, that DFAT, Defence, Home Affairs and other key agencies are sitting around it. I would say that I'm pleased to see that the operating budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has increased from around \$2 billion between- in the last financial year to \$2.2 billion in the next financial year- in this financial year, and that we will see \$3 billion of additional funding to DFAT through to '25-'26. We've opened new posts in key locations; these are good indicators for the work that we are doing.

LAURA TINGLE: Tom Connell.

QUESTION: Thanks very much, Senators. It's a question for you both; I'm not sure how that affects timekeeping...

PENNY WONG: Two and two.

MARISE PAYNE: Trust me, there's a screen behind us... [indistinct]

PENNY WONG: It's two and two.

LAURA TINGLE: Two and two.

QUESTION: Perhaps I'll start with you, Senator Wong. A common refrain from leaders from both parties has been that Australia doesn't need to choose between the US and China over the years. Is that still the case?

PENNY WONG: I think China has changed. I mean, I think that you're referencing a- probably a way of thinking about it between, you know, that might've described the way in which Mr Howard was able to manage it, our principal strategic relationship between- with the United States and our principal economic relationship with China. But clearly the way in which economic power was being utilised for strategic purposes means that duality as a model of engagement is no longer the case. I would make this point, though; we have actually already chosen. You know, we have an alliance that's over 70 years old between us and the United States and led an alliance with deep bipartisan support, so we have already chosen. But the point that we should be focussed on is less about great power competition full stop, but what is the region that we want with the rules that we want that enables Australian interests to be advanced and protect it? That is the key for us, and that means working with the US, which remains the indispensable partner in the reshaping of the region. But it means working also with other partners, other relationships. It means doing more in Southeast Asia and doing a great deal more in the Pacific.

MARISE PAYNE: I think acknowledging and indeed embracing the fundamental of the Australia-US alliance is obviously foundational in our approach in the region and more broadly. But we must be able to continue to pursue key relationships with countries like China, and they are issues that we've discussed already here today. But on the question of strategic choice, I think it's very important to reinforce Australia has no expectations and is not making any indication to any other of our partners or any countries in the region that they would be forced into making choices. Ultimately, they are sovereign decisions for the countries in our region. They have historic and current relationships that are their own. And I do think that sometimes the high volume, lots of light and movement discussions in Australia, not necessarily at the political level, often at the academic and media level about these issues can feel intimidating to countries in our region. And I think it's very important to emphasise that Australia's expectation is that they will always be sovereign nations who'll make their own decision.

PENNY WONG: Can I just have a follow up on that? If what you're referencing is the articulation by the Singaporean Prime Minister and others about, we don't want to choose between, you know, the US and China, you know, I would say this: the basis of our engagement with the Southeast Asian nations is most effective if we find those principles and issues where we share views, rather than getting into an argument about great power competition. Southeast Asia has a very long history of dealing with great power competition.

QUESTION: The last quote I could find on that was 2019 from Scott Morrison. So I take that it perhaps was a...

PENNY WONG: [Interrupts] Yeah. And Prime Minister Lee has said it at least at two Shangri-La dialogues, I think, you know, he has made that clear. And so my point is that message to us, that is a message to the great powers. I think a message to Australia as an ally of the United States is to recognise that the most powerful basis of our engagement with Southeast Asia is to focus on those issues where we have a shared interest. And we have a shared interest as I said before, for example, on rules of the road, such as the Law of the Sea. We have the same interest as Indonesia, which was instrumental in developing it, as with the Philippines and so forth. So I think the exhortation from Prime Minister Lee is it should be heard by Australian leaders.

MARISE PAYNE: And one of the reasons that we've consistently said that in our view of the Indo-Pacific ASEAN is central to that, and warmly welcomed ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific, is because our neighbours and our partners in ASEAN bring that diversity of perspectives across a vast range of different cultures and political systems that we work closely with. And it's so important to respect those and to make sure that Australia's engagement is not in any way suggesting that there is a choice to be made by others.

LAURA TINGLE: Andrew Tillett.

QUESTION: Andrew Tillett from the *Financial Review*. Thank you both for appearing, obviously...

PENNY WONG: [Interrupts] And not for shouting at each other.

[Laughter]

LAURA TINGLE: I'll check my watch.

PENNY WONG: We agreed – we agreed we wouldn't shout.

QUESTION: I am from the Nine Empire, so we might see how it goes.

[Laughter]

PENNY WONG: Hence my- hence what I said.

MARISE PAYNE: An empire now, that's a good one.

QUESTION: A question for both of you, and being- given that we are here at the National Press Club, I'd like to ask about Julian Assange. The UK Home Secretary is considering- is weighing up the extradition of Mr Assange to the US. His lawyers have up until next week to put submissions in. Can you tell me, whoever is minister after 21 May, will either of you lobby the UK Government to not go ahead with the extradition? And if he is extradited to the US, will you lobby the US to drop the charges or will you let that court process go through? Thanks.

MARISE PAYNE: I've consistently said that whilst this matter is still within legal process, and it is still within legal process in the United Kingdom, that I would not make any comments in a way that would prejudice the proceedings for the case. The UK Magistrates Court has now, as you've said, referred the matter to the Home Secretary for the decision on extradition, but it is subject to further appeals by Mr Assange if such a decision is made, and I'm not going to make any additional comment.

PENNY WONG: Well, obviously Mr Assange's case has gone on a long time. His case, as the Minister correctly identifies, is before the Home Secretary, and they will make their decision. I would note the Government has offered him, as is correct, as it should, consular assistance. I think whatever the views people have about Mr Assange's behaviour, I think the case- it is clear this has dragged on a long time. And certainly we would encourage, were we elected, the US Government to bring this matter to a close. But ultimately that is a matter for the administration.

LAURA TINGLE: Could I...

MARISE PAYNE: And that is the point that I've made consistently to partners in the United States and the United Kingdom, and I've raised it with respective Secretaries of State in both countries and over multiple administrations.

LAURA TINGLE: Could I ask as a follow up to that? You mentioned that it's still subject to legal processes. When do they end? I mean if, say, he gets extradited to the US, they'll still technically be legal processes. What is the cut-off for the Australian Government and what would be the view of an Albanese Government about when is the appropriate point to intervene?

MARISE PAYNE: Well, we can't intervene in the legal processes of other countries. And I say that consistently, Laura, in relation to multiple Australians who are detained in various circumstances around the world. It is not a case of us being able to intervene in legal proceedings. I've raised Mr Assange's position with the US Secretary of State in both the Trump and the Biden administration, with the UK Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs across both secretaries, with whom – I have three secretaries – with whom I have worked consistently. And consent has been withdrawn by Mr Assange for us to receive any information about him. And notwithstanding 36 separate approaches to Mr Assange by our High Commission in London to offer consular assistance, which includes engaging with appropriate legal support and also assistance with medical support, we've received no response.

QUESTION: Thank you both.

LAURA TINGLE: At this point, I would like to invite the two of you to ask questions of each other. And maybe, Senator Wong, in the spirit of question time in the Senate, you might like to ask a question of Senator Payne first.

[Laughter]

PENNY WONG: My question goes to the inconsistency of the Government's response in relation to Solomon Islands and the disclosure of the security pact. Minister, you said you first became aware of the treaty when it became public. The Deputy Prime Minister said the Government was, quote, all over it; and the Prime Minister said, it was no surprise. Your Government has also lurched from respecting Solomon's sovereignty and saying that we can't throw our weight around to making comparisons about Cuba and the Prime Minister issuing threats about red lines. So I'd like to understand why so inconsistent and what is the position?

MARISE PAYNE: Well, I don't agree with the premise of all of your question...

PENNY WONG: [Interrupts] That's what she says in Question Time, too.

MARISE PAYNE: But I've only had six occasions to be asked a question by Senator Wong on foreign affairs in question time in the last parliamentary term, so I haven't had a chance to say it very often. The question of when we were aware of the particular security agreement, and I have said and Senator Seselja and others have said is when that security agreement itself was leaked on social media. However, what the senior ministers of the Government, including the Prime Minister, have been clear about is that we have worked

with my Department with security agencies in relation to our concerns about China's pursuit of a greater security presence in the region, and particularly in the Solomon Islands for many, many- well, an extended period of time now. In fact, all of the time that I have been in this role, and particularly since, of course, the change in recognition by the Solomon Islands' diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, because that has evoked a much more forward leaning, assertive effort by China in relation to security engagement in the region.

So that is not just confined to the Solomon Islands, it goes to other countries throughout the region as well. It goes to concerns that are raised around the Pacific Island Forum table from time to time in relation to sovereignty and the implications of a non-Pacific partner or member being in a position of- in a security delivering position.

In terms of red lines, though, I do think it is important that we are clear and that we receive in the way in which it has been made. The clear statement of Prime Minister Sogavare that the Solomon Islands will not accept a Chinese military base in the Solomon Islands.

PENNY WONG: [Talks over] The red line [indistinct]... prime ministers, not Prime Minister Sogavare.

MARISE PAYNE: As I have said, that is something which he makes not just as a commitment to Australia, but he makes it publicly, overtly as a commitment to the entire Pacific.

PENNY WONG: Well, my question- I would like- was the red line language that Prime Minister Morrison used discussed with you before using it? And what does it mean?

MARISE PAYNE: I don't talk about my conversations with the Prime Minister, as you well know, Senator Wong. And it means that there are certain key security issues, such as the presence of a Chinese military base in our region, which would be of deep and fundamental concern to Australia.

PENNY WONG: Which is why they shouldn't have been one in the first place.

LAURA TINGLE: Senator Payne, your question to Senator Wong.

MARISE PAYNE: Thank you. Thank you very much, Laura. A couple of days after the election, about three days, the new Prime Minister, whoever that will be, will need to

demonstrate Australia's ongoing commitment in this region. They will be attending the meeting of the Quad, and I know that the Coalition has demonstrated our absolute commitment to making the Quad a major piece of our regional cooperation, as it now is. But what would Labor take to that meeting this time to demonstrate it is committed and that it won't abandon the Quad and our partners like it did in 2008?

PENNY WONG: Well, we've made clear we are committed to the Quad. I've made that clear some years ago. Publicly, Mr Albanese has made that clear, and we've already engaged, as is appropriate, in the lead up to an election about logistics and arrangements to ensure, if elected, we would be in place in Tokyo for the commencement of the Quad. I think one of the things that we should no doubt be speaking about is the developments that we've just been discussing, which is what is occurring in the Pacific, the fact that the Solomon Islands is looking beyond Australia for security arrangements, and that is all relevant to the nations of the Quad and the countries of the Indo-Pacific.

MARISE PAYNE: I would say that, of course, the Solomon Islands, in November of last year, looked to Australia for security response, and Australia with New Zealand, with Fiji, with Papua New Guinea, with therefore, the Pacific family, made that response in a matter of hours and provided that support on the ground in the Solomon Islands. And I'll also reinforce that Prime Minister Sogavare has indicated that his view, that Australia is the first security partner of the Solomon Islands, and I've reiterated that with Foreign Minister Manele myself.

PENNY WONG: This is the inconsistency again. I mean, you're saying essentially, if I may, this isn't that big a deal. Barnaby Joyce saying it's like Cuba. So I'm just working out which is the position.

MARISE PAYNE: I've never said it's not a big deal, Senator Wong, and that is a misrepresentation of my position.

LAURA TINGLE: Okay. The next question is from Pablo Vinales.

PENNY WONG: Why aren't you on the plane? You're not on the plane.

QUESTION: Back briefly. Thank you. Taiwan's Foreign Minister has told us SBS World News exclusively that Australia should pay more attention in the Pacific. He says Beijing's deal with the Solomon Islands is a security threat. You both concede China has changed. Does Australia need to change, not in its values, but in the way it cooperates with other nations like Taiwan, for instance?

MARISE PAYNE: Well, we have been strong supporters of Taiwan's participation in all fora in which statehood is not a requirement. I would reference the World Health Organization as one, in particular. And we've worked with likemindeds to ensure that, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and the success that Taiwan had in addressing the pandemic, that they were able to participate around those tables and to share that experience and that expertise. We'll continue to do that. We have a strong representative office in Taipei and we will work closely with countries in the Pacific like Nauru, like Tuvalu, who of course continue to recognise Taiwan as we do.

I do think it is important to note that, across the Pacific, we are the only country in the world which has a diplomatic mission in every country of the Pacific Island Forum. It's an important diplomatic engagement. It's an important presence. It enables us to work with all partners, whether it is in some countries' partners like China, in other countries' partners like Taiwan, to bring to the region that joined up approach.

PENNY WONG: Well I think the question demonstrates a few things. First is our region is being reshaped. Secondly, it demonstrates if you don't do enough in a region, even if you've got the historical ties there or the institutional ties, that vacuum is filled. That vacuum is filled. And the reality in the Pacific is we have not done enough. We have not done enough. And we have also gone missing on climate, which people, you know, some in the Morrison Government, like to dismiss. I refer back to the Boe Declaration, where Pacific leaders told us themselves, number one national security issue is climate.

On Taiwan, Labor's position, which has been a long standing bipartisan position of both parties of government, is our focus is ensuring that- working with others to ensure there is no unilateral change to the status quo. It's our long-standing position. It's a position that Tsai Ing-wen has articulated again. What is it we can do to ensure we deter any unilateral changes to the status quo? And we can do that by ensuring we engage with Taiwan in the fora that we are able, recognising the diplomatic situation. We can do that by ensuring we talk to other parties in the region about the risks to the region from any unilateral change to the status quo.

MARISE PAYNE: I'd also say, in addition, that obviously we approach these matters in the context of Australia's clear One-China policy. But I do think it is immensely simplistic to suggest that overseas development assistance or the quantum thereof is the fundamental nub of a problem here. Australia is, by the length of the Strait frankly, provider of two-thirds of international assistance to the Solomon Islands across multiple areas of endeavour, from justice to education, to gender, to health, to many others,

agriculture included. I see Andrew Campbell here today as well from ACIAR. It's not about that- it is a very complex question around security, which we've been discussing here today, and it's not as simplistic as also saying it's about climate. If you accept the fact, as I think the world does, that China is the world's largest emitter, then forming agreements with the world's largest emitter because you apparently disagree with Australia on climate, is not logical, not even inherently logical.

**PENNY WONG:** Well, look at the results. Look at the results. We've announced a comprehensive policy on the Pacific that does recognise, and the one thing I do agree with you on, Minister, is that it's not only quantum. I think more investment is needed and we've announced that, but we have to leverage our strengths. We have to leverage our strengths, and our strengths include our voice and our proximity. But one of the most important parts of the Pacific package we announced with the changes to the Pacific labour schemes and the additional Pacific visa, because they recognise that what are the things we have that other parties who might have a lot more capital ultimately don't have. We have proximity, and we can use that to build stronger relationships.

**LAURA TINGLE:** If I could just delicately segue, or attempt it, between the topic of Taiwan back to the US and the comments you made earlier. Senator Wong, I think you were channelling Madeleine Albright when you described it as the indispensable partner, and you said the US alliance was absolutely foundational. I'd like to ask you both to comment on whether the US approach to Ukraine has given you greater confidence about the way the US is engaging in the world, less confidence, or does it sort of give you a materially different view about the way the US is pursuing foreign policy?

Senator Payne first.

**MARISE PAYNE:** Thank you, and I think the US approach- well, let me affirm what I said in my previous remark about the foundational nature of the alliance and say how much we will welcome warmly the significant appointment of Caroline Kennedy as the next US Ambassador to Australia, and we expect to see her here in the next couple of months. In terms of the approach on Ukraine, we have been working very closely with the United States, with NATO, more broadly with the UK and other partners, but particularly many smaller liberal democracies in the region who see the threat that Russia's illegal, unlawful invasion of Ukraine present to them. But what the US's engagement has done, and I think it is very important, is to bring together a global coalition of great strength to both support Ukraine and to extract a cost, a price on Russia for their actions. That includes in relation to providing military support for Ukraine, in relation to a strong sanctions regime in which Australia is an active

participant. We have sanctioned over 800 individuals and entities as part of that. It is a real global coalition, and the US is a key leader.

PENNY WONG: What I'd say is the invasion of and the unlawful war being waged against the people of Ukraine by Mr Putin has been horrific, and is, continues to be. But what it has demonstrated is the capacity of the US and its NATO partners to work together. It has demonstrated the capacity of a great many nations around the world to stand against the abrogation of the UN charter, which we see before us. It has changed policy in Germany in terms of defence budgets and their policy around the provision of weapons, and it has led Finland to say it wants to join NATO. So there is an interesting demonstration here; one of the arguments that Mr Putin used was the expansion of NATO – well, now we see this.

LAURA TINGLE: Daniel Hurst.

PENNY WONG: And obviously from our perspective we think that it's a matter for them, but it's a good thing.

QUESTION: Daniel Hurst from *Guardian Australia*. On the climate crisis, we know that the US and Pacific island nations, amongst others, would like Australia to increase its 2030 target. Last year, Australia did not increase its formal 2030 target. Last month, the US Assistant Secretary of State Monica Medina, when asked whether Australia should lift its 2030 target this year, said: we're calling on every country that didn't increase their target to raise it, close quote. To both of you, do you see your 2030 targets that you're putting to voters as fixed or set for the next three years? Or are you at least open to considering outreach from our forever friends and Pacific Island friends? And Senator Wong, I can't help but get clarity on your Julian Assange answer earlier...

LAURA TINGLE: [Clears throat]

QUESTION: Olay, bring this matter to a close. What do you mean by that?

MARISE PAYNE: You start.

PENNY WONG: No, we've put out our policy. We've made clear our 2030 target and I'd make this point. We haven't just plucked the number out of the air. We've actually gone through the different policy measures. It's the difference between us and some of the parties to our left. We have to work out how we deliver this. Gone through with our policy measures and worked out what sort of emissions reduction, what sort of cost

impact, cost benefit it will have. So you know, it is a responsible but ambitious target. I think in part - and as Climate Minister many years ago, I did engage with the Pacific Island nations and we didn't have the same position on targets. You know, I was- I thought I was- we were very ambitious, they wanted us to go further. But in part, it's also respecting their experience and talking through with them what are the other things that we can do. And to airily suggest; oh, well, they don't care about it that much because they're talking to China, I'll say this. I don't think our reputation has really ever got over Mr Dutton standing next to Mr Morrison and making a joke about water lapping at your door. It's utterly disrespectful of people's experience.

LAURA TINGLE: Are you going to answer his other question?

PENNY WONG: What was the- no, I thought she's(\*) out of order.

MARISE PAYNE: Oh Daniel, you're in trouble. Australia has been very clear about our emissions, which are currently- we've seen 20.8 per cent below 2005 levels, and we are actually dealing in outcomes, not ambitions - outcomes which exceed the outcomes of the United States, of Canada, of New Zealand, just for example – and of course, exceed the OECD average in the rate at which our emissions have fallen. They're the lowest on a per capita basis in three decades in Australia so we are delivering on that, and we took to COP26, as you know, a net zero commitment 2050, which was overwhelmingly welcomed by our partners in the region. I'm not suggesting that they don't seek more. I've reread the Kainaki II Declaration on these matters and others in recent times, I understand that. But our support is practical and it is helpful. We've taken, for example, delegations from nine of our Pacific Island partners to COP26 to enable them to attend and to participate and to lead, which they do in all of those international fora. Same with the Our Ocean Conference in Palau just in April of this year. We've doubled our climate finance commitment to \$2 billion, \$700 million of that which will be directed specifically to the Pacific, at least. and we have been delivering practical solutions. It doesn't matter whether it's the solar farm that I announced in Palau in December last year that will enable Palau to deliver 20 per cent of its energy in renewables, or whether it is the Tina River Hydropower Project in the Solomon Islands, or the off-grid solar across Papua New Guinea through the Powering Communities Program. These are practical and deliverable outcomes for those countries in a way in which meets their needs, both their infrastructure and their climate needs. Same as the Australia Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific and its outcome.

QUESTION: It's fixed.

MARISE PAYNE: No, I'm not saying that at all. I didn't say that, Daniel – I said there was more.

PENNY WONG: The target is fixed.

QUESTION: Good afternoon...

MARISE PAYNE: Oh, the target? Yes. I'm sorry. Yes.

QUESTION: Good afternoon, Melissa Coade from *The Mandarin*. We've had a bit of discourse during today's debate about the importance of our Pacific family and also climate change. Marise Payne mentioned the Three R's – resilience, relationship, rules. To that end, my question to both of you is if you will win government after the election, will you, in partnership with the Pacific, host a UN climate meeting or create a new ambassador for climate?

PENNY WONG: We've already said we'd reinstate the Ambassador for Climate Change unlike, and I don't necessarily include Maurice in this, but some in her party appeared to be allergic to that term, so we would reinstate it. We've also said we would look at bidding for a hosting of the conference of the parties within the UNFCCC with our Pacific partners. Our engagement with our Pacific partners, our Pacific neighbours on climate matters greatly.

MARISE PAYNE: We do have a very effective ambassador for the environment who covers climate change as well in that remit and has strongly represented Australia, particularly at the last COP in Glasgow and works closely with the Pacific, was part of the Our Ocean Conference in Palau in April as well with Secretary Kerry and others. In relation to whether or not we would host a COP, we would speak with our Pacific neighbours, of course, as to their ambitions and their interests, and determine whether that was something they wish to pursue.

LAURA TINGLE: The next question is from Dominic Giannini.

QUESTION: Dominic Giannini, Australian Associated Press. Thank you both for appearing here today. On the Solomon Islands relationship, there has been some sort of breakdown that has led to this security treaty. So to both of you, how do we fix this? And so to the Government side, how has this been allowed to happen. given that you tout our aid levels and our climate commitments? And to the Opposition side, apart from sending a foreign minister over, what specifically will you do given that our aid commitments at

the moment aren't – or can't – seem to match China's? And with the elephant in the room being corruption, will the parties take the same stance as China's cyberattacks by calling it out as a deterrence if corruption were to be discovered in the Solomon Islands?

**PENNY WONG:** Well, I'm happy to go first, if you'd like. We did put out quite a detailed response or detailed policy on the Pacific precisely because we thought it was important in this debate, given the salience for our national interest, for people to see what the alternative government wanted to do in relation to the Pacific, to ensure we are the partner of choice in the Pacific, to ensure that the Pacific family is more than just words. Now what we've said is this package is about leveraging our strengths. I can take you through all the details, but there are a few highlights which I think matter, in addition to the additional ODA. One is doubling the Pacific Maritime Air Surveillance Program. The EEZ of Pacific nations is, I think, almost three times the size of Australia, possibly more, and this is a key interest for them. This is about illegal fishing. It is about protecting fish-their fisheries, which is a source of resources as well as a source of protein. We want to deliver an Indo-Pacific broadcasting strategy because I think you need voices in the region. And I think it was short-sighted for the Government's cuts to the ABC, which had the effect of ending a whole range of services into the Pacific. And then, of course, the labour scheme. So improving the labour mobility schemes, enabling people for the longer term scheme to bring their families, and the visa category that I described. That is about leveraging our proximity and access to our labour market because the people-to-people ties are a key way in which we ensure we are genuinely part of the Pacific family.

**MARISE PAYNE:** Dominic, I don't agree with all of the premise of your question. It was- I think it is oversimplifying what is a very complex set of circumstances, not just in a bilateral sense, but more broadly. And to the question of relationships on a basis of Foreign Minister to Foreign Minister, my relationship with, for example, Foreign Minister Manele, who has just briefed informally members of the Pacific Island Forum from Suva on these matters, I think on Wednesday of this week, is a very strong one. But we must continue to make the contribution that we do to the security and the stability of our region. That maintains the resilience of economies; that is why we are making a contribution of over \$20 million in terms of our budget support to the Solomon Islands. It's why we've delivered over 500,000 vaccines to the Solomon Islands of 1 million and will continue to do so, including the health security that comes with that, the end-to-end support. It is essential that we continue to grow that, and that is literally what the Pacific Step-up has been doing. But countries ultimately – and it would be very disturbing if we were not prepared to acknowledge this in Australia – countries will ultimately make sovereign decisions for their own reasons that, occasionally, we don't and can't change and can't influence. And that is what respect is about, frankly, with partners as well.

Can I say in relation to Labor's plan, I see a lot of it drawn from existing programs, a whole of government approach, like the Office of the Pacific Step-up. We already train defence and security personnel from the Pacific. We strongly fund the Pacific Maritime Security Program and it would be refunded when it is due to be refunded in a [indistinct] budget...

PENNY WONG: [Talks over] Proposing to double it, actually...

MARISE PAYNE: ...which would represent a similar commitment to the Opposition.

PENNY WONG: No, that's not right.

MARISE PAYNE: But labour mobility is a really interesting answer here- question here, because it is about people to people in many ways. And what Labor's announcement does is completely muddy the waters on labour mobility. There was no consultation from Labor with the NFF and the Fresh Produce Alliance. They've both said that publicly. It's confusing for them and it's confusing for sending countries. And what happens to the countries that have already, like Vietnam, agreed to participate in the ag visa, which they appear to have scrapped, which Indonesia and Thailand and other countries are engaged on? I don't know.

LAURA TINGLE: Senator Payne went over time so [indistinct].

PENNY WONG: Well, first we don't, you know, tear up agreements. Obviously, that's not been announced, the MOU with Vietnam, but if you've actually managed to get an MOU for an ag visa that not one visa has been issued for, you know, an incoming government would respect it. But I remember going to the Pacific with Julie Bishop and I remember the clear message that she understood and that was given to us, that the Pacific labour schemes were one of our key ways to engage. It was one of our key diplomatic strengths. Central to our relationships. And she stood up against Barnaby Joyce and the National Party against the sort of opening of an agricultural visa beyond the Pacific because she understood how important this was diplomatically, as well as the importance of ensuring we have agricultural labour. So it is disappointing to me that you would go down that route when you understand, as Foreign Minister, this is one of our key strengths. It has been a key strength, it was understood by Ms Bishop and past governments, and it will be a key strength if we are elected on 21 May.

MARISE PAYNE: And we will absolutely maintain that key strength, but we also have a commitment to growing Australia's agricultural sector to \$100 billion by 2030, which doesn't appear to be supported.

PENNY WONG: [Talks over] Not one visa, not one visa in your ag visa, and you're having an argument on social media with David Littleproud telling everybody the policy is going to lead to permanency, which isn't the case in terms of answers in Estimates. I mean, it is another inconsistency on- anyway, I'm sorry. We're doing the thing, aren't we?

LAURA TINGLE: [Talks over] Senators, we're now doing getting short of time so I'm going to cut you both off there. We'll have a very short question from Nic Stuart and a one-minute answer from each of you.

PENNY WONG: One minute.

QUESTION: Maurice, final question. 30 years ago you were a young radical. You weren't part of the right wing dominance of the Liberal Party. You've fought your way through. You've actually become a Senator, one of the long serving ministers. You're also Minister for Women – why are women now deserting the Liberal Party? What can the Liberal Party do to win them back?

MARISE PAYNE: Well, I disagree I was a radical.

[Laughter]

I may've been a progressive, but I'll not necessarily claim radical. And Nick, I've been very strongly committed to ensuring that we have been able to deliver our two last Women's Budget statements, which together on women's leadership, women's economic security, women's safety, deliver over \$5 billion of support. And it is not just about that. It's overwhelmingly about the practical application of those working with the states and territories on the next national plan, ensuring that we're addressing economic security through our changes to childcare in 2018 and again this year; our change- our work on paid parental leave and, importantly, on leadership and particularly participation.

PENNY WONG: Well, I'm- it's a good thing that Marise is Minister for Women, because I can remember when Tony Abbott was under the Coalition.

[Laughter]

So that's an advance. I have- I just want to make this point. I have, including when I was much younger – thank you for reminding us both of that – advocated very strongly inside my party for affirmative action targets. And I didn't just do that and we didn't just do that, the women who- with whom I worked, because we wanted to get more women into Parliament for its own sake. We wanted to do it because we wanted to change the focus of political parties. And I can tell you, having been part of a government and now part of a Shadow Cabinet, it does matter having women in the room. And it matters in terms of the sorts of policies you announce; the most obvious example, but not the only one is the fact that our very first Budget reply, Anthony Albanese- in his very first Budget reply, Anthony Albanese announced our childcare policy.

MARISE PAYNE: I'm very proud to be part of a Cabinet that has more women than any other Australian cabinet, with eight sitting around the table.

LAURA TINGLE: Thank you, Minister. I'd like to ask both of you now to make your closing statements of one minute each starting with you, Senator Payne- sorry, two minutes. Sorry, they changed the rules on me.

MARISE PAYNE: Thank you very much, and can I thank the participating media for their questions today, and ladies and gentlemen for your presence. I think we have agreed today that we are living in a time of great change and uncertainty, and having served this country as both Defence Minister and Foreign Minister I've had the privilege of seeing firsthand that Australia is deeply respected and that our voice matters. There will be many tough foreign policy decisions ahead. The Morrison Government has shown that we can make those tough decisions and keep Australians safe, whether it is on AUKUS, or resisting economic coercion, or providing the significant support that was necessary for our region. to recover together from the COVID pandemic. We have a clear plan focussed on promoting the security and the prosperity of the Australian people. We approach this era of strategic competition with confidence in our plan, confidence in our record on foreign policy, and confidence in Australia. It is not easy and it won't be easy, but we can thrive in this area. Our strong economy, our record in managing the pandemic mean we are well positioned. There are challenges, but also opportunities for Australia for our manufacturers, for our exporters, for our innovators, for our students globally and in our region. Under a re-elected Morrison Government, Australia will continue to lead to speak out and to be bold in our purpose. We'll be there with other freedom loving nations when it comes to supporting countries like Ukraine as they defend their freedom, their democracy and sovereignty. We are always mindful that foreign policy is not detached from the lives of Australians. It is there to further the

interests of our nation and improve the wellbeing, the livelihoods, the security, the prosperity of each and every person in this country.

LAURA TINGLE: Senator Wong.

PENNY WONG: Our nation has not known such a vexing set of circumstances since the end of World War Two. But I say to you this: the risks we face will simply be compounded by three more years of Mr Morrison. More of the same excuses, the same political games over national interest, the same buck-passing whilst our problems only get bigger. Anthony Albanese and Labor have a plan, a responsible plan for a better future, a Pacific policy to ensure we secure our region. Stepping up in South East Asia to rebuild trust and meet challenges together, shared challenges together, including additional ODA and a special envoy for the region, and shaping the world for the better by taking action on climate at home and abroad, and modern slavery. What I would say to Australians is this: this will be a very loud, possibly quite angry last week of the election campaign. When it comes to foreign policy, this is our commitment. If you elect Labor on 21 May, you will have a leader in Anthony Albanese who will always put Australia's national interests first. You will have a Foreign Minister with clout. You will have a Cabinet that works together to maximise Australia's influence in the world and to secure our region. You will see more leadership, more energy and more resources. We will take responsibility and we will act. We won't pass the buck. Thank you for your time today.

LAURA TINGLE: Senators Payne and Wong, thank you.

[Applause]

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