

Doorstop – Great Hall, Canberra

JOURNALIST:

[Inaudible]

PRIME MINISTER:

I spoke to him earlier today and I've spoken to him several times about this matter. He says AGL wants to get out of coal, but he has said that he is prepared to sell to a responsible party and that's what we're talking about.

I'm not interested particularly in who owns Liddell and it is only an option –

JOURNALIST:

Would you own Liddell?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I think it's better that the private sector owns generators like that but I want to say that the vitally important thing for me is to ensure that Australians have affordable and reliable energy, electricity in this case. Now Liddell going out in 2022 will leave, as AEMO has identified, a very big hole. About a gigawatt, about a thousand megawatts. So there are obviously other options but one option clearly, that I responsibly as Prime Minister have to explore, is keeping Liddell going. Those discussions have begun with the current owner of Liddell, AGL. What I've said to you is precisely what I've discussed with Andy Vesey and he's said that he is prepared, he would be prepared to discuss selling to a responsible party who would be able to keep the power station going for a period. I've suggested at least five years because we need to make sure that we maintain affordable and reliable electricity. That's my commitment. That's the obligation I owe to all Australians.

Mr Vesey has obligations to his shareholders, my commitment is to all Australians – families, businesses big and small – to deliver affordable and reliable electricity.

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Interview with Fitzy and Wippa, NOVA 96.9 Sydney

RYAN FITZGERALD:

You're in for a special treat, because this is the first time that we've had this man on our show.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Oh yeah.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

It is the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Welcome to the show Malcolm!

PRIME MINISTER:

Hey, great to be with you.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Prime Minister, we have wanted you on the show for a long time. Have you ever listened to the Fitzy and Wippa broadcast before?

PRIME MINISTER:

You know, I haven't but I'm glad to be on it this morning.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Okay, you get to request a song at the end of that you know Prime Minister, so you've got to think of your number one karaoke song alright? But we'll give you time to think about that okay?

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm about as good at karaoke as I am at basketball.

[Laughter]

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Well said, well said!

We do have to talk about this because the United Nations has stepped in with the North Korea crisis that is happening at the moment. You've asked them to intervene to stop the reckless conduct that is happening over there with Kim Jong-un at the moment. A lot of people, we're seeing a lot of breaking news, a lot of people are very nervous at the moment Prime Minister. Are we getting all of the information at the moment? Are we very close to something

happening?

PRIME MINISTER:

The UN Security Council has met. All of the members have condemned North Korea's latest provocation which was this latest nuclear test, following hard on the heels of firing a missile that flew over Japan the previous week.

This is a very dangerous, reckless, provocative regime. The need now is to enforce the toughest economic sanctions on North Korea. Now, the Security Council already has imposed sanctions and what they're now considering, is imposing even tougher ones. Really, that is the key to bringing the regime to its senses, without conflict.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

You mentioned yesterday of course, that China would play a huge role in this.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, China has by far the biggest economic relationship with North Korea and so it has the biggest leverage and therefore the greatest responsibility.

But it is important to understand that while they've got a shared history and they're both communist states and they've obviously been allies – very close allies – North Korea is not an obedient client state to China like East Germany was to the old Soviet Union.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

No.

PRIME MINISTER:

China is frustrated. They are dismayed by North Korea's conduct, they've condemned it. What Kim Jong-un did with the last nuclear test as he's done before, was a very calculated affront to China. I mean, Xi Jinping was hosting a big international conference in Beijing and so Kim Jong-un basically affronts him by having this nuclear test in defiance of Beijing's wishes.

But nonetheless, China does have the greatest economic leverage. It has got the ability to bring the regime to its senses without conflict and it should do so.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Prime Minister if Donald Trump decides "enough is enough, we're in, we're on," is a phone call made to you? Or do we just hear this and realise that as allied forces, we're on as well? Or how does it roll out if we hit 'go' here?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it depends what you mean by 'hit go', but we have a very close

relationship with the United States in all of these defence and strategic matters, none closer. So we are in constant contact at many, many levels through our government system, our defence system, intelligence systems. But the important point to remember, is that everybody wants to get this resolved without conflict.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Absolutely.

PRIME MINISTER:

Nobody wants to have conflict here. I mean Nikki Haley who is the US representative to the United Nations, made the point that North Korea is effectively begging for war.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Yeah, yeah it feels like that.

PRIME MINISTER:

It is extraordinary conduct but a war on the Peninsula would result in thousands of deaths, extraordinary devastation. It would be so damaging to the world, to the region, to the global economy. It would be a catastrophe. That is why everybody that has leverage over North Korea should use it now to bring them to their senses.

Again I want to stress, I'm not suggesting China is responsible in any way for Kim Jong-un's actions, quite the contrary. Nonetheless China does have the biggest leverage and hence the biggest responsibility.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Let's pray it doesn't get to that point. On a lighter note you were just talking about this before, but since you've been on our show and its only been for a couple of minutes Prime Minister, we've received a phone call here from arguably Australia's greatest ever basketballer, Andrew Gaze is on the line. Good morning Gazey.

ANDREW GAZE:

Morning Fitzy. yes just wanted to call up and just say if I could have a chat to the Prime Minister just ever so briefly, because there's a lot of important issues going on around the world and we wish you all the very best with some of those negotiations. But on the internet over the weekend, I tell you what, basketball is the most participated sport in this country, I suppose where participation is concerned. To see some of this shooting action the Prime Minister had, in this little exhibition there at one of the venues. I mean there was no arc, there was no leg bend, there was a whole lot going wrong with that particular shot and I just wanted to offer my services to the great man.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Andrew, thank you, thank you, clearly I do need a coach. But you know the funny thing is, the funny thing is that everyone says this about politicians, "Oh they're so scripted," you know, "They're so risk averse, they don't want to try to do anything."

RYAN FITZGERALD:

So bad at sport.

PRIME MINISTER:

The reality is if you give most people a basketball, they're going to miss the hoop, right?

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Come on Gazey.

[Laughter]

PRIME MINISTER:

Not you Andrew, not you. You give most 62-year old politicians a basketball, they'll miss the hoop. But still, you may as well have a go!

[Laughter]

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Yeah.

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm always happy to have a go.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Gazey, you've got to get him out to the Sydney Kings one night. Prime Minister, do you want to go see the Kings play if you get a spare night?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, that'd be good if I get a spare night.

[Laughter]

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Yep.

PRIME MINISTER:

Hey Andrew? Is Gazey still there?

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Yeah, he's still there.

PRIME MINISTER:

I've got to say I was so pumped up, excited by the enthusiasm of all those kids at that Willetton Basketball Centre I went to in Perth with Ben Morton. Because you know, you can see it is just so popular. Did you say it's the most popular participation sport in Australia? Is that right?

ANDREW GAZE:

Oh look, I might have been stretching the imagination ever so slightly there.

[Laughter]

But it is, participation rates are certainly the envy of most other sports.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Yeah.

ANDREW GAZE:

We unfortunately are very honest with our registration numbers, unlike some of these other sports. I always like to think it is the most participated. We need a few more venues and then, no doubt about it, we'll be able to lay claim.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'm getting lots of help. Joe Ingles has tweeted me offering support, so you know, clearly it's also very touching. Everyone says that people are very hard on politicians, but there you see –

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Well there you go.

PRIME MINISTER:

Great Australian basketballers are reaching out, they're filled with compassion and a desire to help me so that's good.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Prime Minister you're a big Swans fan too, will you be there on Saturday?

PRIME MINISTER:

No I won't sadly. I'll be up in Darwin, but how do you feel about it? You'd be torn between them and the Crows I guess.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Yeah we are at the moment.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

The Swannies are flying.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

It's just great, it's finals time, we are very excited.

We did say to you before, you need to choose a song though, Prime Minister. I mean, you don't need to perform it for us now. Mike Baird, he went with *Power and the Passion* by Midnight Oil, Gladys Berejiklian went Ed Sheeran, Bill Shorten picked *Great Southern Land*. What is your number one song Mr Turnbull?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, my favourite song – but it's a romantic song...

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Yeah, no I like this.

PRIME MINISTER:

My romantic song is *If You Leave Me, Can I Come Too?*

RYAN FITZGERALD:

Oh!

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Have you slow waltzed with Lucy to that one?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, yeah.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

That's not bad. Alright.

PRIME MINISTER:

But I couldn't sing it, I've got to tell you.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

You know, Tony Abbott's was *Suspicious Minds* by Elvis Presley. He performed that for us.

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

He knew a few.

[Laughter]

RYAN FITZGERALD:

He'd had a couple of beers before it as well, I dunno if there were any c-bombs dropped while he was singing.

[Laughter]

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, this is a family program.

[Laughter].

MICHAEL WIPFLI:

Yes it is, so we don't understand what that means. But Prime Minister thank you so much for your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, great to be with you. Thanks a lot Gazey too.

RYAN FITZGERALD:

No worries, good on you mate.

[ENDS]

[Doorstop – Parliament House, Canberra](#)

JOURNALIST:

There's been repeated efforts to try and curb North Korea's nuclear program, so far they've all failed. What makes you think the diplomatic option is going to work this time?

PRIME MINISTER:

The vital priority now is to ensure that the North Korean regime comes to its senses. Australia together with the global community utterly condemns the latest, reckless action by this dangerous regime – this dangerous rogue regime. Now, the UN sanctions, the enhanced UN economic sanctions will begin operation this week and China will be enforcing them.

But there will be more that needs to be done given the affront that North

Korea has shown to China itself.

At the very time North Korea undertook this latest test, the most dangerous and most powerful it has ever done – of a thermonuclear device so we believe – the Chinese President was hosting a vitally important economic conference of the BRICS, Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa. This is an enormous, high-profile diplomatic priority of China. Kim Jong-un chose to affront China with this test.

China has the economic leverage to bring North Korea to its senses and with that leverage comes responsibility. Now as I've said to you many times, we know that North Korea is not an obedient client state of China. North Korea is not to China what East Germany was to the Soviet Union and China is dismayed and frustrated by North Korea's conduct. Nonetheless the fact remains that China has the ability, the economic ability to bring North Korea to its senses and the responsibility therefore, on China, is the greatest.

The time has come for all nations, including China to take action to bring this regime to its senses.

Right now, the risk of war on the Korean Peninsula is greater than it has been for over 60 years. Conflict on the Korean Peninsula would be a disaster for the region and for the world. The time has come for China to take the responsibility to respond to this affront with strong action that brings this regime to its senses.

Thanks very much.

[ENDS]

[Interview with Sabra Lane, ABC AM](#)

SABRA LANE:

Joining us now to discuss the latest is the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Mr Turnbull, good morning and welcome to AM.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning and happy 50th birthday for AM.

SABRA LANE:

Thank you, we'll get to that in a tick. Thank you very much.

Do North Korea and its testing of this nuclear device. The US is now talking about a massive military response that is effective and overwhelming, how can conflict be avoided?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well conflict can be avoided by the regime coming to its senses. Now, unless the regime changes its mind, that will require stronger economic pressure on North Korea. The country that has the ability to impose that pressure, is China. China has the overwhelmingly dominant economic relationship with North Korea, it's its neighbor of course.

China can do more. Now China has roundly condemned this latest test. This test is a direct affront to China. Beijing has been hosting a very important international conference, the BRICS conference; Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa. This is an area of international leadership that Xi Jinping has put enormous store on. So right at that moment, Kim Jong-un has chosen to affront China, to defy China and this calls for a strong Chinese response.

SABRA LANE:

Would an appropriate response for China to cut off oil? Would that be something Kim-Jong un understands?

PRIME MINISTER:

That absolutely would be a lever that China could pull and that would put enormous economic pressure on the regime. So this is the point that I want to stress Sabra, and I've made this point several times with you before, but it's important to repeat.

North Korea is not a puppet state of China. It is not to China what East Germany was to the Soviet Union. The Chinese are frustrated and dismayed by North Korea's conduct, but China has the greatest leverage and with the greatest leverage comes the greatest responsibility.

SABRA LANE:

But are they frustrated, because it may be very convenient for Beijing to have a near neighbor causing so much grief for Washington?

PRIME MINISTER:

Having a near neighbor that is bringing the Korean Peninsula closer to war, than at any time since the end of the Korean War, cannot possibly be in China's interest.

SABRA LANE:

How closely briefed is Australia on what options are open to the United States? Are you being briefed on a daily basis?

PRIME MINISTER:

Very closely briefed.

SABRA LANE:

Is he evil? John Howard told me last week that he thinks Kim Jong-un is evil.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, I don't think there is any doubt about that. This is a person that routinely assassinates members of his own family, you know other people, other would-be-threats in the regime. It is a cruel and evil dictatorship and he starves his own people. Look, this is a shocking, dangerous, provocative, illegal regime that is threatening the peace and security of the region and the world and is advancing nobody's interests other than the maintenance of that one family's dictatorship of North Korea.

SABRA LANE:

How worried are you by the Islamic State threat in the Philippines?

PRIME MINISTER:

Very concerned. We cannot afford to have Marawi become the Raqqa of South East Asia. It is vitally important that the ISIL insurgency in Marawi is defeated.

SABRA LANE:

Australia's considering sending, or we've offered to send troops, I understand Special Forces?

PRIME MINISTER:

The ABC keeps on saying this Sabra and we keep on saying it's wrong. With all due respect on the 50th anniversary of AM –

SABRA LANE:

Clear it up?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well its been cleared up a few times. We are providing support to the Philippines government in terms of intelligence gathering through the use of the P-3 Orions. We stand ready to assist them in capacity-building but the story that the ABC has consistently run – and has been consistently corrected – that we have offered to send special forces is not true.

SABRA LANE:

The war in terrorism will soon enter is 17th year, how long do you think it will last? Will it be something that goes for decades?

PRIME MINISTER:

I fear it easily could, yes. I think this is a crisis within Islam. Fundamentally, what you have is an extremist, violent, intolerant ideology within Islam. It is supported by a tiny minority of Muslims, obviously. Most

of its victims are other Muslims; we've seen examples of that every day. But I think it is going to be a long term struggle.

But you know, the reality is that we have to continue defending ourselves, both at home and abroad and we do so. My government has taken measures both at home and abroad to ensure that our agencies – whether it's the Australian Defence Force overseas, whether it is our police and intelligence services at home – have all of the resources they need to keep us safe. We will continue to do that. There is no 'set and forget' in national security.

Every day I'm focused on ensuring that those who work night and day to keep us safe have the tools, the resources in every respect, to do their job.

SABRA LANE:

Back home now, energy policy, the Clean Energy Target. It's something you've said you'd like to see sorted by the years end. Will it still be called the Clean Energy Target by the time you're finished with it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Sabra, I'm focused on ensuring that we have energy measures, policy measures that will deliver us reliable and affordable power, that will enable us to reduce our emissions in accordance with our commitments internationally. What we've seen is some shocking failures in policy. The most recently confessed-to failure of course was Labor's failure over gas.

SABRA LANE:

We could point to other failures – CPRS.

PRIME MINISTER:

Sabra, I know you don't like me talking about the failures of the Labor Party, but on your 50th anniversary at least give me a hearing.

We have got on the East Coast of Australia a shortage of gas. How could that possibly happen? It seems inconceivable. We're one of the biggest gas exporters in the world, how could we be short of gas?

SABRA LANE:

People on the left like Paul Howes and Martin Ferguson warned about this for years.

PRIME MINISTER:

But people in government, the Labor Party in government ignored those warnings and now admit they ignored those warnings.

It because of that Gillard Government's decision, of which Bill Shorten was a Minister, that Australians are paying too much for gas, thousands of jobs are being threatened and we're paying too much for electricity.

Now I have had to take – as a Liberal Prime Minister – the tough decision of putting limits on exports of gas, to make up for a failure of Labor Policy to which they have now made a full confession.

They owe a massive apology to families and businesses in Australia that are being threatened by these crushingly high gas prices. Which I might say are now coming back, they're coming down because of the measures we've taken. But they should never have gone up, if Labor had put Australians first.

SABRA LANE:

Parliament is back from today, the Opposition says "anything can happen". They're not happy that Barnaby Joyce could possibly be the Acting Prime Minister at the end of this week given that his election to Parliament is in question – the validity of it is in question.

If the High Court finds that he was invalidly elected, Labor will claim vindication won't it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it says a lot about the Labor Party, Sabra, doesn't it?

That at a time when we're facing the greatest threat of war on the Korean Peninsula in 60 years – more than 60 years – in the face of that, in the face of rising energy prices and Labor's admitted responsibility for that – in the face of all of that, what the Labor Party wants to do is talk about creating disruption on the floor of the Parliament.

Australian's will be sickened by the sight of the Labor Party's failure to recognise the priorities of the Australian Parliament is to keep Australians safe and to support the opportunity, the economic opportunity that Australians deserve. That requires the Parliament to focus on the real issues, rather than playing political games. I mean consider this; you have Tanya Plibersek out there yesterday, is she talking about North Korea? Is she talking about how the Opposition stands in support of the government in demanding stronger sanctions against North Korea? No. She's talking about playing games on the floor of the Parliament. It's pathetic.

SABRA LANE:

Well Labor could, they've taken a leaf straight out straight out of Tony Abbott's playbook on how to run the Opposition in these circumstances.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, that is no justification. The reality is we are facing on the Korean Peninsula, the gravest threat to peace since the end of the Korean War. These are dangerous times. Now, what Australians would expect is the Parliament to be resolute in support of the security of Australia.

SABRA LANE:

As you pointed out at the start of this interview, AM is turning 50 today. It feels a little somber to be honest. We have more than a million people listening to this program. Why do you think it has endured when so many other things haven't?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I believe it has endured because it focuses on what the ABC is, by act of Parliament, required to do; which is to deliver accurate and impartial news and current affairs.

We live in a media environment Sabra, where, you know, because of the internet and clickbait and social media, there is so much sensationalism, so much – well, fake news, Donald Trump would call it. But quite a bit of it is fake, as we know. Of course the big commercial media companies are under more pressure than ever before. The ABC has assured taxpayer funding and the responsibility on the ABC to be accurate and impartial and balanced and thoughtful and focus on the real issues of the day, is greater than ever.

So AMs celebrated 50 years. Happy birthday, AM and the values on which AM was created, I hope will be enduring, because they are vitally important for the ABC and for all Australians.

SABRA LANE:

Well on that note Prime Minister, thank you very much for talking to AM this morning.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks so much.

[ENDS]

[North Korean Aggression – Nuclear Test](#)

The North Korean regime claims to have conducted a successful test of a nuclear device, with a seismic event of 6.1 magnitude detected at a North Korean nuclear test site.

The regime has claimed to have detonated a hydrogen bomb, although that has not been confirmed.

This would be North Korea's sixth nuclear test.

Australia utterly condemns North Korea's flagrant defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which ban nuclear weapons development and testing by Kim Jong-un's regime.

We call for the UN Security Council to urgently consider further strong measures that would place pressure on North Korea to change course, and for all nations, especially the Permanent Five UNSC members, to apply the maximum possible pressure to this dangerous pariah regime.

North Korea is the only country that is testing nuclear weapons, and responsibility for the increasing tensions in the region sits with Pyongyang.

North Korea's reckless conduct poses a grave danger to global peace and security.

Australia is doing its part to exert pressure on North Korea through our full implementation of UNSC sanctions and our autonomous sanctions regime.

We have repeatedly said we are committed to the path of diplomatic and economic pressure to resolve this crisis. We will continue to work with our ally and partners to change North Korea's behaviour and deter it from threatening the region and the world with illegal weapons.

We welcome China's intent to implement sanctions, and urge it to use its substantial economic and political leverage to rein in North Korea's actions.

Now is the time for strengthened resolve by all members of the international community.